

## Topic Sentence Checklist

**Choose a paragraph from your draft and use the following checklist to evaluate the effectiveness of your topic sentence.**

Self-Check Questions	Yes	No	Ideas for Revision if You Checked “No”
Is the topic statement the first statement in the paragraph?			If the topic sentence is not at the start of the paragraph, move it there. Reread the paragraph to make sure it is still cohesive and coherent.
Is the link between the thesis for the paper and the topic sentence clear?			You may be able to clarify the link to the thesis by using key terms from the thesis, adding an explicit explanation of the connection in the topic sentence, etc. Sometimes, you may need to tweak your thesis to include all of the topic sentences you use.
Does the topic sentence reflect the purpose of the paragraph?			Think about what the paragraph’s purpose is, what the sentence says, and what the disconnect is. Are you missing a key point? Do you need to rephrase the topic sentence? Did the purpose of the paragraph change from what you originally intended?
Does the topic sentence reflect the <i>scope</i> of the paragraph? (In other words, do all of the sentences in the paragraph fit under the umbrella created by the topic sentence)?			You may need to make the topic sentence broader. Alternatively, your paragraph may contain an idea or sentence that would fit better in a different paragraph.
Is the topic sentence sufficiently focused (i.e., not too broad or too narrow/detailed)?			If the topic sentence is too broad, see if you can narrow it down by adding qualifying terms, adding detail, or removing tangentially related ideas. If it is too narrow, see if you can make it broader by adding more information. Reread the paragraph for ideas about what will and will not fit.
Is the topic sentence itself free of support? (In other words, is the topic sentence used to make an assertion or introductory statement that can be supported or expanded as opposed to providing the actual support?)			If you have any specific evidence or examples in your topic sentence, move them to their own sentences in the main part of the paragraph.
If appropriate, does the topic sentence link to the ending of the previous paragraph or at least seem like a logical next step?			If the connection to the previous paragraph is unclear, you may be able to add a transition word or phrase at the start of the topic sentence. Alternatively, you may need to reorder your paragraphs so they proceed more logically.

**If you answered “No” to any of the above questions, revise your topic sentence to address the issue. Some ideas for revision are included in the checklist, but you may find other ways to revise as well.**