

Grade 6 SAUSD Writing Notebook

Writing Paragraphs

Intensive

Writing Paragraphs

Lesson Overview Objectives, summary, and time frame

Overview

The purpose of the following activities is to introduce Early Intermediate students to writing topic sentences and establishing a main idea in writing. Creating topic sentences is foundational to the overwhelming majority of academic writing applications.

The following activities begin with teaching students to identify a topic sentence/main idea in reading. Students look at examples and non-examples of paragraphs with topic sentences. Then, students create topic sentences from given details/topics. Finally, students will brainstorm topics and create a topic sentence/detail Tree Map.

ELD Standards

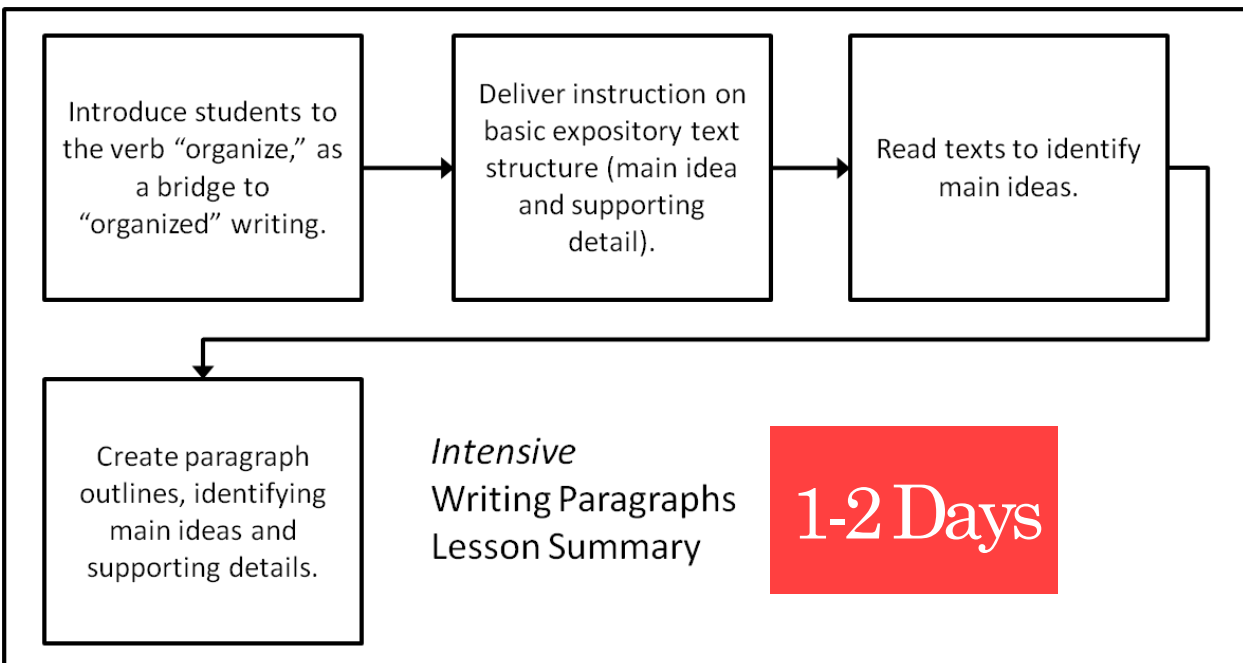
- Use common verbs, nouns, and high-frequency modifiers in writing simple sentences.
- Write expository compositions that include a main idea and some details in simple sentences.
- Read text and orally identify the main ideas and details of informational materials, literary text, and text in content areas by using simple sentences.

Content Objectives:

1. Students recognize or create topic sentences for level appropriate texts.
2. Students create basic paragraph outlines that include a topic sentence and three supporting details.

Language Objectives:

1. Students create complete topic sentences.
2. Students create complete topic sentences, and three complete sentences as supporting details.



Writing Paragraphs

Activity 1 Introducing paragraph organization

Content Objective: Students recognize or create topic sentences for level appropriate texts.

