

# TOPIC SENTENCES

(Occasion/position statement)

An **occasion** is the first part of the topic sentence. The occasion introduces your **reason for writing**. An occasion can be any event, problem, idea, solution or circumstance that gives you **reason** to write.

The **position** states what you plan to **prove or explain** in your paragraph.

An **occasion/position statement** can be a complex sentence and can begin with one of these subordinate conjunctions.

## START WITH...

**If**  
**After**  
**Since**  
**Before**  
**So that**  
**Whenever**  
**As long as**

**In order that (to)**  
**Even though**  
**Although**  
**Unless**  
**While**  
**When**  
**Even**  
**As if**

**As**  
**Until**  
**Where**  
**Though**  
**Even if**  
**Because**  
**Wherever**  
**As soon as**

## EXAMPLES:

*Although my family and I have taken many wonderful vacations, none was more fun and exciting than our camping trip to the Grand Canyon.*

*Before you make the decision to light up a cigarette, consider the problems caused by smoking.*

*Even though bike helmets are sometimes unfashionable and uncomfortable, all cyclists should wear them.*

*If students use chemicals to do science experiments, it is important that they learn the proper way to dispose of them.*

# TRANSITION WORDS

•In an **accordion paragraph** you will need a transition each time you introduce a new reason/detail/fact.

•Use the **transition sets** below when you write a paragraph. Words in these sets may be mixed. **Vary** and **bury** them.

•Read your paragraph aloud. This way you will know if you have selected a transition that fits and makes sense.

## Some Common Transition Sets:

first • second • third  
one • another • next  
first of all • also  
first • then  
at first • after  
one • equally important  
the first • the second  
one • another • last

first • in addition • finally  
first • also • besides  
one • the other  
the first • a second  
one example • another example  
a good example • a better example  
an important • an equally important

## More Advanced Transition Sets:

a good • a better • the best  
to begin • then • consequently  
it started when • as a result • then • therefore  
at the beginning • then • following this • finally  
one way • another way • a final method  
one • one other • along with • last  
in the first place • after that • later on • at last  
one important • another important • the most important  
initially • then • after that  
a bad • a worse • the worst  
as soon as • next • later • in the end  
to begin • at the same time • finally  
first of all • besides • in addition  
to start • furthermore • additionally • last  
first • along with • likewise

# CONCLUSIONS

## What to do:

- **Restate** your position; remind the reader of your topic.
- Use **key words** from your topic sentence.
- **Summarize** your paragraph, **convince** the readers of your position, **challenge** them to think about the issue, or **encourage** them to take action.

## What to avoid:

- Introducing a new topic.
- Phrases such as...

*-as I have said*  
*-as I proved*  
*-as you can see*

## Helpful Words and Phrases:

in fact  
obviously  
clearly  
certainly  
in conclusion  
truly  
definitely  
surely  
to sum up  
all in all

# FLEXIBILITY

Paragraphs may be any length. Below are sample paragraphs that illustrate the flexibility of the accordion paragraph. You may want to experiment with different lengths. Remember you may vary the number of reasons/details/facts or explains in any paragraph.



### (6) Six Sentence Paragraph

1. Topic Sentence
2. Reason/detail/fact
3. Explain
4. Reason/detail/fact
5. Explain
6. Conclusion

### (7) Seven Sentence Paragraph

1. Topic Sentence
2. Reason/detail/fact
3. Explain
4. Reason/detail/fact
5. Explain
6. Explain
7. Conclusion

### (8) Eight Sentence Paragraph

1. Topic Sentence
2. Reason/detail/fact
3. Explain
4. Reason/detail/fact
5. Explain
6. Reason/detail/fact
7. Explain
8. Conclusion

### (9) Nine Sentence Paragraph

1. Topic Sentence
2. Reason/detail/fact
3. Explain
4. Explain
5. Reason/detail/fact
6. Explain
7. Explain
8. Explain
9. Conclusion

### (10) Ten Sentence Paragraph

1. Topic Sentence
2. Reason/detail/fact
3. Explain
4. Explain
5. Explain
6. Reason/detail/fact
7. Explain
8. Explain
9. Explain
10. Conclusion

*Step Up to Writing* by Maureen Auman  
<http://www.sopriswest.com>