



University of Tikrit

College of Education for Women

English Department

Subject: Writing in Paragraphs

1st year

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Identify topics and main ideas

Lecture 2

In this unit, we will learn

- identify topics and main ideas .
- combine sentences using *and* and *but* .
- learn how to use commas in sentences with *and* and *but*.
- practice writing paragraph .

Identify topics and main ideas

The topic sentence has two main parts:



Look at these topic sentences:

- The last CD I bought changed my life.

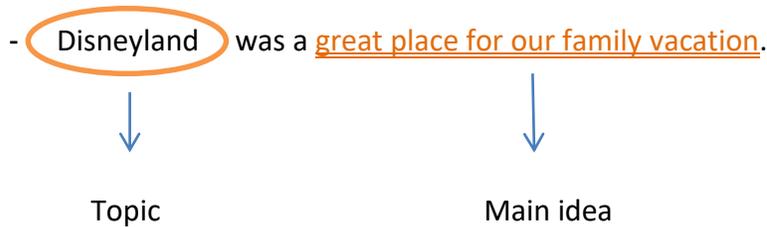
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Topic

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Main idea

- Reading books, such as the Harry Potter stories, can help students improve their English.

↓
Topic

↓
Main idea



A good topic sentence should include either of the following:

- **a one clear topic**

weak: *It's important to have friends, and also to do well in school.*

strong: *I don't think I will ever have a better friend than Heather.*

- **an opinion or idea about the topic**

weak: *I have been studying karate.*

strong: *studying karate has given me strength and self-confidence.*

A good topic sentence should not be:

- **too broad (too much to write about)**

weak: *Australia is an interesting country.*

strong: *On my visit to Australia, I saw many unusual animals.*

- **too narrow (not enough to write about / is just a fact)**

weak: *School starts at 8-30 a.m*

strong: *Getting ready for school in the morning is more difficult than any of my classes.*

Combine sentences using *and* and *but*

- Sentences about the same topic can often be combined with words like *and* and *but*.
- Use *and* to join similar ideas.
- Use *but* to show contrasting ideas: good / bad, easy / difficult, positive / negative.

Look at these examples:

- I sent my mother a birthday card. I called her.
I sent my mother a birthday card **and** called her.

- I like getting flowers. I don't like getting chocolates.
I like getting flowers, **but** I don't like getting chocolates.

- I didn't send my brother a birthday present. He didn't send me one.
I didn't send my brother a birthday present, **and** he didn't send me one.

Learn how to use commas in sentences with *and* and *but*

1- When you join two complete sentences with *but*, you must always use a comma before *but*:

- I didn't want to send her a present. I sent her one anyway.
I didn't want to send her a present , **but** I sent her one anyway.

2- When you join two complete sentences with *and* and the subjects of the sentences are both written, use a comma before *and*:

- Shopping in the mall is expensive. Parking is hard to find.
Shopping in the mall is expensive , **and** parking is hard to find.
(Shopping and Parking are both written.)

3- When you join two complete sentences and remove the subject of the second sentence, don't use a comma before *and*:

- These days people post paper cards. People e-mail electronic cards.
These days people post paper cards **and** e-mail electronic cards.
(The subject people is not written a second time.)

Practice writing paragraph

On a separate sheet of paper, write a topic sentence about A birthday present.

- Your paragraph should involve sentences with *and* and *but*
- Circle the topic and underline the main idea
- Circle the commas you used.