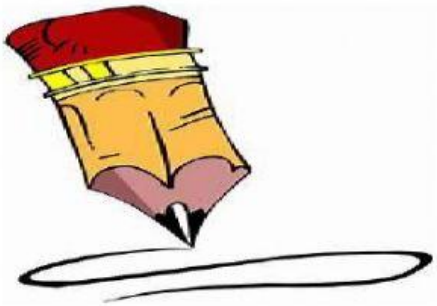
Name: _____

Date: _____



Written Composition
Topic Sentences/Main Idea

Every sentence in a paragraph must contribute to the main idea. Most of the sentences in a paragraph simply support the main idea. Some may state or summarize that idea.

(A) There is one sentence in each of the following paragraphs that does not contribute to the main idea. It does not belong in the paragraph. Write the sentence that should be removed from each paragraph.

1. Jim is looking forward to election day. It's fun to vote and exciting to watch the election results. He'll be rooting for his candidate to win and enjoying the suspense if the vote is close. The following day will be a good time to play video games.

2. April is beginning the lengthy process of choosing a college to attend. She is buying and reading guides to the best schools. She hasn't completely ruled out working for a year before attending college. She's checking out the many websites that provide information for picking the right college or university. She's even researching the climate of the area of every school she considers.

3. Bill is one of those people who just doesn't have to worry about gaining too much weight. He is the best tennis player I've ever met. Bill can eat any amount of any food he likes without putting on an ounce. He can go for weeks without exercising with no apparent effect. It just doesn't seem fair!

4. Scientists are learning a great deal about the aging process. This knowledge will allow doctors to help their patients live longer and better lives. They will be able to defeat diseases associated with aging and perhaps even delay the onset of old age. Many doctors would agree that some medicines are much too expensive.

(B) Which one of the two sentences that follow each paragraph belongs in that paragraph?

1. Ryan is very athletic for a three year old. He can run faster than most kids twice his age. He throws and catches a basketball with ease. He is an accomplished tennis player and golfer.

a. Ryan can even roller skate backwards on one foot.

b. Ryan can even read second grade level books.

2. Don't be so quick to buy an SUV. They are more expensive than many equally comfortable automobiles. They consume fuel faster than you can say, "Fill 'er up!" These trucks are clearly not for everyone.

a. They tend to be much safer in collisions than other vehicles.

b. They are less stable and harder to control in emergency situations.

3. Yes, I confess, I'm a beef addict! I can't drive past a Burger King without stopping in for a Whopper. I have filled my freezer with steaks and roasts and mountains of ground beef. No steer is safe if I'm in his neighborhood.

a. I am very unhappy if I can't eat mushrooms with my beef!

b. The Cattleman's Beef Association should make me its poster boy!