

# Topic Sentence Cheat Sheet



## Persuasion/Synthesis Essay Prompt

### Few Rules to Remember:

1. Topic sentences are always arguments in these kinds of essays.
2. The persuasion and synthesis essays can be addressed in exactly the same way.
3. The three paragraph models here are just for illustration. Your essay can certainly be 2-5 paragraphs.
4. Topic sentences should show relationships/transitions between paragraphs: your goal is an essay that feels like a cohesive whole.
5. There are five basic approaches you can take on these essays.
  - Straight Refutation (2-4 reasons why the idea is a bad one)
  - Straight Support (2-4 reasons why the idea is a good one)
  - Concession/Qualifier (strongly take one side, but concede one point to other side)
  - Boomer (not only present your argument, but attack the other side)
  - Caveat (strongly take a position, but concede that there is an issue to consider)

### Straight Refutation/Straight Support Essay

You probably want to avoid these. If you can't write these topic sentences by now, you're DOOMED. Keep them arguments.

### Concession/Qualifier Essay

**Thesis:** While modern media discourse is often base and even occasionally pointless, such democratic discussion is essential for good governance and to undermine corporate dominance of the debate.

**Body Paragraph 1: It's undeniable that** American discourse has suffered as access to publishing has increased. [CONCESSION]

**Body Paragraph 2: Despite the** crudeness of much of contemporary discussion free expression of even the most trivial idea is crucial to democracy. [YOUR FIRST ARGUMENT]

**Body Paragraph 3: Even more significantly,** democratization of discourse offers perhaps the only tool to undermine corporate dominance of the media. [YOUR SECOND ARGUMENT]

### Boomer Essay

**Thesis:** The democratic discussion generated by new media is **not only** essential for good governance and to undermine corporate dominance of the debate, but those who argue it undermines public discussion represent an elitist view that must be rejected.

**Body Paragraph 1:** Free expression of even the most trivial idea is crucial to democracy. [YOUR FIRST ARGUMENT]

**Body Paragraph 2:** Even more significantly, democratization of discourse offers perhaps the only tool to undermine corporate dominance of the media. [YOUR SECOND ARGUMENT]

**Body Paragraph 3:** Critics of new media wrongly assert that it debases our national discussion. [CRUSH THIS ARGUMENT]

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## Caveat Essay

**Thesis:** The democratic discussion generated by new media is essential for good governance and to undermine corporate dominance of the debate.

**Body Paragraph 1:** Free expression of even the most trivial idea is crucial to democracy. [YOUR FIRST ARGUMENT]

**Body Paragraph 2:** Even more significantly, democratization of discourse offers perhaps the only tool to undermine corporate dominance of the media. [YOUR SECOND ARGUMENT]

**Body Paragraph 3:** Despite all of the benefits of participation in new media, it's imperative that society be watchful lest hateful speech spread unchecked. [YOUR CAVEAT—NOT A FULLY DEVELOPED CONCESSION, BUT AN ISSUE TO CONSIDER}

## Analysis Essay Prompt

### Few Rules to Remember:

1. When you read the piece, look for logical places to make your divisions. In order, subject, tone, and chronology are the best places to look for division.
2. You DO NOT need to include specific devices in the topic sentences. In fact, unless they are dominant devices that you intend to discuss exclusively, don't list them.
3. You want to make the author of the piece the subject of the sentence. This will make your sentence stay in the active voice.
4. Note (parenthetically) the structural division you have chosen.
5. Keep it simple and clear. The body of the paragraph is where the intricate analysis takes place.
6. In analysis essays, the argument is simply your assertion about what the author is saying.

**TRANSITION, The AUTHOR [STRONG VERB] (parenthetical citation of structure) SUBJECT PURPOSE.**

### Sample Topic Sentence (Basic and Effective)

Updike opens his argument (paragraphs 1-2) by describing the conflicted emotions of fans on Opening Day.

### Sample Topic Sentence (Bit More Artful)

In his breathless open, Updike depicts (paragraphs 1-2) the crowd at a baseball game on Opening Day, who are both nostalgic about the season past and nervously optimistic about the one to come.