

Gale Resources Tip Sheet

Gale In Context Toolbox—How to Write a Topic Sentence

The **Gale In Context** toolbox tip sheets are designed to help middle school and high school researchers prepare a written report. This document will explain **what a topic sentence is and how to write one**.

All good reports start with a topic sentence. This sentence lets everyone know the main idea of the report. To write a good topic sentence, you have to do two things:

- Figure out what the **main idea** is for your report.
- Put the main idea into **your own words**.

Finding the Main Idea

First, ask yourself this question: “What’s my report about?” If you can answer this question, you know what your topic is. When you know what your topic is, you’re almost ready to write your topic sentence. If you can’t answer this question, you’ll have to do some more **research**.

Second, ask yourself this question: “What’s important about my topic?” Think of the things that make your topic special or interesting to you. If you can think of something that makes your topic special, you’re ready to write your topic sentence. If you can’t, you need to **research** your topic some more to find out what’s important about it.

Let’s say your teacher asked you to write a report on the pyramids of Egypt. Think about what’s important about the pyramids in Egypt. Write down key words and phrases you come up with. These will help you write your topic sentence. If you’re unable to come up with some important facts about pyramids, you’ll need to do some more research.

Putting the Idea into Words

Now you’re ready to write. Use the list of words and phrases about your main idea. Here’s a list for our Egyptian pyramid example:

<i>big</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>monument</i>	<i>hard to build</i>	<i>Nile River</i>
<i>ancient</i>	<i>Egyptian</i>	<i>tomb</i>	<i>bury</i>	<i>kings and queens</i>
<i>huge</i>	<i>pointy</i>	<i>many stones</i>	<i>many builders</i>	<i>beautiful</i>

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Next, pick the best words from your list. The best words to use are the ones that:

- Say what's most important about your topic.
- Sound the best to you.

Now write a sentence using these words. Here's an example:

The pyramids are huge tombs where the ancient Egyptians buried their kings and queens.

Follow these steps for your writing your own topic sentence!

Need more help? Ask your librarian!

Sources

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