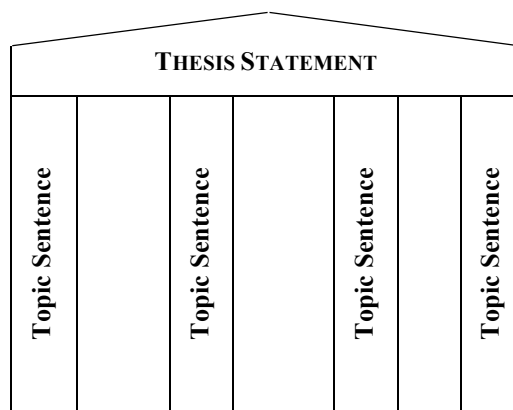


Creating Topic Sentences

Just as the thesis statement tells the main argument of your essay, topic sentences state the main idea of the individual body paragraphs that support your thesis.

The Roof and Pillar Analogy

One way to think about a topic sentence visually is through the roof and pillar analogy. The thesis statement covers the overall argument/primary point of the paper and is supported by the topic sentences, which give the main points and evidence needed to prove or develop the thesis.



Developing Topic Sentences for Your Project

Think of the topic sentence as a small-scale thesis for a paragraph or section; it should cover a small point that helps you build to your project's overall thesis. Draft and refine topic sentences just as you would a thesis; topic sentences are essential to helping you build well-organized and well-developed paragraphs. Use the following checklist to help you refine drafts of your topic sentence. You can print this page and check them off as you go!

- ☐ The topic sentence clearly supports my overall thesis.
- ☐ The topic sentence transitions from my previous paragraph or section OR indicates a relationship between this topic and one before it.
- ☐ The topic sentence clearly identifies the point I'm addressing in the paragraph OR shows the reader that the argument is preparing to change directions (sometimes called **signposting**).
- ☐ The topic covers a single topic within the **scope** of my thesis.

Want to know more? Try these handouts:

- [Transitions in Writing and Speaking](#)
- [Thesis Statements](#)

Or, let the Writing Center help! Stop by LIB 362 or visit us online at mtsu.mywconline.com to schedule an appointment.