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| ***SOME GUIDELINES FOR WRITING STRONG TOPIC SENTENCES:*** |

**A topic sentence must predict or promise what follows, so it cannot be a question. To orient the reader, you may use a question as the first sentence, with the topic sentence as the answer to that question.**

* 1. *Weak:* Should schools provide free computers for their students?

*Strong:* Schools must provide free computers for their students to assist them in their studies and prepare them for their future careers.

**Phrases such as “I think” or “in my opinion” may muddle or weaken topic sentences. Your writing is always your opinion, so you don’t need these phrases unless they are central to the idea that you are trying to convey.**

* 1. *Weak:* I think that it is important for every woman to carry pepper spray.

*Strong:* As violent criminals take over the city streets, women must carry pepper spray to protect themselves.

**The topic sentence should provide clear relationships among all of its elements so that it can provide a framework for understanding the rest of the paragraph.**

* 1. *Weak:* Historians record only dry statistics; we should read novels.

*Strong:* Accurate historical novels give us a deeper understanding of the past than do the dry collections of facts and statistics that pass for history texts.

**A topic sentence needs to be clear and specific, so that it can predict and summarize the rest of the paragraph for the reader.**

* 1. *Weak:* Public transit is terrible.

*Strong:* Incapable of providing reliable, comfortable service, the San Francisco Municipal Transit System is failing its ridership.