



6.1 Thesis statements and topic sentences

Your task is to create a handout on thesis statements and topic sentences that you and your classmates can use as a guide when you write. You may use the template and example from a student essay below.

A thesis statement is [finish the sentence]

Topic sentences are [finish the sentence]

So what exactly is the function of topic sentences? Well, they [finish the sentence]

And what exactly do they look like? In the following excerpt from a student essay, the topic sentences have been marked, and we explain how you see the topic sentence is supported by evidence. [Mark topic sentences and decorate the margin with relevant notes about evidence that supports the topic sentences]

Throughout the story, Megan and Laura are comparing themselves to each other and, in particular, to the abducted girls. The few adjectives used to describe the first girl, Julie-Anne, can be summarized down to this quote, “she is beautiful” (l. 2). She is in fact so stunning that the pair of friends strive to look like her. “(...) [We] stare into the mirror too long, hoping to catch just the smallest hint of Julie-Anne in our own faces” (ll. 65-66). They want to be just as Julie-Anne because of her beautiful traits, and this need shows quintessential throughout the short story.

A key factor to understand their longing to look like Julie-Anne is the fact that Laura and Megan are often mistaken for siblings. “(...) from the back you can’t tell us apart” (l. 8). They are depicted as being so similar that they might even fear losing their own identity and individuality in their commonalities. Although they deliberately wear their hair the same way,



they repeatedly try to stand out from each other. “You run like a spaz” (l. 42) says Megan and thus does her best to distinct herself from Laura by demeaning her, finding every way that Megan is and does better than Laura.

This need of distinction is paramount in their longing for Julie-Anne’s looks. “I would absolutely fuck [Julie-Anne’s boyfriend]” (l. 49), says Megan realizing that Julie-Anne has a loving boyfriend and someone drooling over her, even willing to abduct her. In addition to her beauty, she must be worthy of doing a criminal act to obtain which triggers Megan’s and Laura’s plans: If they could be like Julie-Anne, they would be pursued by someone. They might even get abducted, so pretty they would be.¹

Some strong points in this example are [finish the sentence]

Some weaknesses, however, might be [finish the sentence]

So how exactly does one write a good topic sentence? One suggestion might be to [finish the sentence]

And here you can find five example phrases that you might use to start your topic sentence [finish ideas for the remaining four bullets]:

1: There are many reasons why

2:

3:

4:

5:

¹ Excerpt from student essay on the short story “Slut Trouble” by Beejay Silcox (2017).