



Find the Topic Sentence!

Topic sentences express the main idea of a paragraph. They are usually stated in the first sentence (Pattern A) or last sentence (Pattern B) of the paragraph, and sometimes they are stated in different ways in both (Pattern C). A topic sentence rarely ever appears in the middle of a paragraph (Pattern D); it is possible to do if there is a good reason for it, but it usually isn't an effective place for it.

The following paragraphs exemplify all the patterns mentioned above, and there are even a couple with no topic sentence at all (we'll call this Pattern E—not advised). Can you find them? Mark each sentence below.

- _____ 1. Spanish is spoken in many countries. It is spoken throughout Latin America. Of course, it is the language of Spain. In some countries, like the Philippines, it is one the official languages. Many people throughout the world use Spanish to communicate.

- _____ 2. Some people walk on a treadmill at home or ride a bicycle. Others like to go out dancing, do aerobics, or work out in a gym. Some people prefer to swim. Most people have a favorite way to exercise.

- _____ 3. It seems that people mature at different rates. Some children are serious and responsible. Many people mature during college or as they gain experience on their first job. Other folks take more time, and some people grow old but never seem to grow up.

- _____ 4. Some people leave too many lights on around the house. Some aren't careful about how much water they use. Americans waste a lot of resources. Most people buy products with a lot of unnecessary packaging that isn't good for the environment.

- _____ 5. There's a toaster oven, a blender, and a can opener on one counter. I have a microwave oven on another. In my cupboard, you can find a mixer and a hot air popcorn popper. On the far side of the kitchen, there is a coffee machine and coffee grinder.

- _____ **6.** There are large ones with religious significance, such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter. There are colorful one-day celebrations, including Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day. There's a scary one called Halloween. There are lots of patriotic ones like Independence Day, Memorial Day, and Veteran's Day. There are a number of days to remember important people and historical figures such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Presidents' Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Columbus Day, Labor Day, and Cesar Chavez Day. The U.S. has many different holidays.
- _____ **7.** The park is a pleasant place for everyone. Little kids like to play on the swings and slides. Older children can play little league baseball or other team sports at the larger parks. Teenagers often play Frisbee on the grass or volleyball in the sand. Adults enjoy taking walks, and some seniors like to sit on the park benches and feed the birds.
- _____ **8.** You should get an oil change every 3,000 miles. You need to check the air pressure in your tires and have them rotated. There are some things you should do regularly to maintain your car in good condition. It is also important to check the battery voltage and all fluid levels. Don't forget to inspect the belts and hoses for signs of wear.
- _____ **9.** Dogs in the U.S. are treated like humans. People talk to their dogs and buy them special toys and clothing. There are special parks, hotels, restaurants, and bakeries for dogs. Some owners take their dog to see a psychiatrist as well as the veterinarian. American dogs are spoiled like children.
- _____ **10.** First, they can see better what is written on the board. They also can hear the instructor more clearly, so they take better notes. When they are close to the teacher, they feel less shy about asking questions, so they get a lot of help. Students who sit in front of the class often are more attentive and receive better grades in the class. There are many reasons for this.
- _____ **11.** It has a 6-cylinder engine and antilock brakes, air conditioning, power steering, air bags, and a navigation system. It also has a stereo CD player and a sunroof.
- _____ **12.** In most paragraphs, the topic sentence appears first. In many paragraphs, however, it comes last. Sometimes it is stated both at the beginning and at the end, in different words. Every paragraph must have a topic sentence in order to be effective.