## TOpic <br> S

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FOR $3^{P D}$ - $6^{T H}$ Grades The TEACHER next door

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Thanks!
Jenn


## teacher notes:

## TOPIC SENTENCES

1. When starting to work on paragraph construction, first we go over the main parts of the paragraph: Topic Sentence, "Star Ideas" (usually three), Details to support each Star Idea, and the Conclusion Sentence.
I have the kids color code a great deal, using paragraphs I've created or ones that previous students have crafted successfully (I use the Paragraph Color Coding and Outlining packet). The Topic Sentence and Conclusion sentences are highlighted in green, Star ideas are yellow and Details are red, following the Step Up to Writing Model. This color coding reinforces the concept of a paragraph and gives them a basic "recipe" for it. I also have the kids do a T-chart outline on the back of each color coded paragraph (notes only, not sentences) to help them further recognize the organization that went into writing the paragraph.
2. Next, I spend a day or two on each type of topic sentence.
Although there are many ways you can create a topic sentence, I feel that if kids at grades 3 - 5 (and even higher) can master a basic set of five topic sentences and use them with ease, this puts them in good stead as a growing writer. You can use the Topic Sentences at a Glance page as teacher reference. Then, I introduce the types of topic sentences in the following order: List Statements, Power Number, Two Nouns and Two Commas, Occasion Position, and Get Their Attention. We go over examples together, the kids write a sentence on their whiteboards as I give them a topic. We also discuss how there are lots of "right" answers when it comes to writing.
3. After all five of the topic sentences have been presented, the review begins.
The first review day, I would recommend using the Topic Sentences to Discuss as a Class worksheet. You can project this on the Smart Board, if you have one, and kids can use whiteboards, to write the abbreviation for the topic sentence type, after each sentence is read. There are two other review pages (one for each of two days) and I like to have kids work on these with a partner, so they can discuss answers. I recommend correcting these together, so kids get instant feedback to see if they are on the right track.
The last review is a really fun one. I start by telling (not reading) students the story of the accidental creation of Tollhouse cookies (see the Tollhouse page for details). Then, I actually pass out chocolate chip cookies for the kids to enjoy! Of course, you have to be aware of food allergies in your class and need to follow school policies about foods in the classroom, but if you're able to do this, the kids love it! After the story and the cookies (if you're able), the kids then do the worksheet alone or with a friend and we correct it together.

In 1930, Ruth Wakefield, and her husband Ken, owned the Toll House Inn in Massachusetts. It was a bed and breakfast where tired travelers would stop to sleep and to get a good meal. It was called the Toll House Inn because it was located near a toll road, where cars would have to pay a fee to travel on that road.

One day, Ruth decided to make "Butter Drop Do" cookies, which were similar to a vanilla or sugar type cookie that were made originally in the Colonial Days. Since she had a Nestle chocolate bar, she decided that she would chop it into tiny pieces and add it to the dough. There were no chocolate chips in those days, but Ruth thought that perhaps the chocolate would melt into the dough, making it more like a chocolate cookie. Instead, the bits of chocolate softened but held their shape and the chocolate chip cookie was born!

The cookie was such a big hit at the Inn that the recipe was soon published in the Boston Newspaper, as well as other newspapers in the New England Area. Eventually, the recipe was printed on the back of Nestle chocolate bars with the understanding that Ruth would be able to have all of the chocolate that she wanted, for free, for the rest of her life, so she could continue to make her delicious cookies. In 1939, Nestle semi-sweet chocolate chips were officially sold.


# Lists the three 

star ideas, to
tell exactly
what the

## paragraph will be about

# Uses number words like 

many, several,
three, a few...
to present the
general topic


$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Uses although, } \\
& \text { even though, } \\
& \text { when... with an } \\
& \text { occasion, and } \\
& \text { ends with the } \\
& \text { writer's position } \\
& \text { on it }
\end{aligned}
$$



## 

There are lots of different types of topic sentences. Here are five of them:

1. List Statements

A list statement tells the reader exactly what the paragraph will be about by listing the three star ideas.
Examples:
A. My favorite sports include soccer, football, and basketball.
B. When it's summer time, I like to go swimming, ride my bike, and play with my friends.
2. Power Number Statements

Power Number Statements do not tell the readers each of the star ideas but use number words (many, few, a number of, four...) to present the general topic.
Examples:
A. There are several things you can do to become a better writer.
B. In order to climb Mt. Whitney, you need to know three safety rules.

