

PRACTICE—CHOOSING THE BEST TOPIC SENTENCE

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.

PRACTICE—CREATING YOUR OWN TOPIC SENTENCE:

Now try creating your own topic sentences for the following paragraphs:

1)

Famous inventor Thomas Edison, for instance, did so poorly in his first years of school that his teachers warned his parents that he'd never be a success at anything. Similarly, Henry Ford, the father of the auto industry, had trouble in school with both reading and writing. But perhaps the best example is Albert Einstein, whose parents and teachers suspected that he was retarded because he responded to questions so slowly and in a stuttering voice. Einstein's high school record was poor in everything but math, and he failed his college entrance exams the first time. Even out of school the man had trouble holding a job-until he announced the theory of relativity.

2) Eating disorders afflict as many as five to ten million women and one million men in the Unites States. But why?

Young girls not only play with Barbie dolls that display impossible, even comical, proportions, but they are also bombarded with images of supermodels. These images leave an indelible mental imprint of what society believes a female body should look like. Carri Kirby, a University of Nebraska mental health counselor, adds

that there is a halo effect to body image as well: "We immediately identify physical attractiveness to mean success and happiness."

3) From Deborah Blum's "What's the Difference between Boys and Girls?"

Boys tend to gather in large, competitive groups. They play games that have clear winners and losers and bluster through them, boasting about their skill. Girls, early on, gather in small groups, playing theatrical games that don't feature hierarchy or winners. One study of children aged three to four found they were already resolving conflict in separate ways—boys resorting to threats, girls negotiating verbally and often reaching a compromise.

