

## Writing Paragraphs → Topic Sentences

Level: Middle 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 below and circle, underline, or highlight the topic sentence.**

Bicycle tours provide tourists with a wonderful way to visit Paris. Riding a bike instead of getting around by car or bus gives visitors the chance to talk to shop owners or stop at little bistros and meet Parisians. Visiting this way lets tourists see more of the real life of the city, rather than just the big tourist attractions. Many travel companies now offer bicycle tours, with guides who lead riders to interesting sites. For those adventurous travellers, renting a bike (and buying a map!) is a great way to find the truly out-of-the-way places. Of course, no visitor to Paris should miss attractions like the Louvre or Eiffel Tower, but only a bike tour will afford a closer view of real Paris life.

Scientists can even point to various locations in the brain that seem to control functions, like the ability to speak or to move one side of the body. This model becomes tricky, though, when one part of the brain receives an injury, causing a patient to lose some of those functions. In recent years, doctors and researchers have been astonished to see how often patients can regain lost abilities, as though the skills were gradually “rerouted” and controlled by different parts of their brains. Obviously, scientists have only just begun to understand the workings and complex connections of the human brain.

Regardless of how we spend our time, there are only 24 hours in a day. In order to do well later in life, students must develop sound time-management skills early in their academic careers. The first step is to get enough sleep at night. Students are less able to accomplish anything if they’re just too tired. But then they need to set priorities. Is one assignment due tomorrow, while another is due next week? Do tomorrow’s assignment first. It’s useful to create a schedule of upcoming tasks a few days ahead of time, and then stick to it. Each evening, the student can create a to-do list to accomplish the next day. By staying on top of school work this way, students will develop time-management skills they can use in their jobs, and even use to manage a family schedule.

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