## 3. Two Nouns and Two Commas

Two Nouns and Two Commas always starts with a noun (a person, place, or thing), describes it, and then makes a statement about it. The description part of the sentence is surrounded by commas (one before the description, and one after it).
Examples:
A. Roald Amundsen, an explorer, was the first to find the Northwest Passage.
B. Folsom, a suburb of Sacramento, is a great place for families.

## 4. Occasion Position

Occasion Position topic sentences start with an occasion (a dependent clause) and use words like when, whenever, although, even though, and they end with the writer's position on the topic (an independent clause).
Examples:
A. Whenever we celebrate the holidays, we always include some special traditions.
B. Even though writing a report is a lot of work, you do learn a lot from the process.
5. Get Their Attention

These topic sentences try to grab the reader's attention by making a statement that is thought provoking, controversial, or interesting.
Examples:
A. The Italian Deli serves the best pastrami sandwiches in the country.
B. Gum chewing should be illegal!

## TOPIC SENTENCES:


Name: $\qquad$
A common way to start a paragraph is to use a topic sentence called a "list statement". List statements tell the reader exactly which topics will be covered in the paragraph.
You can use a list of words: When we go camping, we enjoy fishing, hiking, and exploring.
You can use a list of phrases: Getting ready for the Olympics takes strong determination, good self-discipline and a healthy work ethic.
You can use a list of dependent clauses: When I won the spelling bee, when I saw my newborn baby brother, and when I met my best friend for the first time, I realized that this year was going to be my best yet.
Finish these list statements:

1. Plants need $\qquad$ , $\qquad$ and $\qquad$
2. My Aunt and Uncle enjoy vacationing in $\qquad$ ,
$\qquad$ , and $\qquad$ .
3. When I get ready in the morning, I make sure to $\qquad$ ,
, and $\qquad$
4. When $\qquad$ , when $\qquad$ and when $\qquad$
happened, I knew that it was going to be the worst day ever!
5. My favorite sports include $\qquad$ , $\qquad$ and $\qquad$
Now create your own list statements:
6. $\qquad$
7. $\qquad$
8. $\qquad$


## TOPIC SENTENCES: <br> Two Nouns <br> ,- ${ }^{-1}$ and Two Commas

Name: $\qquad$
One way to add variety to your topic sentences is to use Two Nouns and Two Commas. These sentences, also called appositives, start with a noun, and are followed by a description. Make sure when writing Two Nouns and Two Commas that you place a comma before and after the description of the noun.
Here are a few examples:
A. Mrs. Miller, our principal, is known for wearing fancy high heeled shoes.
B. Your lungs, an important part of the respiratory system, can be damaged by smoking.
C. The tomato, which is actually classified as a fruit, is a versatile food.
Finish these Two Nouns and Two Commas topic sentences:

1. Chess, a $\qquad$ of strategy, is very complex.
2. Logorrhea, or talking excessively, is a problem that $\qquad$ sometimes face in classrooms.
3. Cricket, a game $\qquad$ to baseball, is popular in India.
4. Philadelphia, home of the Liberty $\qquad$ , has many historical sites to see.
5. Synonyms, words that mean the $\qquad$ thing, can be found in a thesaurus.
Now create your own Two Nouns and Two Commas topic sentences: 7. $\qquad$
6. $\qquad$
7. $\qquad$

## TOPIC <br> sentences Occasion Position

Name: $\qquad$
Occasion Position Topic Sentences are a great way to start a paragraph. These sentences start with an occasion, which is the "set up" part of the sentence and is a dependent clause. The second part of the sentence is the position and tells the reader what you plan to prove or explain. The position is an independent clause. Make sure to place a comma between the occasion and the position in your topic sentence.

Circle the occasion and underline the position in the following sentences:

1. Whenever I need a snack, I try to choose something that is healthy for me.
2. Although climbing Mt. Everest is a dangerous trip, the climber was determined to accomplish it.
3. After making the soccer team, she decided to continue to practice her skills.

Finish these Occasion Position Topic Sentences:
4. Even though bicycle helmets are sometimes uncomfortable, all bicyclists should them.
5. Before you use chemicals to do a $\qquad$ experiment, it is important to learn the proper way to dispose of them.
6. If you are lucky enough to have a dog for a $\qquad$ , make sure to take good care of him.

