

A. Remember that a topic sentence is a complete sentence and is neither too general nor too specific.

Step 1 Read the sentences in each group, and decide which sentence is the best topic sentence. Write *best TS* (for “best topic sentence”) on the line next to it.

Step 2 Decide what is wrong with the other sentences. They may be too general, or they may be too specific, or they may be incomplete sentences. Write *too general*, *too specific*, or *incomplete* on the lines next to them.

The first one has been done for you as an example.

Group 1

- too specific* a. A lunar eclipse is an omen of a coming disaster.
 too general b. Superstitions have been around forever.
 best TS c. People hold many superstitious beliefs about the moon.
 incomplete d. Is made of green cheese.

Group 2

- _____ a. The history of astronomy is interesting.
_____ b. Ice age people recorded the appearance of new moons by making scratches in animal bones.
_____ c. For example, Stonehenge in Britain, built 3500 years ago to track the movement of the sun.
_____ d. Ancient people observed and recorded lunar and solar events in different ways.

Group 3

- _____ a. It is hard to know which foods are safe to eat nowadays.
- _____ b. In some large ocean fish, there are high levels of mercury.
- _____ c. Undercooked chicken and hamburger may carry *E. coli* bacteria.
- _____ d. Not to mention mad cow disease.
- _____ e. Food safety is an important issue.

Group 4

- _____ a. Hybrid automobiles more economical to operate than gasoline-powered cars.
- _____ b. The new hybrid automobiles are very popular.
- _____ c. Hybrid cars have good fuel economy because a computer under the hood decides to run the electric motor, the small gasoline engine, or the two together.
- _____ d. The new hybrid automobiles are popular because of their fuel economy.

Group 5

- _____ a. The North American Catawba Indians of the Southeast and the Tlingit of the Northwest both see the rainbow as a kind of bridge between heaven and earth.
- _____ b. A rainbow seen from an airplane is a complete circle.
- _____ c. Many cultures interpret rainbows in positive ways.
- _____ d. Rainbows are beautiful.
- _____ e. The belief that you can find a pot of gold at a rainbow's end.

- B. Remember that the topic sentence is the most general statement in a paragraph. Read the following scrambled paragraphs and decide which sentence is the topic sentence. Write *TS* on the line next to that sentence.

Paragraph 1

- _____ a. A notes/memo function lets you make quick notes to yourself.
- _____ b. Other capabilities include word processing, spreadsheets, and e-mail.
- _____ c. A voice recorder that uses a built-in microphone and speaker works like a tape recorder.
- _____ d. Basic tools include a calendar to keep track of your appointments, an address and phone number book, to-do lists, and a calculator.
- _____ e. MP3 playback lets you listen to digital music files, and a picture viewer lets you look at digital photos.
- _____ f. Most personal digital assistants (PDAs) have tools for basic tasks as well as for multimedia functions.
- _____ g. A few models also include a built-in digital camera and keyboard.

Paragraph 2

- _____ a. Twelve years after *Sputnik*, the United States caught up by becoming the first nation to land a man on the moon.
- _____ b. The Europeans have joined the competition, vowing to land European astronauts on the moon by 2025 and on Mars by 2035.
- _____ c. The number of nations competing in the “space race” has grown since the early days of space exploration.
- _____ d. China joined the competition in 2003 when it launched *Shenzhou 5*.
- _____ e. Initially, the former Soviet Union took the lead when it sent the first man into Earth orbit in the spaceship *Sputnik* in 1957.
- _____ f. For almost 50 years, the United States and Russia were the only competitors in the contest to explore space using manned spacecraft.

Paragraph 3

- _____ a. Another important change was that people had the freedom to live and work wherever they wanted.
- _____ b. The earliest significant change was for farming families, who were no longer isolated.
- _____ c. The final major change brought by the automobile was the building of superhighways, suburbs, huge shopping centers, and theme parks such as Disney World in Florida.
- _____ d. The automobile revolutionized the way of life in the United States.
- _____ e. The automobile enabled them to drive to towns and cities comfortably and conveniently.
- _____ f. In fact, people could work in a busy metropolitan city and drive home to the quiet suburbs.

Paragraph 4

- _____ a. In time, this melted part rises as magma.¹
- _____ b. The formation of a volcanic eruption is a dramatic series of events.
- _____ c. As the plate² sinks, friction and Earth’s heat cause part of it to melt.
- _____ d. The magma produces heat, steam, and pressure.
- _____ e. First of all, most volcanoes are formed where two plates collide.³
- _____ f. Then one of the plates is forced under the other and sinks.
- _____ g. When the heat, steam, and pressure from the magma finally reach the surface of Earth, a volcanic eruption occurs.