

Revision & Practice 3 : Identifying & Choosing Topic Sentences

Level : L2

Module : Written Expression (CWE)

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Exercise 1 : Identify the topic sentences in the following paragraphs.

Paragraph 1

The maintenance of order in prestate societies is rooted in a commonality of material interests. The greater the amount of common interests, the less need there is for law-and-order specialists. Among band-level cultures law and order stem directly from the relations between people and the natural habitat from which subsistence is derived. All adults usually have open access to this habitat: the rivers, lakes, beaches, oceans; all the plants and animals; the soil and the subsoil. In so far as these are basic to the extraction of life-sustaining energy and materials they are communal "property."

(Marvin Harris, (1975), *Culture, people nature*, p. 356)

Paragraph 2

Though the United States has spent billions of dollars on foreign aid programs, it has captured neither the affection nor esteem of the rest of the world. In many countries today Americans are cordially disliked; in others merely tolerated. The reasons for this sad state of affairs are many and varied, and some of them are beyond the control of anything this country might do to try to correct them. But harsh as it may seem to the ordinary citizen, filled as he is with good intentions and natural generosity, much of the foreigners' animosity has been generated by the way Americans behave.

(Edward Hall, (1973), *The silent language*, p. xiii)

Paragraph 3

Anthropology is the study of humankind, especially of Homo sapiens, the biological species to which we human beings belong. It is the study of how our species evolved from more primitive organisms; it is also the study of how our species developed a mode of communication known as language and a mode of social life known as culture. It is the study of how culture evolved and diversified. And finally, it is the study of how culture, people, and nature interact wherever human beings are found.

(Marvin Harris, (1975), *Culture, People Nature*, p. 1)

Exercise 2 : Look at the following text about Leonardo da Vinci. The first sentence of each paragraph has been removed. The sentences are listed in the box below the text. Match them with the correct paragraphs.

The Genius of Leonardo

1.

He was the illegitimate son of a Florentine lawyer and property owner. His artistic bent obviously appeared at an early age for when he was 15 he was apprenticed to the painter Verocchio. In 1472 he was accepted in the painters' guild in Florence, where he remained until 1481.

2.

And among his early drawings were many sketches of mechanical apparatus and weapons, evidence of his interest in, and knowledge of things mechanical.

3.

His artistic achievements in Milan reached their peak with the mural 'The Last Supper' completed in 1497.

4.

In the 1490s he began monumental treatises on painting, architecture, human anatomy and mechanics. He set down his observations on these themes in voluminous notes and sketches, which he would later assemble in his notebooks. There remain of his notebooks a prodigious 7000 pages, all in characteristic 'mirror-writing'.

5.

He then went back to Milan and entered the service of the French King Louis XII. Later he was to work in Rome with Raphael and Michelangelo on designs for the new church of St Peter. In 1516 he settled in France, at Cloux, near Amboise, where he died three years later.

6.

He was no mere theorist advancing fanciful ideas. He was a practical man, who designed things that would work, because he could see how they would work.

7.

There is no evidence that Leonardo actually built the machines and mechanical devices he sketched and described. And in many cases their practical importance remained unrealised and unrealisable for centuries. There was neither the demand for them nor the technology.

(Pears Encyclopaedia, 1987, p. 342)

Match the following sentences with the correct paragraphs.

a. Leonardo returned to Florence in 1499, where he painted that most famous painting 'The Mona Lisa' (1503).

b. Between 1482 and 1499 he was employed in the service of the Duke of Milan, to whom he was painter, sculptor, musician and technical adviser on military and engineering matters.

c. In whatever subject he studied, Leonardo laid absolute faith in the evidence of his eyes.

d. Leonardo da Vinci was born in 1452 in Vinci, a small village in Tuscany.

e. And it is in his 'things', his machines, that we are interested in this book.

f. By then Leonardo's expertise with paint brush and palette, pen and pencil was already well advanced.

g. But his creative energies now were turning more and more to scientific and literary pursuits.