**Topic Sentence Development Station**

**STEP ONE**: enjoy this video from Shmoop <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nx2-PcBzZjo&t=2s>

## STEP TWO: Read the following information about topic sentences with examples of both good and bad ones.

## Klazema, April. “Examples of Topic Sentences and How To Write Them.” *Udemy Blog*. 05 Mar. 2014. Web. 16 Apr. 2017.

## What is the Topic Sentence?

The topic sentence is a sentence that is used at the beginning of a paragraph to tell the reader what it is that you are going to be talking about in that paragraph. It’s very similar to the thesis statement; Shmoop even calls topic sentences “mini thesis”.

The topic sentence is important because it leads the reader to the points of your essay without causing confusion. It also helps to prevent any miscommunication on your part.

Here are a few qualities that make for a good topic sentence:

* Brevity: Long, rambling sentences can be confusing. Don’t pack your topic sentence too full of details. That’s what the rest of the paragraph is for.
* Clarity: Likewise, don’t beat around the bush. Say exactly what you want to say. Try not to engage in wordplay and don’t speak in vague terms.
* Precision: Don’t be too broad when introducing the topic that you’re going to discuss. Not only is that a bland approach, it is also unhelpful to readers.

On the other hand, there are a few things that make for a bad topic sentence. Be sure that you aren’t using these kinds of sentences to introduce your paragraphs, as they are unhelpful to readers and do little to help you get your point across.

* Don’t use facts as topic sentences. Remember, you are using the topic sentence to introduce a point you are trying to make, or your opinion.
* Don’t just talk about the “what” – talk about the “why” as well. That is, don’t just think about the effect, but it’s cause.
* Don’t say “I am going to tell you…” or I am going to speak about…” when introducing a topic.

## Good Vs. Bad Topic Sentences

Now that you know a little about the basics of writing good topic sentences (and how you can start to avoid writing bad ones), let’s take a look at some examples of each.

Bad: *Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809.*

Why isn’t this a good topic sentence? First and foremost, it tells the reader very little about what you are going to say. Not only that, but you are not using this valuable space in your paragraph to make a real point.

Good: *Abraham Lincoln, born in 1809, was one of the most influential politicians in history.*

With this topic sentence, you are making a strong point, which you will ideally back up with plenty of facts and good information. The reader also knows what to expect when you use this kind of statement.

Bad: *I am going to discuss the Battle of Gettysburg.*

While you are telling the reader what the topic is, you are still speaking in very broad terms with this kind of statement.

Good: *The Battle of Gettysburg, fought in 1863, was the turning point in the Civil War*.

You are making a strong point with this kind of statement, and narrowing down what you are going to talk about. In this case, you are discussing why the Battle of Gettysburg was such an important battle.

Bad: *The Civil War had lasting effects on the American South*.

With this topic sentence, you are saying what happened, but you are not saying why.

Good: *Because the Civil War was fought mostly on Southern soil, it had lasting effects on the region.*

With this topic sentence, you are describing a cause and an effect, and you can go into a little more detail in the following sentences

**STEP THREE**: Complete the topic sentence worksheet.

**STEP FOUR**: Complete Topic Sentence Practice worksheet.