Now create your own Occasion Position topic sentences: Use these words/phrases to help you get started.

| after | as soon as | eventhough | whenever | unless |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| although | wherever | while | in order to | even if | as long as

7. $\qquad$
8. $\qquad$
9. $\qquad$

## TOPIC <br> Name: <br> $\qquad$ <br> 

Get Their Attention topic sentences are declarative statements. These sentences usually tell one's opinion and include a strong verb or action word.

Here are a few examples:
A. The pancakes at Grandma's Diner on Main Street are the best!
B. Our soccer team was undefeated this season!
C. The salaries of fast food workers should be increased.

Finish these Get Their Attention topic sentences:


1. Coffee loving adults usually love to go to $\qquad$
2. The downtown movie theatre serves the most delicious $\qquad$
3. Reciting the Preamble to the Constitution impressed my $\qquad$
4. The most interesting fish in the $\qquad$ is the blob fish.
5. The westward bound $\qquad$ faced tremendous hardships.
6. Surfers are sometimes viewed as unintelligent because of the way they $\qquad$ Now create your own Get Their Attention topic sentences:
7. $\qquad$
8. $\qquad$
9. $\qquad$

## TOPIO Sentences

Occasion Position $=O P$
Power Number = \# Get Their Attention = GTA

List Statement $=L$
Two Nouns and Two Commas $=2 \& 2$

1. Visitors to Egypt will want to see five amazing sights.
2. The most delicious pizza can be found at Chicago Fire.
3. My room has a study area, a play area, and a sleep area.
4. In the summer, we swim every day.
5. I enjoy doing three types of sports.
6. When I ran a marathon, my family cheered me on.
7. George Washington, our first president, loved animals.
8. Star Wars ranks as one of the all-time best science fiction movies!
9. Although I was sick, I was still able to watch T.V.
10. Christopher Columbus, an explorer, sailed across the Atlantic.
11. At Marie Calendars, there are a variety of pies to choose from.
12. Football players might be offensive, defensive, or on special teams.
13. Even if you're afraid of heights, skydiving is an exciting sport.
14. My parrot says the most interesting phrases!
15. My brother loves spaghetti, French bread, and salad.

Name: $\qquad$
Write one of the following abbreviations for each type of topic sentence:
Occasion/Position = O/P
Power Number Statements = \#
Get Their Attention = GTA
$\qquad$ Marco Polo, an early explorer, traveled to Asia.
16. $\qquad$ The best cinnamon rolls can be found at Grandma's Café.
17. $\qquad$ Jackson School recess areas include the blacktop, the play-structure, and the field.
$\qquad$ In the winter, I enjoy doing three outdoor activities at Lake Tahoe.
18. $\qquad$ When I decided to run for student council, my principal gave me some good advice.
19. ___ Squanto, an American Indian, helped the pilgrims learn to plant corn.
$\qquad$ The Wizard of Oz had some exciting special effects for a movie at that time.
20. Although I was unable to go to the King's game, I enjoyed spending time with my Grandpa.
21. ___ Tourists traveling to Japan will want to visit four interesting sights.
22. ___ At the Folsom Bakery, there are plenty of desserts to choose from.
23. __ Soccer players include a goalie, defenders, midfielders and forwards.
$\qquad$ Even if you are nervous, zip lining is an activity you'll want to try.
24. $\qquad$ My dog is the smartest dog in the world!
25. $\qquad$ My family loves to have popcorn, M\&Ms, and Dr. Pepper at the movies.
26. $\qquad$ Before you learn to drive, you need to know the rules of the road.

## TOPIC SENTENCE Identification

Name: $\qquad$
Write one of the following abbreviations for each type of topic sentence:
Occasion/Position $=O / P \quad$ Two Nouns and Two Commas $=2 \& 2$
Power Number Statements = \# List Statements $=L$
Get Their Attention = GTA

