# Essay Writing

## Topic Sentences:

A **topic sentence** describes the rest of the paragraph. When a reader reads a topic sentence, a **question** should appear in the mind of the reader. The rest of the paragraph will then give an answer to that question. The question must **relate** to the **thesis** of the essay.

A good topic sentence:

* Summarizes information in the **whole** paragraph, not just part of it
* Is short, clear and simple
* Isn’t too general
* Isn’t too specific
* Is related to all sentences
* Isn’t a conclusion

Every topic sentence will have a **topic,** and a **controlling idea**.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **Controlling Idea** |
| What the paragraph **is about** | What the paragraph **will say** |

## Support sentences:

Support sentences explain the idea in the topic sentence; they **answer** the topic-sentence question. Good supporting sentences have different **goals.** Writers vary them to:

• explain • describe • give reasons • give facts • give examples • define

**For example:**

1. More than ten percent of the university’s student population is international.
2. Lukas finally quit his job because of the stressful working conditions.
3. The family moved from the village to the capital for economic reasons.
4. Oranges and grapefruits grow in California.
5. She lived in a lovely three-story castle surrounded by a forest.
6. Many tourists visit Bangkok, which is the capital and largest city in Thailand.

##

## Thesis statements:

**Thesis statements** help guide the essay and introduce the topic in more detail. Thesis statements answer the questions:

1. What are you writing about? 2. Why are you writing about it?

Before you begin writing, you must **clearly** **answer** these questions. Write thesis statements by:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Remembering the questions above | 2. Using words such as “because”. |

**For example:**

Children should not eat fast food because it has little nutritional value, it doesn’t give sufficient energy, and it’s expensive.

From this thesis statement, you already know the three main ideas in the paragraphs:

**Topic: Food and children**

Paragraph one: little nutritional value

Paragraph two: insufficient energy

Paragraph three: price.

## Concluding sentences:

**Concluding sentences** summarize or **conclude** the main ideas of the paragraph. A concluding sentence often has one of these four important purposes:

1. It restates the main idea.
2. It offers a suggestion.
3. It gives an opinion.
4. It makes a prediction. **Concluding sentences** often repeat words or phrases from the **topic sentence** to summarizing the content of the paragraph, and use **summary transition phrases** such as:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * As a result
* Overall
* For this reason
* Certainly
* Because of this

  | * Surely
* In conclusion
* Therefore
* For these reasons
 | * Clearly
* Thus
* In brief
 |

## Transition phrases:

**Transition phrases** are used to **link** **sentences** and **paragraphs**. They make your writing **flow**, which makes it **stronger**. **Transition phrases** can be used anytime, and they can be used for many purposes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Addition
* Emphasis
* Exemplification or illustration
* Comparison
* Concession
* Cause
* Effect
 | * Clarification
* Contrast
* Purpose
* Qualification
* Time sequence
* Summary
 |

**Addition transition phrases** are used to **add information**. They are very useful at the start of body paragraphs, and within paragraphs. They are not normally used in conclusions. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| furthermore, further, moreover, meanwhile, in addition, additionally, also, again, too, as well, besides, then, still, next, |

**Cause transition phrases** are used to **show the cause (reason) why something has happened**. They are normally used within paragraphs. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| because, since, on account of, for that reason, that's why, |

**Clarification transition phrases** are used to **explain something in another way**. This is to help the reader understand better. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| namely, in other words, specifically, to paraphrase, to clarify, to rephrase, to put it another way, |

**Comparison transition phrases** are used to **compare two different points of view**. They are normally used at the start of body paragraphs, and within paragraphs, similar to addition transition phrases. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| similarly, likewise, in the same way, |

**Concession transition phrases** are used to **show you understand and accept another point of view**. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| granted, of course, naturally, admittedly, |

**Contrast phrases** are used to **show** **the difference between two different ideas**. Along with addition transition phrases, **contrast transition phrases** are one of the most common phrases you will see or use in your writing. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| however, yet, but, whereas, on the other hand, in contrast, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, regardless, conversely, otherwise, even though, although, despite, in spite of that, though, in fact, while, |

**Effect transition phrases** are used to **show a result**. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| therefore, consequently, as a result, accordingly, in turn, thus, hence |

**Emphasis transition phrases** are used to **make something sound more amazing, or believable**. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| indeed, by all means, certainly, without a doubt, undoubtedly, in fact, surely |

**Exemplification or illustration transition phrases** are used to **show or introduce an example.** For example:

|  |
| --- |
| such as, for example, for instance, namely, to illustrate, to demonstrate, specifically, in particular |

**Purpose transition phrases** are used to **show the reason why something is done**. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| in order to, so that, for this purpose |

**Qualification transition phrases** are used to **make writing sound more credible or believable**. They are used to show the extent to which something should be believed. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| almost, nearly, probably, never, always, frequently, perhaps, maybe, although |

**Summary or conclusion transition phrases** are used to **finish a paragraph or an essay**. They are used at the end of paragraphs, or in the final paragraph. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| to summarise, in sum, in brief, to sum up, in short, in summary, in conclusion, to conclude, altogether, on the whole, finally, given these points, on the whole, as above, as has been previously noted/ mentioned/ stated/ described |

**Time sequence transition phrases** are used to **show time or order**. They work in a similar fashion to addition transition phrases by being at the start or middle of a paragraph, and not normally in a conclusion. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| in the first place, first, firstly, second, secondly, now, until now, since, next, once, then, so far, eventually, subsequently, thereafter, following, afterwards, at last, last, lastly, at that time, finally, soon, during, afterwards, simultaneously, |

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# Paragraph Types

## Introductions:

**Introductions** have **two** main roles:

1) **Introduce the topic** to the reader.

2) **Make** the reader **want to read more.**

A good introduction includes:

1. A general **topic sentence** that tells the reader the topic you will be writing about.
2. **Supporting sentences** that narrow the topic further.
3. A **thesis statement** that describes the content of the essay, usually composed of **three main ideas**.
4. A **concluding sentence** to finish the introduction.

All these sentences are written in a way that **draws the reader in**, and makes them **want to read more**. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| To become a successful writer, students should follow some important steps. Just attending the class is not enough. Writers need a good background in grammar and vocabulary, skills in writing essays, and skills in editing. Learning to be a successful writer involves a lot of hard work. |
| **Introductions** should be about **100-200 words** depending on the length of the essay.  |

## Body Paragraphs:

**Body paragraphs** give extra support to the main argument in a structured way. They make up the majority of the essay. Each body paragraph focuses on **one** **main point**, and gives **supporting reasons** for that point. Bodyparagraphs should be about **200-300 words** depending on the length of the essay.

A good body paragraph includes:

1. A s**equence** or **addition transition phrase**
2. A **topic sentence** that links to the main topic of the essay
3. **Support sentences** that provide extra substance to the argument
4. **Concluding sentences** to round out the paragraph

## Conclusions:

**Conclusions** tie everything together, briefly summing up the main ideas before ending provocatively for the reader. A good conclusion is about 5 to 7 lines long, or around **100 words** or more.

A good conclusion includes:

1. A **summary transition phrase**
2. A **rephrasal** of the thesis statement
3. A **summary** of the main points
4. A **sentence** leaving an interesting final impression.

# Essay Structure