



In every paragraph there should be a topic sentence that lays out the main idea of the paragraph. The topic sentence lets the reader get an idea of what they are about to read and is usually the first sentence of a paragraph.

Link to the thesis

Introduce the main idea of the paragraph

Link to the previous paragraph

Topic sentence



What's going on in the paragraph?

Why is this paragraph important to the rest of the paper?

How does this paragraph relate to the thesis?

What point is trying to be made here?

When constructing topic sentences, transition words make it easy for the reader to understand the sequence of the paper. Transition words and phrases are also helpful since topic sentences should show ideas linking to each other. Though transition words are important for organization and flow, it is also important to avoid overusing them.

#### Popular Transitions

**Addition:** also, as well as, besides, furthermore, in addition, similarly, likewise

**Consequence:** accordingly, consequently, otherwise, subsequently, therefore, thus

**Contrast and Comparison:** contrast, conversely, instead, likewise, however, nevertheless

**Similarity:** comparatively, correspondingly, identically, similarly, moreover

**Sequence:** At first, first of all, to begin with, at the same time, for the time being, later on, meanwhile, later, earlier, simultaneously, afterward, in conclusion

**Summarizing:** after all, all in all, in conclusion, in summary, to sum up, finally

Thesis: By creating distinct social classes in *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald sends strong messages about the elitism running throughout every strata of society.

Poor topa



**Poor topic sentence:** Many middle class people want to be a part of the wealthy class.

**Better topic sentence:** While some people of the middle class are content with their status and find their purpose in life, others dream of becoming a part of the wealthy class, often allowing that dream to consume their lives.



**Further Assistance:** For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library or call 815-836-5427.

**Sources Consulted:** [Indiana.edu](http://Indiana.edu), [Public.wsu.edu](http://Public.wsu.edu), [Owl.english.purdue.edu](http://Owl.english.purdue.edu), [Uc.toronto.edu](http://Uc.toronto.edu)