1. $\qquad$ Grandma's cinnamon rolls are the best in the world!
2. $\qquad$ There are many types of houses in our neighborhood.
3. $\qquad$ Even when I'm tired, I try to exercise to give myself an energy boost.
4. $\qquad$ San Francisco, the city by the bay, is an exciting place to visit.
5. $\qquad$ He loves to play baseball, tennis, and golf.
6. $\qquad$ The fourth graders learned several ways to make a shelter.
7. $\qquad$ Tulips, a flower grown from a bulb, bloom in the springtime.
8. $\qquad$ Rick's amazing hair tonic can make even the most frizzy hair behave!
9. $\qquad$ During the summer, I like to swim, ride my bike, and go to my friend's house.
10. $\qquad$ Even though it was rainy, we found fun things to do inside.
11. $\qquad$ After school, I like to do my homework first and then play.
12. $\qquad$ She likes a number of clothing stores.
13. $\qquad$ El Torito, a Mexican restaurant, has delicious enchiladas.
14. $\qquad$ We learned a number of good Spanish phrases in our language class.
15. $\qquad$ Spaghetti, lasagna, and ravioli are my favorite Italian dishes.
When you start to write a paragraph, you need to choose a good topic sentence. The topic sentence tells what the paragraph will be about. All the sentences below were written about chocolate chip cookies. Match the topic sentences to their types:

List Statement $=L$
Power Number = \#
Occasion Position $=O / P$
Two Nouns and Two Commas $=2 \& 2$ Get Their Attention = GTA

$\qquad$ 2. Whenever you eat chocolate chip cookies, you should drink a glass of cold milk to go with it.
$\qquad$ 3. There are three things I like best about chocolate chip cookies.
$\qquad$ 4. Butter, sugar, and flour are some of the main ingredients in chocolate chip cookies.
$\qquad$ 5. Mrs. Field's cookies are delectable!
$\qquad$ 6. Even though there are many types of cookies, chocolate chip cookies are my favorite.
$\qquad$ 7. The most delicious chocolate chip cookies are fresh from the oven.
$\qquad$ 8. Famous Amos, a businessman from Los Angeles, owns his own cookie making company.
$\qquad$ 9. Chocolate chip cookies can be homemade, bought in a bakery, or purchased in a package from the grocery store.
$\qquad$ 10. Chocolate chip cookies may be made in many different ways.


# Power <br> Number 

## Two Noun and Two

 commas

Get Their Attention車


Soccer is the most exciting sport in the world!

El Dorado Hills, a suburb of
Sacramento, is a wonderful place to live.

## (4)

Even though learning to ski is hard work, it's a lot of fun once you master it.

In the summer, I enjoy doing three activities.
(6)

Whenever I need help, my mom is always there for me.

The subjects I like? best include
reading, writing, art, and music.

(1)(3)

Strawberries, bananas, and mangoes make a delicious smoothie.

Former President Bush, a republican from Texas, has two daughters.

Snickers, Kit Kat, and Take Five are my favorite candy bars.
(1)(5)

You can always count on my dad to help with homework.

There are four ways to make homemade clay.



Name

Pretend you are writing a paragraph about $\qquad$
Write a different topic sentence for each sentence type:

1. List Statement: $\qquad$

## TOPIO Sentences

Occasion Position $=O P$
Power Number = \# Get Their Attention $=$ GTA

List Statement $=L$
Two Nouns and Two Commas $=2 \& 2$

1. Visitors to Egypt will want to see five amazing sights. \#
2. The most delicious pizza can be found at Chicago Fire. GTA
3. My room has a study area, a play area, and a sleep area. L
4. In the summer, we swim every day. O/P
5. I enjoy doing three types of sports. \#
6. When I ran a marathon, my family cheered me on. $O / P$
7. George Washington, our first president, loved animals. $2 \& 2$
8. Star Wars ranks as one of the all-time best science fiction movies! GTA
9. Although I was sick, I was still able to watch T.V. O/P
10. Christopher Columbus, an explorer, sailed across the Atlantic. $2 \& 2$
11. At Marie Calendars, there are a variety of pies to choose from. $O / P$ or \#
12. Football players might be offensive, defensive, or on special teams. $L$
13. Even if you're afraid of heights, skydiving is an exciting sport. $O / P$
14. My parrot says the most interesting phrases! GTA
15. My brother loves spaghetti, French bread, and salad. L
年
16. _2 \& 2_ Marco Polo, an early explorer, traveled to Asia.
17. _GTA_ The best cinnamon rolls can be found at Grandma's Café.
18. _L_ Jackson School recess areas include the blacktop, the play-structure, and the field.
19. _\#_ In the winter, I enjoy doing three outdoor activities at Lake Tahoe.
20. _O/P_ When I decided to run for student council, my principal gave me some good advice.
21. _2 \& 2_ Squanto, an American Indian, helped the pilgrims learn to plant corn.
22. _\#_ The Wizard of Oz had some exciting special effects for a movie at that time.
23. _O/P_ Although I was unable to go to the King's game, I enjoyed spending time with my Grandpa.
24. _\#_ Tourists traveling to Japan will want to visit four interesting sights.
25. _\#_ At the Folsom Bakery, there are plenty of desserts to choose from.
26. _ L_ Soccer players include a goalie, defenders, midfielders and forwards.
27. _O/P_Even if you are nervous, zip lining is an activity you'll want to try.
28. _GTA_ My dog is the smartest dog in the world!
29. _L_ My family loves to have popcorn, M\&Ms, and Dr. Pepper at the movies.
30. _O/P_ Before you learn to drive, you need to know the rules of the road.

