

Writing Paragraph Responses

Topic Sentences

1. Should direct the reader's attention to the subject or topic of your paragraph
2. On tests and exams the subject is determined by the question you are being asked—make sure you actually answer the question.
3. Topic sentences are usually the first sentences in paragraphs and usually define the topic and main idea of the paragraph
4. The thesis sentence is usually the last sentence in the introduction. It should clearly state the thesis (theme/opinion/main point) of your response

Here are some ways to capture the reader's attention:

- a. Give an attention grabbing reaction to the term/topic/question
 - The old saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" is the perfect way to describe how the main idea is revealed this photo essay.
 - "Woulda, coulda, shoulda," that's how the people in this article reacted when they realized....
- b. You may also need to define the term or take a position on the subject
 - The media elements in this selection were very effective because...
 - The main idea in this selection is... The purpose of this selection is...
 - The title and photographs in this article supported this by...

Supporting Details

1. Supports your main idea or opinion with evidence from the text
2. Paraphrase/Summarize the ideas in the text
3. Ideas (paraphrases, quotations, etc.) must be introduced, discussed, and explained

Concluding sentence

1. Conclude with a sentence or two that summarizes the main point of the paragraph.
2. Effective writers usually conclude paragraphs with an interesting final point or thought about the main topic or subject of the paragraph.
3. Avoid introducing ideas or concepts not directly related to the ideas discussed in your paragraph.

Note: If a question asks for two (2) examples, make sure you completely discuss both examples. Take the time to read each question very carefully, if you don't understand a question—ask your teacher to help you out.