Language Objective: Students create complete topic sentences.

40-55 minutes

Introduce key vocabulary.

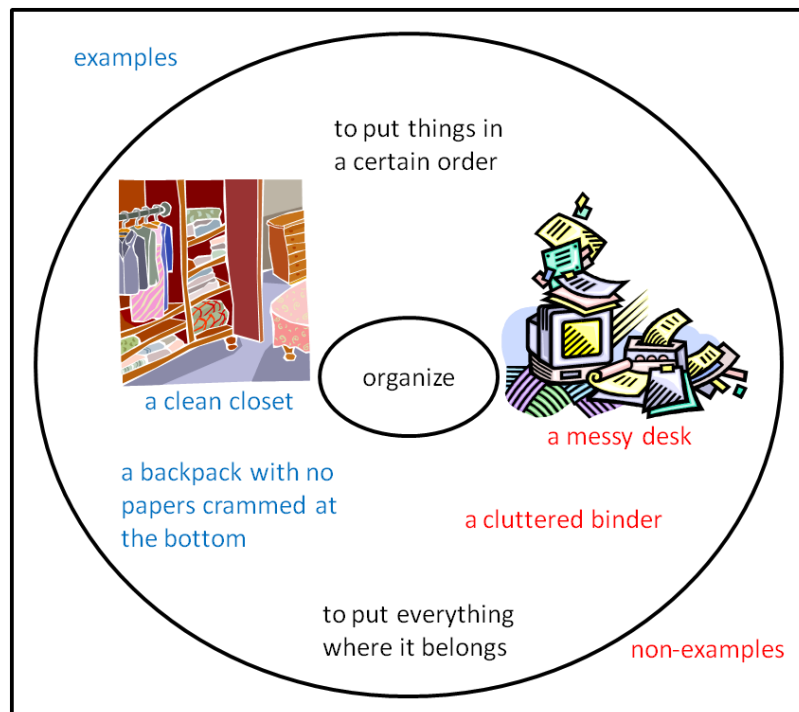
ELD Standard—Use common verbs, nouns, and high-frequency modifiers in writing simple sentences.

Instruction

In order to prepare students to learn paragraph structure/organization, teach the students the academic vocabulary word “organize.”

- Write the word organize on the board/document camera and read it to the students.
- Have them repeat the word, organize.
- Tell students “to organize is to put things in a certain order.”
- Provide examples and invite students to share additional examples of things that can be organized (your closet, desk, classroom, video game collection, movies, garage, etc.)
- Ask students to give examples of how they organize their closets (or desks). Encourage them to use the word “organize” in their responses.
- *I organize my _____ by _____.*
- *I organize my desk by putting my pencils and pens in a holder and stacking my books from biggest to smallest.*
- *I organize my closet by putting all the dresses, long sleeve shirts, short sleeve shirts, and pants together.*

You may also want to use the following Circle Map to help illustrate the idea for students. This can be done as a model, or as an independent/partner practice activity. Students may also add illustrations (i.e. an “organized” closet vs. an unorganized closet.)



Writing Paragraphs

Activity 1 Introducing paragraph organization

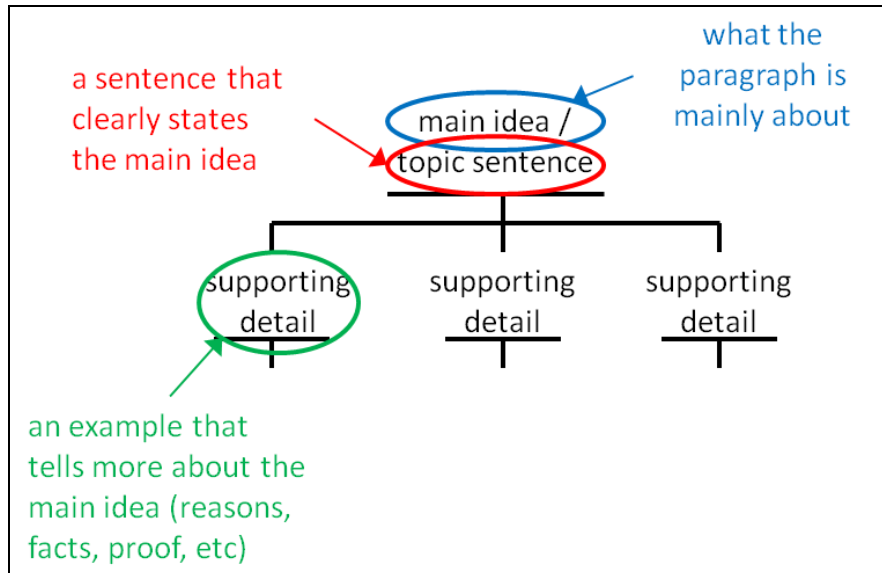
Attack the prompt.