## TOPIC <br> SENTENCE Identification

Write one of the following abbreviations for each type of topic sentence:
Occasion/Position = O/P Two Nouns and Two Commas $=2 \& 2$
Power Number Statements = \# List Statements $=L$
Get Their Attention $=$ GTA

1. _GTA_ Grandma's cinnamon rolls are the best in the world!
2. _\#_ There are many types of houses in our neighborhood.

3. _O/P_ Even when I'm tired, I try to exercise to give myself an energy boost.
4. _2 \& 2_ San Francisco, the city by the bay, is an exciting place to visit.
5. _ L_ He loves to play baseball, tennis, and golf.
6. _\#_ The fourth graders learned several ways to make a shelter.
7. _2 \& 2_ Tulips, a flower grown from a bulb, bloom in the springtime.
8. _GTA_ Rick's amazing hair tonic can make even the most frizzy hair behave!
9. _O/P and $L_{\text {_ }}$ During the summer, I like to swim, ride my bike, and go to my friend's house.
10. _O/P_ Even though it was rainy, we found fun things to do inside.
11. _O/P__ After school, I like to do my homework first and then play.
12. _\#_ She likes a number of clothing stores.
13. _2 \& 2_ El Torito, a Mexican restaurant, has delicious enchiladas.
14. _\#_ We learned a number of good Spanish phrases in our language class.
15. _ L_ Spaghetti, lasagna, and ravioli are my favorite Italian dishes.

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| :---: |
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|  |
|  |

When you start to write a paragraph, you need to choose a good topic sentence. The topic sentence tells what the paragraph will be about. All the sentences below were written about chocolate chip cookies. Match the topic sentences to their types:

> List Statement $=L$
> Power Number $=\#$
> Occasion Position $=O / P$
Two Nouns and Two Commas $=2 \& 2$ Get Their Attention = GTA

_2 \& 2_1. Chocolate chip cookies, invented by an American woman, are one of the most popular cookies in the world.
_O/P_2. Whenever you eat chocolate chip cookies, you should drink a glass of cold milk to go with it.
\#_3. There are three things I like best about chocolate chip cookies.
__L__4. Butter, sugar, and flour are some of the main ingredients in chocolate chip cookies.
_GTA_5. Mrs. Field's cookies are delectable!
_O/P_6. Even though there are many types of cookies, chocolate chip cookies are my favorite.
_GTA_7. The most delicious chocolate chip cookies are fresh from the oven.
_O/P_8. Famous Amos, a businessman from Los Angeles, owns his own cookie making company.
_L_9. Chocolate chip cookies can be homemade, bought in a bakery, or purchased in a package from the grocery store.
\#_10. Chocolate chip cookies may be made in many different ways.

## TOPic Sentence cARD GAME KEy

These abbreviations are used for the topic sentence types:

Occasion/Position = O/P
Power Number Statements = \#
Get Their Attention = GTA

1. 2 \& 2

List Statements $=L$
Two Nouns and Two Commas $=2 \& 2$
2. GTA
3. $2 \& 2$
4. O/P
5. $O / P$
6. $O / P$
7. $O / P$
8. L
9. \#
10. GTA
11. $2 \& 2$
12. $L$
13. L
14. O/P
15. GTA
16. \#
17. O/P
18. $2 \& 2$
19. O/P
20. \#
21. L
22. O/P
23. L
24. GTA
25. $2 \& 2$
26. GTA
27. O/P
28. $O / P$
29. L
30. GTA
31. $2 \& 2$
32. $2 \& 2$
33. L
34. GTA
35. GTA
36. 2 \& 2

