Topic Sentences are sentences that writers use to focus their ideas and express the main point of their paragraphs. A strong set of topic sentences will work together to support a thesis.

Practice using topic sentences to keep your ideas focused: Read the paragraph below: Find the topic sentence; can you find the irrelevant sentence?

Learning a second language can provide a deeper understanding of a foreign culture. Social habits that may not make sense to most outsiders might start to make more sense after a few vocabulary lessons. For example, I always wondered by my Dutch cousins rarely said “you’re welcome” after I said “thank you”. My cousin can speak English but sometimes makes mistakes. At first I thought he was being rude, but when I learned more about his language I realized that they don’t use “you’re welcome” the same way we do: in response to “thank you”. They actually say something that translates to “If you please” when they offer you something. This is one of the first things I learned about Dutch culture when I started to learn their language and it gave me a different perspective on the roles of host and guest since in Dutch the onus to be polite is on the host, and not the guest as it seems to be in English.

Read the following sentences. As you read complete the following tasks:

A. Identify correct Topic Sentences (OK)
B. Identify and correct sentences which are too broad or too narrow (TB/TN)
C. Identify and correct sentences which announce the topic (A)
D. Identify and correct incomplete ideas (INC)

1. ______ Why coping is an important aspect of recovery will be shown in the following paragraphs.
2. ______ Mr. X has five full-grown children.
3. ______ Quitting smoking may improve your singing voice.
4. ______ This paragraph outlines the negative effects of daylight savings on your health.
5. ______ Steven takes vitamin C every morning.
6. ______ This paragraph concerns how helmets should be worn by all hockey players.
7. ______ Drug use in Canada is a controversial issue.
8. ______ The greatest thing about Toronto is the night life.
9. ______ How I learned to cook healthier food.
10. ______ The politician’s earnest answers made the audience feel at ease.

A good topic sentence of a paragraph contains two elements: the **topic** and the **controlling idea**.

- **The Topic** = The subject of the paragraph
- **The Controlling Idea** = limits the topic, shows the reader how the writer will limit the topic

Adjusting to Canadian winters has been a real challenge for me
- **Topic**: Adjusting to Canadian Winters
- **Controlling Idea**: has been a real challenge for me

Now it is your turn! Look at the following TOPICS. They are VERY broad. Decide how to limit them by writing a topic sentence with a CLEAR controlling idea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Limited topic</th>
<th>Controlling idea</th>
<th>Topic Sentence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Summer</strong></td>
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<td>2. <strong>Learning English</strong></td>
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<td>3. <strong>Sports</strong></td>
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<td>4. <strong>Food</strong></td>
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<td>5. <strong>Smoking</strong></td>
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