

IDENTIFYING AND CRAFTING EFFECTIVE TOPIC SENTENCES/ARGUMENTS

Usually, an essay has 3-4 (well developed) body paragraphs, excluding the introduction and conclusion. The topic sentence is the first sentence introducing the main idea, and should sum up the gist of each body paragraph.

Effective topic sentences/arguments consist of an assertion which engages directly with the essay question's keywords, and the reason for the assertion being made.

ARGUMENT = ASSERTION [WHAT] + REASON [WHY/HOW]
<p>QUALIFIED ASSERTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• link clearly to the question• qualify your assertion by indicating the context/conditions/to whom your argument applies• rephrase the keywords to display your understanding of their meaning <p>REASON</p> <p>Substantiate your assertion with a rationale that previews a characteristic of the stakeholder (e.g. stakeholder's values or power/capabilities).</p> <p><u>Notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the questions raised in your question analysis should help you unearth these characteristics.• When crafting your topic sentences, you should ensure that each addresses a new idea

Q: To what extent is charitable giving desirable?

Examples	
<p><i>Cynics would claim that</i> charitable giving is considered undesirable when it creates an unsustainable solution to a pre-existing problem. This is seen in efforts to provide aid to people who are already entrenched within a certain way of life.</p> <p><i>It must also be acknowledged that</i> there are instances of charitable giving ignoring the needs of recipients and instead focusing on the selfish mindset of the donor, which is less desirable. Donors see charity drives as dumping grounds for unwanted items and expired food to get rid of things they no longer want.</p>	<p>Qualified Assertion (what, in stated context) + Reason (what)</p> <p>Qualified Assertion (what, to whom) + Reason (what)</p>

<p>'The arts are nothing more than a luxury.' How far is this true of your society?</p> <p>"Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder." While it is true that people from all backgrounds would be able to appreciate the arts in their own way, <i>admittedly</i>, not everyone is privileged enough to be able to appreciate art for its academic purposes. Thus, appreciating the arts as an activity is a luxury to those less well-educated,</p>	<p>Qualified Assertion (what, to whom) + Reason (what)</p>
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<p>especially the older generations who do not manage to obtain much formal education during Singapore's founding years.</p> <p><i>Despite all these barriers to taking on the arts,</i> Singapore still recognises the important role that the arts has in society as a creative platform for all. As such, the Singapore government has taken steps to ensure that the arts are more accessible to everyone. To lessen the financial burden that pursuing the arts might bring, the government highly subsidises learning platforms like the Singapore National Youth Orchestra and Singapore's Children Choir which are free for Singaporeans to join.</p>	<p>Qualified Assertion (what, context) + Reason (what)</p>
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EXERCISE:

Samples of topic sentences are given below.

i Identify the reason and assertion in the topic sentences below.

ii Give reasons why you think the topic sentences are effective or ineffective in addressing the question.

<p>Consider the view that consumers are at the mercy of corporations. (DHS Y6 2015 EOY)</p> <p>(a) Just 37 years ago, there were 50 companies in charge of most American media. Now, 90% of the media in the United States is controlled by just six corporations: AT&T, CBS, Comcast, Disney, Newscorp and Viacom.</p> <p>(b) Although it seems like consumers have a wide variety of brands to choose from, some products are actually monopolised by a single company. Quality and prices of products are actually controlled without consumers' knowledge. E.g. Luxottica makes over 80% of all the sunglasses in the world.</p> <p>(c) The modern consumer is more demanding than ever, with abundant choices and the ability</p>

to make informed choices with a quick Internet search.

Do films offer anything more than entertainment? (DHS 2020 Y5 Promo)

1. Conventional wisdom has it that films are only made to entertain. In the fast-paced, hectic society that we live in today, the majority of audiences demand to be entertained through films which are an easy escape from our stressful lives, and audiences hardly ruminate over or care about the issues highlighted in films after watching them. Therefore, film producers driven by profit, would create films with mass appeal to elicit engagement regardless of whether there exists any substance in the plot of the film.
2. Marvel movies have been lambasted for being too homogenous. Critics have highlighted how "the 'Marvel movie'" has become its own genre, an archetype for polished, epic, action-packed, films filled with one-liners.
3. More experimental film producers interested in the art of film making would argue otherwise: there exist arthouse films that utilise challenging or unusual storytelling to provoke thought and place an emphasis on the authorial expressiveness of the director.

SELF-PRACTICE: IDENTIFYING AND CRAFTING TOPIC SENTENCES

Q: To what extent do advertisements have a negative effect on society?

Question analysis:

Samples of topic sentences are given below. Give reasons why you think the topic sentences are effective or ineffective in addressing the question.

(Refer to the ASSERTION + REASON structure if needed.)

	Effective or ineffective? Why?
a) Advertisements are prevalent in Singapore.	
b) Advertisements expose the young and impressionable to undesirable content.	
c) Advertisements have a positive impact on society as they promote social values.	
d) A negative effect of advertisements is that they distort societal perceptions of beauty.	

e) There is validity in the claim that advertisements affect people in society adversely as they fuel consumerism which encourages unnecessary spending.	
f) Advertisements do indeed have a largely negative influence on young children as they expose them to undesirable values and ideals at a young age.	
g) However, the negative impact of advertisements is generally not as bad as it is claimed to be for society in general, particularly when advertising allows consumers to compare and contrast goods and services across companies and drives innovation in firms to create better products.	