

Paragraph Unit

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Lesson 4 Titles and Topic Sentences

Tennessee Standard - 6th Grade

Assessed - Determine an appropriate title that creatively reflects the topic.

Topic sentences are like small thesis statements. They state the main idea of the paragraph. The rest of the paragraph must expand, describe, or prove what the topic sentence states in some way. Topic sentences make a point and give reasons or examples to support it.

Similar to a thesis statement a good topic sentences states the main idea (an interesting subject), and then adds what you want to say about the topic (your specific feeling about it).

An interesting subject
 + your specific feeling about it
 = a good topic sentence

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Your specific feelings could include:

precautions	To survive at Camp Green Lake the campers in Tent D must take several precautions.
advantages	There are several advantages to being the leader of Camp D.
reasons for	Clyde Livingston was Stanley's hero for a number of reasons.
the causes of or the effects of	Bad luck followed Elya Yelnuts everywhere as a result of breaking his promise to Madame Zeroni.
the steps for	By following these simple directions you can make nail polish from rattlesnake venom.
the way to or the method	Stanley learned to avoid being caught on the Warden's cameras by following these steps.
parts, kinds, or types	The Texas desert contains many types of dangerous creatures.
qualities of	The campers in Tent D appeared to be ready to fight for the smallest of reasons.
difficulties of or obstacles to	To understand Zigzag's weird behavior you must be aware of several problems he had faced before coming to Camp GreenLake.

Read the paragraph below.

Palindromes are words, numbers, and phrases that can be read the same backwards and forwards. Names such as Bob, Eve, and Anna are palindromes because they can be reversed to spell the same word. In the book *Holes* everyone in the Yelnats family named their first son Stanley because it was a palindrome for Yelnats. "Madam, I'm Adam.", "Marge lets Norah see Sharon's telegram.", and "Lee had a heel." are examples of phrase palindromes. One example of a number palindrome is at 8:02 on the 20th of February 2002 it was 20:02 02/20 2002. Can you come up with a palindrome of your own?

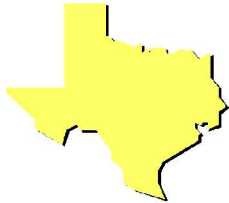
What is the main idea of this paragraph?

Can you find a sentence that tells you the main idea? This sentence is called the topic sentence. The topic sentence usually comes at the beginning of a paragraph, however, some writers may place the topic sentence at the end.

The portion of the topic sentence that says that can be read the same backwards and forwards specifies the writer's feelings by which of the items listed above?

Activity 1

Below you will see pairs of sentences. Each pair contains one sentence that would make a good topic sentence and another sentence that would make a good detail sentence. Write T before the sentence in each pair that would make a good topic sentence. Write D before each sentence that would make a good detail sentence.



1. _____ Texas has 267,000 square miles.
2. _____ Texas is so big that you can find many things to do.



1. _____ A bully is a boy or girl who acts mean or hurtful to others.
2. _____ Bullies sometimes hit, kick, or push to hurt people.



1. _____ Heavy downpours on Earth's deserts can drastically change the landscape of these regions.
2. _____ Desert plants are mainly ground-hugging shrubs and short woody trees.



1. _____ Kayaking is one camp sport.
2. _____ Basic push-ups and pull-ups will improve your upper body strength so that you will be better prepared to conquer camp activities.



1. _____ There are several ways for accurately telling how old fossils are.
2. _____ The animal dies and sinks to the sea floor.

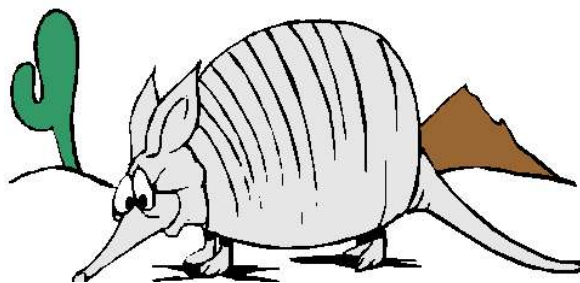
Activity 2 Write a topic sentence for each set of words. Remember to state an interesting fact plus your take on the topic. Be sure to look at the specific feelings list to help you with ideas for topic sentences.

1. detention center Camp Green Lake
2. Texas desert
3. yellow spotted lizard harmful
4. inventor Herbert Lapidus odor-eater insole early 1970s

Activity 3 Read each paragraph below. Think of the main idea for each. Then write a topic sentence that tells the main idea. On the line provided above the paragraph write a title that creatively reflects the topic.

1.

Many desert animals are nocturnal. They sleep during the day in burrows below the surface of the desert or hide in shaded areas. They come out at night to eat. Some desert animals do not need to drink water. They get water from the foods they eat. Most desert animals are small.



2.



Some bullies act the way they do to try to make themselves feel more important or more popular. Other bullies are acting out or copying things they have seen. Most bullies do not realize or understand how they are hurting others.

3.

Henry Nelson McKinney was an advertising agent for N. W. Ayer & Son. In 1917 he named the new shoes "sneaker" because they were quiet as you walked.



This paragraph is referring to Keds®.

Activity 4

Using the outline you created in Lesson 2, write a topic sentence for each of the three paragraphs. Next write one title that creatively reflects the topic of the report. Use the graphic organizer provided.

Graphic Organizer - Hamburger Model Graphic Organizer

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Sources of Information:
 Desert Animals <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/painting/desert.shtml>
 The History of Shoes, Sandals, and Sneakers <http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blshoe.htm>
 Topic Sentences http://eslbee.com/topic_sen