

WRITING I - TOPIC SENTENCES

http://www.staff.uni-giessen.de/~ga1070/topic_sentences_ex.html

Exercise 1

The following groups of sentences can be rearranged to form paragraphs. Make a note of the order in which they should be placed (e.g. b., d., c., a., e.) and put a ring around the letter that corresponds to what you think is the topic sentence.

Paragraph 1

- a. Next, add antifreeze to your windshield washer fluid; otherwise, the fluid will freeze and possibly break the container.
- b. First, put on snow tires if you plan to drive on snowy, icy roads very often.
- c. Driving in winter, especially on snowy, icy roads, can be less troublesome if you take a few simple precautions.
- d. Finally, it is also a good idea to carry tire chains, a can of spray to unfreeze door locks, and a windshield scraper in your car when driving in winter weather.
- e. Second, check the amount of antifreeze in your radiator and add more if necessary.

Paragraph 2

- a. A breakthrough in one of these areas will hopefully provide a means of relieving both the overstretched oil market and the environment.
- b. Researchers in the automobile industry are experimenting with different types of engines and fuels as alternatives to the conventional gasoline engines.
- c. One new type of engine, which burns diesel oil instead of gasoline, has been available for several years.
- d. Finally, several automobile manufacturers are experimenting with methanol, which is a mixture of gasoline and methyl alcohol, as an automobile fuel.
- e. A further type is the gas turbine engine, which can use fuels made from gasoline, diesel oil, kerosene and other petroleum distillates.
- f. The increasing depletion of oil reserves, along with environmental concerns, have prompted some radical developments in car design over the past few years

Paragraph 3

- a. Later on, people began to write on pieces of leather, which were rolled into scrolls.
- b. In the earliest times, people carved or painted messages on rocks.
- c. In the Middle Ages, heavy paper called parchment was used for writing and books were laboriously copied by hand.
- d. With the invention of the printing press in the middle of the fifteenth century, the modern printing industry was born.
- e. Some form of written communication has been used throughout the centuries.

Exercise 2

Write good topic sentences to begin each of the following paragraphs. Remember to include both a topic and a controlling idea.

1. Americans relaxing at home, for example, may put on kimonos, which is a Japanese word. Americans who live in a warm climate may take an afternoon siesta on an outdoor patio without even realising that these are Spanish words. In their gardens, they may enjoy the fragrance of jasmine flowers, a word that came into English from Persian. They may even relax on a chaise longue, while sipping a drink made with vodka, words of French and Russian origin, respectively.
2. In European universities, students are not required to attend classes. In fact, professors in Germany generally do not know the names of the students enrolled in their courses. In the United States, however, students are required to attend all classes and may be penalized if they do not. Furthermore, in the European system, there is usually just one comprehensive examination at the end of the students' entire four or five years of study. In the American system, on the other hand, there are usually numerous quizzes, texts, and homework assignments, and there is almost always a final examination in each course at the end of the semester.
3. For example, the Eskimos, living in a treeless region of snow and ice, sometimes build temporary homes out of thick blocks of ice. People who live in deserts, on the other hand, use the most available material, mud or clay, which provides good insulation from the heat. In Northern Europe, Russia and other areas of the world where forests are plentiful, people usually construct their homes out of wood. In the islands of the South Pacific, where there is a plentiful supply of bamboo and palm, people use these tough, fibrous plants to build their home.

Exercise 3

Now write two or three topic sentences for each of the following topics. You should choose two or three different controlling ideas for the same topic.

Example:

Topic:	Television's effects on children
Topic sentences:	1. Television is harmful to children because it teaches them violence as a way of solving problems.
	2. Television can improve a child's general knowledge.

- a. Smoking cigarettes
- b. Foreign travel
- c. Space exploration
- d. Rock music or rock musicians
- e. Studying a foreign language
