

TOPIC SENTENCE OUTLINE (aka reverse outline)

One good way to pare a long document down to its essentials so that you can see the big picture is to make a topic sentence outline. *A topic sentence of a paragraph is a sentence that clearly states the main ideas of the paragraph.* It is not always the first sentence in the paragraph. Everything else in the paragraph should be supporting material, examples, details, etc. Literature review topic sentences do not necessarily begin with an author's name.

Leave in the headings and subheadings that appeared in the original manuscript. List topic sentences as bullet points under the headings, paragraph by paragraph. If you find a paragraph of your document that does not appear to have a topic sentence (this would be a paragraph in which the main idea of the paragraph is only implied), write a topic sentence for that paragraph. If a paragraph covers two ideas, it should probably have been two paragraphs, so it will need two topic sentences.

Once your topic sentence outline is complete, go back over it looking for

- Flow
- Redundancies
- Gaps

Your topic sentence outline will look something like this:

Heading

- TS
- TS

Subheading

- TS
- TS
- TS