ELD Standard—Write expository compositions that include a main idea and some details in simple sentences.

Instruction

Introduce students to the concept of paragraph writing/organization by using a Tree Map (see example).

- Explain to students that all good paragraphs follow this structure/organizational pattern.
- Writers begin each paragraph by clearly stating the main idea in a topic sentence.
- Then they tell more about that main idea by giving details and/or examples that are related to the topic. These examples may answer questions such as how/why/ or what kind. The details may also provide reasons, facts, or proof about the main idea.
- On the Tree Map, you may want to identify key vocabulary terms and highlight/define them in the frame of reference (see example).



Writing Paragraphs

Activity 1 Introducing paragraph organization

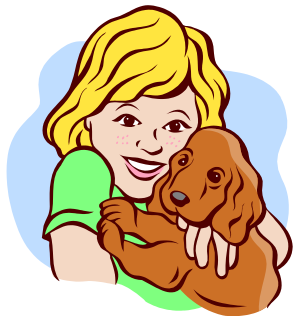
Reading to identify the main idea.

ELD Standard—Read text and orally identify the main ideas and details of informational materials.

Model

Use Resource 1 for this activity.

- Remind students that we are learning about how to organize a good paragraph. Ask students to identify the key parts of a paragraph (main idea/topic sentence, supporting details).
- Read the sample paragraph aloud to students as they follow along on their copies.
- After completing the paragraph, ask the students what the paragraph is mainly about. (Being good with dogs).
- Ask the following questions and encourage students to pair/share before calling on volunteers to answer.
 - *Does this paragraph have a topic sentence?*
 - *What is the topic sentence?*
 - *Does the writer have details that tell more about her topic?*
 - *Give me an example of one of her details.*
- Using markers, highlighters, or colored pencils, underline/highlight the topic sentence in red (as students identify it).
- Do the same for the supporting details in green. (see key for Resource 1 on next page)
- Then, ask students to make a Tree Map, like the paragraph structure map, using the information from the highlighted story. (See sample below)



Resource 1

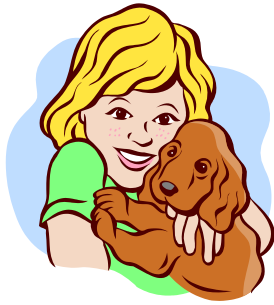
Dog Person by Carolina Aguila

I am very good with dogs. I get along well with them, and they really seem to listen to me. I've trained my dog to sit, stay, and do tricks. I taught my neighbor's dog to walk without tugging on the leash. Now I'm helping my friend Anna train her dog, too.

