

Writing Paragraphs → Topic Sentences

Level: High School

*A paragraph is a group of related sentences revolving around one central idea (as set forth by **the topic sentence**). A good topic sentence introduces the main idea in a general rather than specific way and then controls the rest of the paragraph by developing that single idea. The topic sentence is often the first sentence in a paragraph, but it may also come after an opening transitional sentence or even at the end of a paragraph.*

Read each paragraph. Then, select the best topic sentence and the better paraphrase.

Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi believed strongly in the principle of non-violence. This principle had been taught in many religions and philosophies, long before he adopted it for his own life. But Gandhi was the first person to advocate using non-violence on such a large scale. He thought of non-violence in moral terms, believing that antagonism harmed a person's inner self. If someone committed a violent act, anyone who responded with violence was on the same moral level as the first aggressor. And the violence harmed the inner being of both people. So Gandhi aimed for a "higher level" of existence, where all people treated each other in a way that promoted the removal of antagonisms. He lived the principle of non-violence first in his personal life, and then taught his followers to adopt the same approach. He sometimes drew criticism for teaching these beliefs, because he suggested that persecuted groups should offer themselves up and allow the persecution, rather than fight back with violence. But Gandhi pointed to the fact that throughout history, no matter how strong tyrants were, they always fell eventually. He believed that as the public saw an oppressor's actions done in full view, without being resisted, people's opinions would turn against the tyrant. And in Gandhi's view, this would lead to the fall of the persecuting power much sooner than if people fought the persecution with violent acts. Even though his philosophy of non-violence sometimes produced controversial dilemmas, there is no doubt that his firm commitment to the idea influenced large numbers of people and helped in India's quest for independence.

Topic:

- a) The life of Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi
- b) Mahatma Gandhi's belief in non-violence
- c) Mahatma Gandhi's fight for independence from Britain

Paraphrase:

- 1) Given how harsh and cruel British rule in India was, it is understandable that Mahatma Gandhi was determined to fight for independence at all cost.
- 2) Despite criticism, Mahatma Gandhi was unwavering in his belief that the fight for Indian independence from Britain must come about in a non-violent manner.

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Most people think that radio preceded television by many years. In fact, television has existed nearly as long as radio. Even with many advances since the early days, the very technique used for reproducing and transmitting television images today follows the same back-and-forth image scanning process that was first conceived in the early 1880s. By 1884, the first patent had been filed for equipment using that technique. Early in the 1920s, while the first limited radio broadcasts were taking place, the seeds of television technology improved steadily. Scottish inventor, John Logie Baird, began by transmitting the first moving silhouettes of images from London in 1925. By 1926, he could transmit the first discernible image of a human face. And by the close of the decade, the first true television broadcasts took place on two experimental TV stations, run by General Electric. Technology advanced quickly enough after that to allow live broadcasts of the Berlin Olympics in 1936. This was only eleven years after the first rudimentary silhouette, and a mere sixteen years after the first radio news broadcast from a Detroit radio station. While it's true that radio had a slight head start in both technology development and popular appeal, television was always hot on its heels. Once the basic TV technologies were perfected, it didn't take long for television to catch up completely.

Topic:

- a) The decline of radio
- b) The birth of television
- c) The ever-increasing pace of technological advances

Paraphrase:

- 1) Television has been around much longer than most people realize.
- 2) Famous actors played an important role in the success of television.