

PRACTICE

CHOOSING THE TOPIC SENTENCE THAT FITS:

The topic sentence of the paragraphs below has been removed. Read them carefully and then choose the best topic sentence among the four choices below. Be prepared to explain your choice.

Paragraph 1:

This belief is especially common among weight lifters who often consume large quantities of high protein foods and dietary supplements, thinking it will improve their athletic performance. Like weightlifters, football players consume too much protein, expecting it to produce additional muscle energy. Although it is true that muscles contain more protein than other tissues, there is no evidence that a high protein diet actually constructs more muscle tissue than a normal diet. Nutritionists point out that muscle cells grow not from excess protein but from exercise: when a muscle is used, it pulls in protein for its consumption. This is how a muscle grows and strengthens. If athletes want to increase their muscle mass, then they must exercise in addition to following a well-balanced, normal diet.

1. Many athletes have false ideas regarding proper nutrition.
2. My brother, a weightlifter, is an example of someone who consumes a lot of protein because he thinks it will make him bulky.
3. Many athletes falsely believe that protein improves athletic performance by increasing muscle mass.
4. The public is often confused by the seemingly conflicting advice nutritionists give us about our health.

Paragraph 2:

Lately parents and critics across the country have been making a bigger fuss about the number and content of commercials aimed at children, and it seems as though the media has become a scapegoat for adults who have set questionable health guidelines for their children. It is both logical and factual to state that parents are the number one authority for most everything in their child's life, which of course includes food choices. Recent studies from the Institute of Medicine found that the easiest and most reliable measure of understanding a child's health and diet is to look at the health and diet of the parents. It is very likely that a child's obesity did not come from the media, but from behaviors within the family. Even if advertisements became restricted or more limited, if parents do not enforce healthy diets or teach nutrition, the children will have learned nothing. Timothy J. Muris of *The Wall Street Journal* realizes that without addressing the issues of parental control, the ban on child food advertisements are "appealing on the surface, but ultimately useless."

1. Despite increasing rates of childhood obesity, we should not ban junk food ads aimed at children.
2. According to Andrew Martin of the *Chicago Tribune*, "... the rates of obesity among 6 to 11-year-olds more than tripling during the last three decades, doubling for children ages 2 to 5 and increasing even more for adolescents 12 to 19 years old."
3. The staggering figures regarding childhood obesity alone are alarming enough to generate a stir.
4. Although junk food advertisements are being blamed for children's poor dietary habits, regulating these ads would not address the real source of the problem: lack of parental guidance.

WHAT ARE TRANSITIONS?

Transitional words can signal levels of importance, connections, and the direction of thoughts. For example, after a friend begins a sentence with "I like you very much," would you prefer that the next word be "and" or "however"? The word "and" signals more of the same, hinting that you could anticipate another pleasant compliment. On the other hand, "however" signals a change of thought, so brace yourself for a negative remark. If the next words were "consequently" or "therefore," you could anticipate a positive result or reward for the positive feelings. Such words are transitions and lead readers to anticipate the direction of a writer's thoughts. Transitions also reveal organizational patterns.

In short, transitions...

- are phrases or words used to connect one idea to the next
- are used by the author to help the reader move from one significant idea to the next.
- show the relationship within a paragraph (or within a sentence) between the main idea and the support the author gives for those ideas.

WHY USE TRANSITIONS?

Transitions serve as "guiderails" through someone else's logic. We all think differently, so it is helpful to use transitions to signal the direction of your thoughts. Like you use a turn signal in a car to let the car behind you know you are going left, transitions signal which direction you are going as you present a series of ideas and arguments to someone not familiar with your reasoning.

ANSWERS

CHOOSING THE TOPIC SENTENCE THAT FITS:

Paragraph 1:

3. Many athletes falsely believe that protein improves athletic performance by increasing muscle mass.

Paragraph 2:

4. Although junk food advertisements are being blamed for children's poor dietary habits, regulating these ads would not address the real source of the problem: lack of parental guidance.

CREATING A TOPIC SENTENCE THAT FITS:

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

1) On inventors:

Doing well in school does not always demonstrate intelligence or future success.

2) On eating disorders:

The images of beauty we are surrounded by are unrealistic and impossible to attain and make many women feel unattractive and deeply unhappy with themselves.

3) On Deborah Blum's article:

The female approach to interacting with one another is more harmonious and democratic.