Writing Paragraphs

Activity 1 Introducing paragraph organization

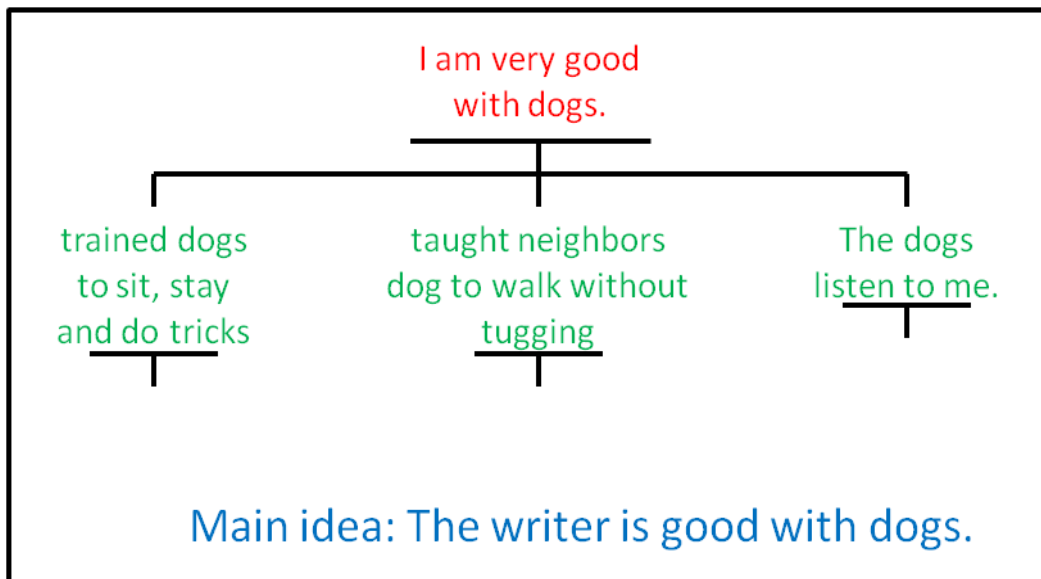
Key



Dog Person
by Carolina Aguila

Main Idea: Being
Good with Dogs

I am very good with dogs. I get along well with them, and they really seem to listen to me. I've trained my dog to sit, stay, and do tricks. I taught my neighbor's dog to walk without tugging on the leash. Now I'm helping my friend Anna train her dog, too.



Writing Paragraphs

Activity 1 Introducing paragraph organization

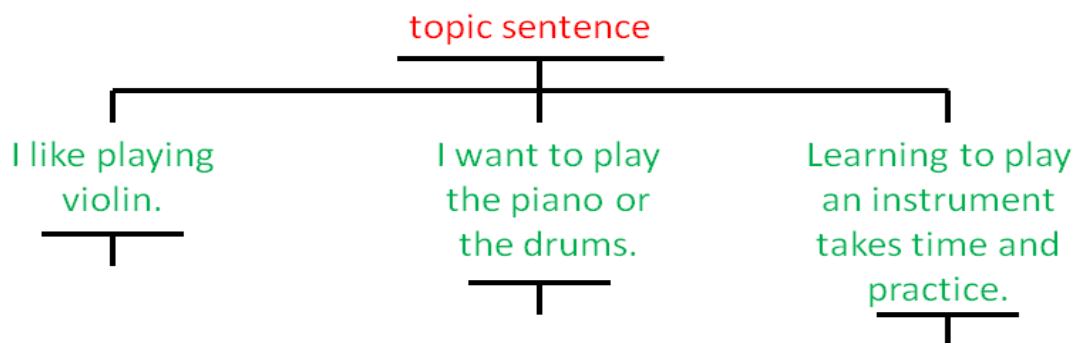
Reading to identify the main idea.

ELD Standard—Read text and orally identify the main ideas and details of informational materials.

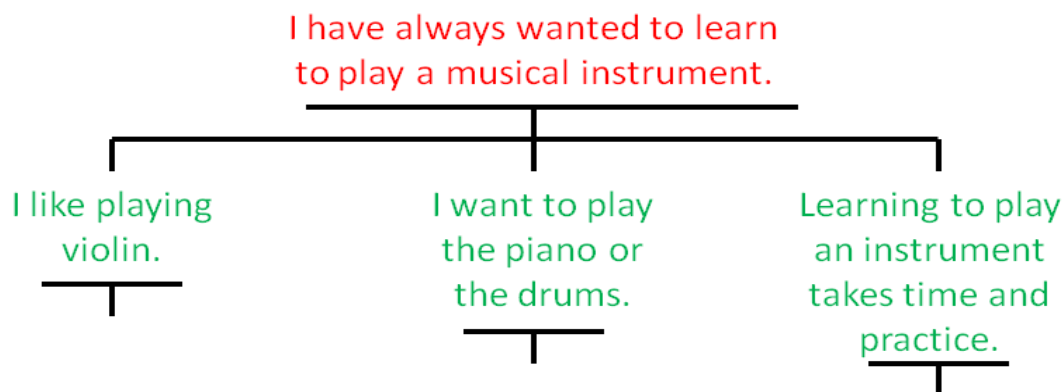
Practice

Use Resource 2 for this activity (copies for students)

