**Topic Sentences: Part I**

**Purpose:** Upon completion of this activity, students will understand and be able to identify the two parts of a topic sentence. **This DLA should take approximately 15 to 30 minutes to complete.**

1. Read the following information about topic sentences, and then print the second page to go over with an instructor in the WRC.

A topic sentence usually comes at the beginning of every paragraph, and it names the main idea of the upcoming paragraph as well as the writer’s assertion about the main idea. It is the promise that writers make to their readers that they are going to cover a certain topic and only that topic. A topic sentence can also be imagined as an umbrella that “covers” all the ideas in the paragraph.

A topic sentence can be broken down into two parts: the main idea and the writer’s opinion or assertion about that main idea. In the following topic sentences, the main idea is circled, and the opinion/assertion is underlined. **Note:** Once you have a main idea, you can go in many different directions with your paragraph. In the first one, the main idea “going to the beach” is combined with the opinion/assertion “can be a relaxing experience,” but the opinion/assertion could also have been “is a great hassle in the summer” or “is an inexpensive outing for a family.”

Going to the beach **can be a relaxing experience.**

The worst parts about **the new house** are that it’s badly made and horribly located.

The current economic crisis **was caused by the housing bubble.**

Even though **it’s economical, public transportation in Riverside** is not reliable.

2. Now, print out the second page of this DLA, and mark the topic sentences in the first section according to the directions.

3. Remember, you can ask questions at any point in this process. Write down your questions as you go along, or go and ask an instructor each time you have a question. This is a self-paced activity, so make it work for you.

4. Apply to your own writing: look over your own topic sentences in a paragraph you have written, and label the main idea and the opinion/assertion. Remember that the sentence shouldn’t include much more than JUST the main idea and the opinion/assertion. If you have questions about your own topic sentences, bring those assignments to a WRC instructor for part of your conference.

5. Finally, complete the exercises on the following page by adding your own main ideas or opinions/assertions to the incomplete topic sentences, and print that page to be signed by the instructor on duty.
1. Mark the following topic sentences by circling the main idea and underlining the opinion or assertion being made about that main idea. Note that the main idea does not always come first, and some information isn’t part of the main idea or the opinion/assertion.

   a. All jobs have their good parts and bad parts; Charlie’s job is mostly frustrating but sometimes rewarding.

   b. Although it can be a great place to adopt an animal, the pound is sometimes a dangerous place for the animals.

   c. Two advantageous habits for students are studying a little bit every day and getting a good night’s sleep every night.

   d. One of the most difficult tasks for a young adult is taking care of a sick relative.

   e. Even though the tax system is not perfect, we should not abandon the idea of the federal income tax.

2. Now fill in the missing parts of the following topic sentences, and mark your additions as main idea (MI) or opinion/assertion (O/A) on the line provided. Remember to keep an academic tone, and try to say something interesting and specific in your topic sentences.

   a. Paying taxes is __necessary for our community’s quality of life__.  ____O/A

   b. ______________________ is an important part of any daily routine.  ______

   c. One of the best benefits of being a student is ______________________.  ______

   d. Even though it can be a healthy habit, _____________ can be dangerous.  ______

   e. Celebrating birthdays with your friends ______________________.  ______

3. Write down any questions you may have about topic sentences, and bring those questions, this sheet, and any of your own topic sentences to the instructor on duty in the WRC.

4. Have the instructor go over your answers and sign this sheet when you are done discussing topic sentences.