

Topic sentences

- A paragraph is a set of sentences that all relate to one main idea.
- The topic sentence is the sentence that tells that main idea.
- The first sentence of the paragraph is usually the topic sentence.

Specific focus

- The topic sentence must be specific and focused.
 - The topic sentence tells the reader what the paragraph is about.
 - The idea must be specific enough so that you can *completely explain* it in one paragraph.
 - The idea must be big enough so that you can say several interesting things about it.

Specific focus

- Examples: These are not specific enough.
I will write about Harry Potter.

China is in Asia.

I like chocolate.

I learned something today.

Specific focus

- Examples: These are too narrow.
China's population is 1,298,847,624 people.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone was published on June 26th, 1997.

Specific focus

- Examples: These are good, clear, and specific.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone is a novel about a young wizard who attends a magic academy.

There are three main steps required to produce chocolate from cacao.

Forastero, criollo, and trinitario are the three types of cacao beans used to make chocolate.

How specific should I be?

- Your topic sentence should be specific enough so that you can completely explain the main idea in *about* 4 to 12 sentences.
- It should be general enough so that you can say *at least* two interesting things.
- (These are only approximate suggestions, but they are a good way to start practicing.)

Topic + Focus pattern

- First think about the general idea you will write about. This is your *topic*.
- Next, decide what specific things you want to say about the topic. This is your *focus*.

TOPIC

FOCUS

types

Cacao beans

how to process them

Topic + Focus pattern

TOPIC

FOCUS

Cacao beans

types

There are three main types of cacao beans.

1. Forastero is the most common.
2. Criollo is the most expensive.
3. Trinitario is a mix of forastero and criollo.

Topic + Focus pattern

TOPIC

FOCUS

Cacao beans

how to process them

Processing cacao beans requires three steps.

1. Fermenting
2. Roasting
3. Grinding