- Read the paragraph, “Music” aloud to students.
- After reading the paragraph, ask students if they can identify the main idea of the paragraph “Instruments I’d like to Play”
- Point out to students that this paragraph is missing an important part. Using the organizational Tree Map, ask students to pair/share and identify what part is missing. [Topic Sentence]



- In groups/partners, have students create a Tree Map to show the organization pattern of “Music.”
- Have each group/pair brainstorm an appropriate topic sentence and add it to their charts.
- Have each group/pair share out their topic sentence. Provide feedback to students based on the sentence’s connection to the given details.
- Examples: *There are many instruments I’d like to learn to play.* OR *I’ve always wanted to learn to play an instrument.*



Writing Paragraphs

Activity 1 Introducing paragraph organization

Reading to identify the main idea.

ELD Standard—Write expository compositions that include a main idea and some details in simple sentences.

Practice

Use Resource 3 for this activity (copies for students).

- Review example at the top of the page with students (first day of school).
- Remind students that a good topic sentence clearly tells about the main idea.
- Have students practice independently by creating topic sentences for the following two examples (my dad, my best friend Jessenia).

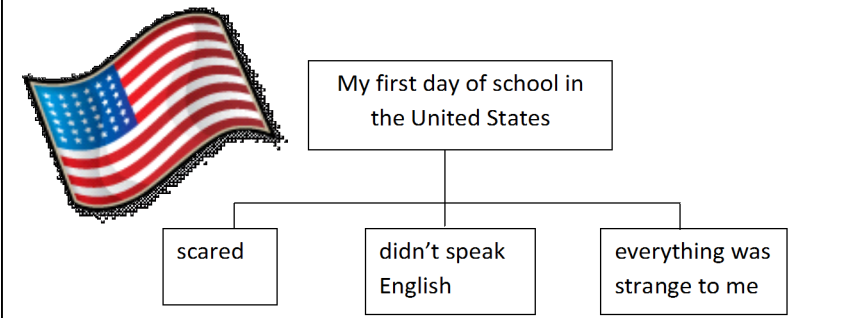
Sample Answers:

- My Dad: *I have the best dad in the world.* OR *My dad is the greatest.* OR *I have a great dad.*
- My best friend Jessenia: *My best friend Jessenia is a great dancer.* OR *My best friend Jessenia is the best dancer at school.* OR *My best friend Jessenia is a very talented performer.*

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

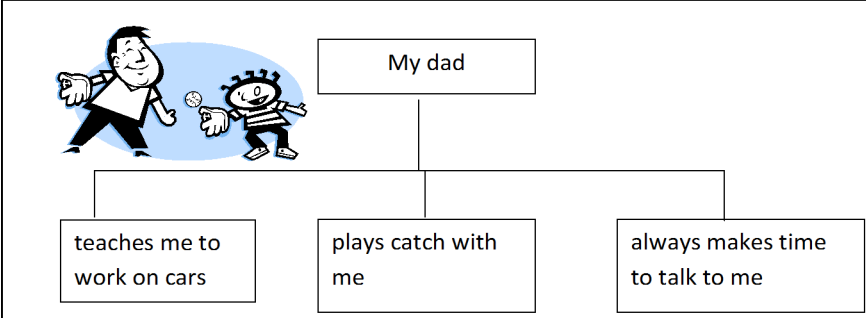
Directions: Use the tree maps with main ideas/details to write appropriate topic sentences.
Remember that topic sentences should clearly state the main idea without giving away the details!

