

Topic and Closing Sentences

The topic sentence

The function of the topic sentence is 1) to let the reader know *what* you're going to talk about and 2) to show *how* you are going to talk about it. A topic sentence which is helpful to the reader...

- introduces your central idea,
- introduces your major supports, and
- presents your major supports in the same order as they appear in the discussion.

Your topic sentence should also make your reader *want* to read your paragraph, so try to make your topic sentence stimulating.

In the paragraph below, the central idea is “Sungkyunkwan University’s campus is interesting,” and the major supports are “natural” and “man-made” aspects.

Sungkyunkwan University’s campus has two interesting aspects, natural and man-made, which will make you want to visit again and again. One interesting aspect is nature’s attractions. In the Sungkyunkwan, the old Confucian shrine and academy, there are two big ginkgo trees which are almost six hundred years old. The lush forest of Secret Gardens, a sight that gladdens the heart, borders the whole southern edge of the campus and guards our gentle campus from the barbarous city. And to the west, in back of the university’s buildings, are hills and woods and a creek where you can go with your sweetheart. Another aspect is the campus’s interesting buildings. There are several traditional buildings in the Sungkyunkwan, which were first built at the end of the fourteenth century. In addition to historical buildings, you can see many new buildings. We still have old modern buildings, the administration building and the law college, erected in the 1960s, before many of us were born. A truly modern building, the library, was built at the beginning of the ‘90s, and the main classroom building was built later, in 1993. Now, in the twenty-first century, we have a new student union and a new classroom building. If you want to see an interesting combination of natural and human creations, visit Sungkyunkwan University’s campus.

The closing sentence

The functions of the closing sentence:

1. Get the reader to *reflect on* your central idea, by reminding of the central idea and the major supports. (Although you needn’t state the major supports explicitly, the closing sentence should include them at least indirectly.)
2. Leave the reader with a positive feeling about your ideas. This is your last chance.

Here are a few ways (in **bold** print) to close the paragraph above, along with examples (in normal print).

Summarize the central idea and supports.

These two interesting aspects are a celebration of the cooperation of nature and man. (*This could also be considered another method: Draw a conclusion.*)

Draw a conclusion.

It would certainly be worth your while to spend an afternoon wandering this park-like campus.

Ask a provocative question

Will the campus still have this wonderful combination six centuries from now?

Restate the topic sentence in different words, *not just repeating the topic sentence.*

If you want to experience a harmonious blend of natural and human creations, visit Sungkyunkwan University’s campus.

Introduce a related idea to trigger reflection.

Other universities’ campuses may have either wonderful landscaping or great building buildings; visit Sungdae if want both.