



Standards and Benchmarks: 1A, 1B, 1E, 1F, 1G, 1H, 1I, 1J, 2A, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, 3F, 3G, 3H, 3I, 3J, 3K, 3L

Terrific Topic Sentences

A *topic sentence* states a paragraph's main idea. It also serves to capture the reader's attention. Most expository paragraphs begin with declarative sentences, but a writer can add variety by starting with a question, command, or interjection that expresses strong feelings or emotions. This lesson is designed to give students practice in writing topic sentences that make main ideas clear and also appealing to their audience.

Goal:

Students will write paragraphs with topic sentences that capture their reader's attention.

Objectives:

1. Given a writing prompt, the students will create a topic sentence.
2. Given a topic sentence, the students will restate it as a question, command, or exclamation.

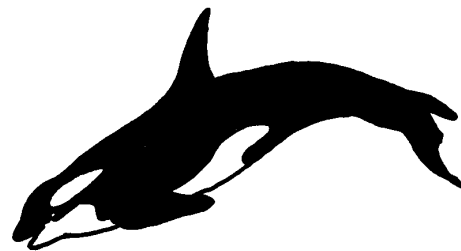
Materials:

- Worksheet #1 (page 42)
- Worksheet #2 (page 43)
- newspapers and other periodicals

Procedure:

I. Lesson Introduction

- A. Begin the lesson with a discussion about whales. Talk about their size, where whales live, and how these creatures interact with humans. Ask volunteers to create a declarative sentence, interrogative sentence, imperative sentence, and an exclamatory sentence using the topic "killer whales" (orcas). Explain to the pupils that a topic sentence needs to be interesting and attention-getting. Most expository writing begins with topic sentences that are declarative, or statements. Sometimes a writer will add variety to a piece by beginning with a question, command, or interjection that expresses emotion.
- B. Direct the learners to read the paragraph about whales that goes with this lesson. Have them locate and state the topic sentence. Next, the pupils will brainstorm and attempt to restate that sentence in the form of a question, command, or exclamation. A group of sample responses is provided.



Terrific Topic Sentences (cont.)

II. Lesson Body

- A. Introduce the lesson practice worksheet. The students will be given writing prompts and then asked to create a list of topic sentences. Declarative statements will be acceptable for these exercises. When these statements are given, the writers are asked to transform each into a question, command, or exclamation.
- B. A review of the four types of sentences (declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory) and end punctuation may be necessary (page 41). Remind the students that most expository writing begins with declarative sentences, but writers will occasionally vary their styles and use questions, commands, and exclamations to maintain interest and challenge their audiences.
- C. For reinforcement and reteaching, first gather together a collection of newspapers and periodicals. Have the pupils identify a story of interest and then state its topic sentence. After that, practice transforming these into questions, commands, and exclamations.
- D. Extend the lesson by using these articles to practice summary writing skills. Also practice writing conclusion sentences in the form of questions, commands, or exclamations. This will provide a unique way to end compositions.

III. Lesson Conclusion

- A. Close the lesson by having the pupils restate the purpose of a topic sentence. They must also list different strategies that can be applied to make topic sentences more interesting and attractive to their audience. Students will be asked to employ these techniques in future writing assignments.
- B. Writing Applications: Whales like the orca, dolphin, and porpoise are often trained to entertain or assist humans with certain water-related tasks. Instruct the students to write a paragraph about an animal that performs in a show or is trained to work with people for a common goal. It may be an animal with which they have had personal experience or one observed at a circus, water park, or on television. Tell them to begin by stating topic sentences in the form of questions, commands, or exclamations.
- C. Publishing Project:
 1. Group students together that have written about the same or similar animals. Have them read their compositions to each other and then share their reactions and feelings within the small group.
 2. Computer Connection: Many animal theme parks, zoos, and circuses have home pages listed on the Internet. Allow the pupils to locate and view a few of these Web sites to help them research further information for their writing applications.

IV. Evaluation:

- A. Use the discussion questions and worksheets to measure student progress and skill mastery.
- B. Writing Applications: Use the four-point rubric scale to determine if students *can independently*, *can usually*, or *require assistance* to write detailed descriptions of familiar, persons, places, objects, or experiences.

The Four Types of Sentences

Declarative Sentence

An insect is sometimes called a bug.

Interrogative Sentence

Do you know anything about insects?

Imperative Sentence

Close the lid to the bug box.

Exclamatory Sentence

Oh no, the bugs are escaping!

End Punctuation

Type of Sentence	Punctuation Mark
Declarative Sentence	.
Interrogative Sentence	?
Imperative Sentence	.
Exclamatory Sentence	!

Terrific Topic Sentences

Worksheet #1

A topic sentence states the main idea and must capture a reader's interest.

Of the 78 species of whale, the orca (or killer whale) is the most feared. These mammals live in families called pods and swim in all the oceans of the world. One is most likely to find them in the colder waters of the Arctic and Antarctic regions of Earth. A tall dorsal fin and a black and white body make them easily recognizable. Their rounded snouts and bullet-shaped bodies allow orcas to swim at speeds up to 40 miles per hour. A killer whale is the only whale that eats warm-blooded prey. Often it takes 300 pounds of fish, squid, and other marine animals a day to satisfy this beast's huge appetite. The orca may appear to be friendly or playful at water parks or on television, but this wild animal is one of the most ferocious in nature.

1. What is the topic sentence of the paragraph about? _____

2. Use the information in the paragraph above to write the following:

a. an interrogative sentence

Example: What do you know about killer whales?

b. an imperative sentence

Example: Read these facts about orcas.

c. an exclamatory sentence

Example: Orcas are fascinating beasts!

Terrific Topic Sentences

Worksheet #2

A *topic sentence* states the main idea and must capture a reader's interest.

Exercise A

Read the following list of writing ideas. Create a topic sentence for each.

1. the best place to go swimming _____

2. my favorite amusement park ride _____

3. going fishing with a friend _____

4. enjoyable board games to play _____

5. our family's most valuable possession _____

6. a day at the races _____

7. staying overnight at grandmother's house _____

8. the surprise party _____

9. when the wheels came off _____

10. the broken eyeglasses _____

Exercise B

Read the following topic sentences. Rewrite each in the form of a question, command, or exclamation.

1. Our vacation on a tropical island was very exciting. _____

2. I made too many mistakes the first day of school. _____

3. A police car pulled into our driveway. _____

4. My parents brought home twins from the hospital. _____

5. It was past midnight when I heard something coming up the stairs. _____