Sample:



A tree map diagram with a central box containing the text "My first day of school in the United States". To the left of this central box is a stylized illustration of the United States flag. Three lines branch out from the bottom of the central box to three separate boxes below it. The boxes contain the following text: "scared", "didn't speak English", and "everything was strange to me".

Topic Sentence: *My first day of school in the United States was hard.*



A tree map diagram with a central box containing the text "My dad". To the left of this central box is a cartoon illustration of a man (the father) and a young boy (the son) playing together. Three lines branch out from the bottom of the central box to three separate boxes below it. The boxes contain the following text: "teaches me to work on cars", "plays catch with me", and "always makes time to talk to me".

Topic Sentence: _____

Writing Paragraphs

Activity 2 Writing organized paragraphs

Content Objective: Students create basic paragraph outlines that include a topic sentence and three supporting details.

Language Objective: Students create complete topic sentences, and three complete sentences as supporting details.

30-40 minutes

Brainstorm topics.

ELD Standard—Write expository compositions that include a main idea and some details in simple sentences.

Instruction

As a class, or in groups, create a Circle Map. In the center of the map write “writing about me.”

- Tell students that you are going to brainstorm topics/ideas that we can write about. To help narrow down our topics, we are going to stick with topics that can tell about ourselves.
- Start by giving students an example: “I could write a paragraph about my favorite sport” and add this to the Circle Map.
- Call on students to share other possible topics. (see sample map below)



Writing Paragraphs

Activity 2 Writing organized paragraphs

Practice generating details.

ELD Standard—Write expository compositions that include a main idea and some details in simple sentences.

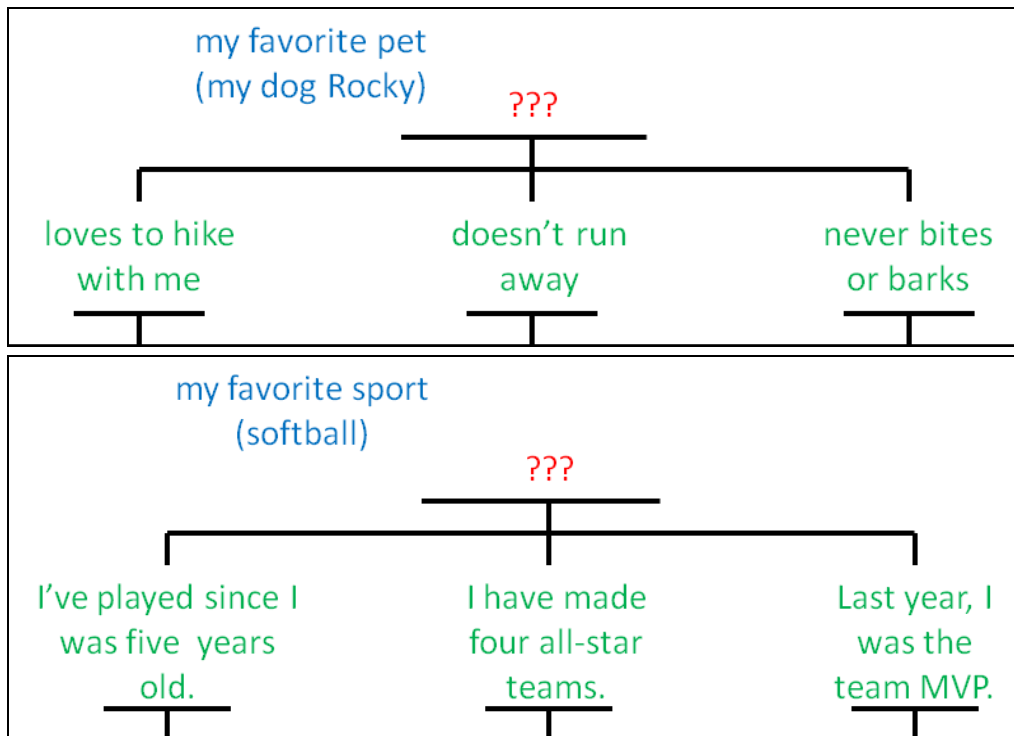
Model

Demonstrate to students how to take a topic and support it with details using a Tree Map.

