

Attributes of an Effective Topic Sentence

- **Confirms or supports an essay's thesis statement**
- Identifies the main idea of the paragraph
- States the point the writer wishes to make about that subject
- Is a point (or argument) that supports your thesis (NOT THE THESIS ITSELF)
- Is not universal, rather it is specific to the novel
- Is never a fact
- Is the first or second sentence of the paragraph
- Is present in EVERY paragraph
- Is not too general or too specific - general enough to show the paragraph's main idea instead of just one of its details; specific enough that the reader understands the main idea of the paragraph.
- Is supported by evidence (all quotes support the Topic Sentence, which in turn supports the thesis)
- Is developed by the supporting details in the paragraph (the sentences other than the topic sentence).
- Never announces what it will do.
- Is a complete sentence.
- Does not parrot the thesis statement but supports it.
- If fiction, is in present tense (literature is a living thing)
- Includes a **subject** (racism) and a **controlling idea** (an attitude or an opinion)
- Is a type of mini thesis for the paragraph

Sample Topic Sentences Statements

Directions: For each topic sentence below, note if it is:

- Effective
- Ineffective
- Or somewhere in-between.

Also, using the guidelines of a TS on the previous page, please tell me the specific reasons

- The TS IS effective
 - The TS IS NOT effective
 - Or why it is in-between. Use as many reasons as apply.
1. This topic sentence is about racism.
 2. TJ has several reasons for telling his story, and the first reason is racism.
 3. Storytelling has been practiced throughout the ages.
 4. Everyone has been a victim of racism once in their lives.
 5. Everything a person fears about racism.
 6. *Whale Talk* is a difficult book. It presents challenging subjects and harsh languages; this is the reason it has been banned so often in public schools.
 7. Racism is everywhere in the novel.
 8. There's a lot going on in this novel, which is why TJ relates his story.
 9. Making a story last is complicated. To do this you have to think, will people still be around in 20, 50, even 100 years from now still be reading it
 10. Racism at Cutter High School is the main reason TJ tells his story.