

## Topic Sentence = A topic + A controlling idea

Topics are in **red**, controlling ideas are in **green** in the examples that follow:  
Notice that a topic sentence is **broad** enough so that additional sentences can be added beneath it to support the topic sentence.

*Football* is very boring to watch on TV.

The food and service is terrific at *Outback Steakhouse.*

*Changing a tire* is easy if you know what to do.

*Janice's room* is a nightmare to clean up.

Trouble always seems to find *Joe Student.*

Notice that the topic sentences above are not too specific (which is good). In each of the topic sentences above, the writer could easily add many more sentences underneath to support the topic sentence. For example:

*Janice's room* is a nightmare to clean up.

If you open her closet, clothes and athletic equipment immediately fall onto the floor. Under the bed, dust balls and mold grow in abundance. Even her parents are afraid to walk in. The Department of Health condemned it as a public safety hazard. Ron Smith walked in there last Saturday, but no one has seen him since. If her parents made her clean her room, I'm certain Janice would not know where to begin.

Consider the following **poor example** of a topic sentence:

*Janice's room* is a nightmare to clean up because there are dust balls under the bed. The topic sentence is too specific. How much more can you say about the room as it relates to the dust balls under the bed?

Keep your topic sentence broad – not too specific.