- For example, if you were modeling a topic “my favorite pet,” you might note that your dog Rocky likes to hike, doesn’t run away, and never barks or bites as details.
- Don’t include a topic sentence yet. Creating topic sentences will be the next step.

After modeling the Tree Map, use the topics from the Circle Map to break students into groups/partners, and assign each group a topic from the Circle Map.

- In groups, have students create a Tree Map organizing their topic into a main idea and details. Tell each group NOT to write a topic sentence yet. Only write the topic (See sample below)
- Monitor groups as they work and give feedback as necessary.
- Once groups are finished, collect each Tree Map to use with the next step.



Writing Paragraphs

Activity 2 Writing organized paragraphs

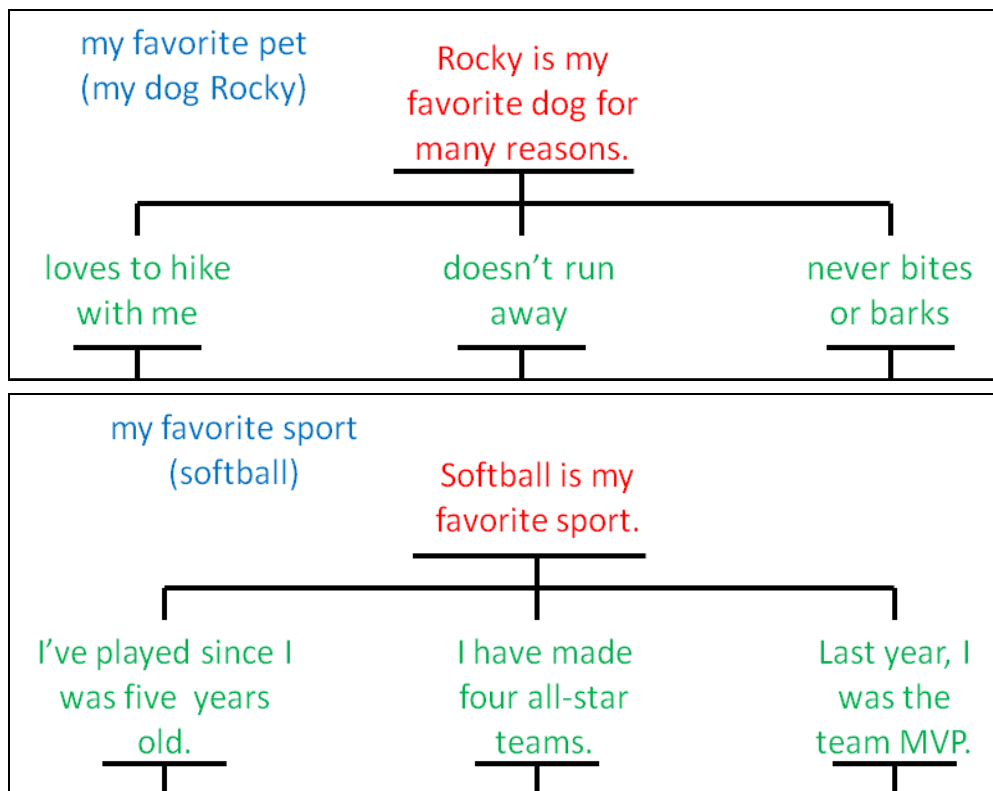
Practice identifying topic sentences.

ELD Standard—Write expository compositions that include a main idea and some details in simple sentences.

Practice

Using the Tree Maps from the previous step, redistribute to each group/pair of students a topic Tree Map (not the one they worked on).

- Tell students to look at the topic and details, and write an appropriate topic sentence for that paragraph.
- Remind students that the topic sentence must clearly state the main idea of the paragraph without telling the details.
- Students can write the topic sentences in at the top of the map.
- Have groups/pairs share their topic sentences with the group.
- If time permits, students can take the language off the map and actually draft out the paragraphs. If not, be sure students are orally rehearsing by identifying topic sentences and supporting details.
- Post charts/papers around the room as examples.



Writing Paragraphs

Activity 2 Writing organized paragraphs

Practice identifying topic sentences.

ELD Standard—Write expository compositions that include a main idea and some details in simple sentences.

Practice

Use Resource 4 for this activity (student copies). Pass out the writing topic sentences assessment page.

- Review directions with the students. Using the Tree Maps with Main Ideas and Details, write a good topic sentence for each topic. Remember to clearly state the main idea without telling the details.

Give students time to work on the assessment independently. If students are struggling, support them by giving them a sentence frame:

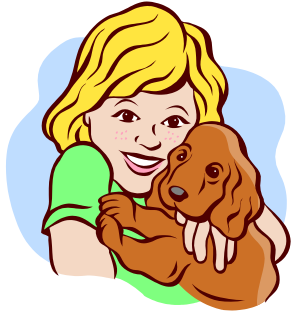
- *My older brother Tony is _____.*
- *I really _____ trying new things.*

Accept any answers that follow the main idea and details. Samples include:

- *My older brother Tony is the best big brother anyone could have.*
- *My older brother Tony is the best.*
- *My older brother Tony is great.*
- *I really like to try new things.*
- *I have always enjoyed trying new things.*
- *Trying new things is something that I love to do.*
- *Trying new things doesn't scare me.*
- Review assessments and share good examples with students using the document camera. If there are students who did not do well, share those examples (anonymously) and have students give feedback on how to improve the topic sentences.
- Again, if time permits you may want to have students use the Tree Maps as an outline to actually create paragraphs of three or four sentences in length.

Writing Paragraphs

Resource 1 Identifying topic sentences



Dog Person by Carolina Aguila

I am very good with dogs. I get along well with them, and they really seem to listen to me. I've trained my dog to sit, stay, and do tricks. I taught my neighbor's dog to walk without tugging on the leash. Now I'm helping my friend Anna train her dog, too.

Writing Paragraphs

Resource 2 Identifying topic sentences

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Directions: Read the following paragraph. Look for the important parts of a paragraph (main idea, topic sentence, details).



Music
by Jessenia Corpus

I like playing the violin. I want to play the piano. I also want to play the drums. It takes a lot of time and practice to learn to play a new instrument.

1. What is the main idea of this paragraph? _____
2. What is missing? _____
3. With your group or a partner, create a tree map that shows the organization of the paragraph. Add a topic sentence that makes sense.

Writing Paragraphs


Resource 3 Creating topic sentences

Name _____ Date _____

Period _____


Directions: Use the tree maps with main ideas/details to write appropriate topic sentences. *Remember that topic sentences should clearly state the main idea without giving away the details!*

Sample:



```
graph TD; A[My first day of school in the United States] --- B[scared]; A --- C[didn't speak English]; A --- D[everything was strange to me]
```

Topic Sentence: *My first day of school in the United States was hard.*



```
graph TD; A[My dad] --- B[teaches me to work on cars]; A --- C[plays catch with me]; A --- D[always makes time to talk to me]
```

Topic Sentence: _____

Writing Paragraphs

Resource 3 Creating topic sentences

Resource 3 (continued)


My best friend Jessenia

Won school dance competition

Taught me how to do the shuffle

Takes ballet classes three days a week

Topic Sentence: _____



Writing Paragraphs


Resource 4 Creating topic sentences

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Writing Topic Sentences


Assessment

Directions: Using the Tree Maps with Main Ideas and Details, write a good topic sentence for each paragraph. *Remember to clearly state the main idea without telling the details.*



```
graph TD; A[My older brother Tony] --- B[Helps me with my homework]; A --- C[sticks up for me]; A --- D[lets me go places with him and his friends]
```

Topic Sentence: _____



```
graph TD; A[Trying new things] --- B[like trying different kinds of food]; A --- C[not shy – like to meet new people]; A --- D[not afraid to move to a new school]
```

Topic Sentence: _____
