

Drafting Lecture Notes

Outlines

If you like, you may start from an outline. Many people start by just writing down ideas. Start with the strategy you like. At some point, however, you need to be able to put together enough information for an outline that you can share with your teammates and with me.

By the end of the first drafting phase, you will want to have the following:

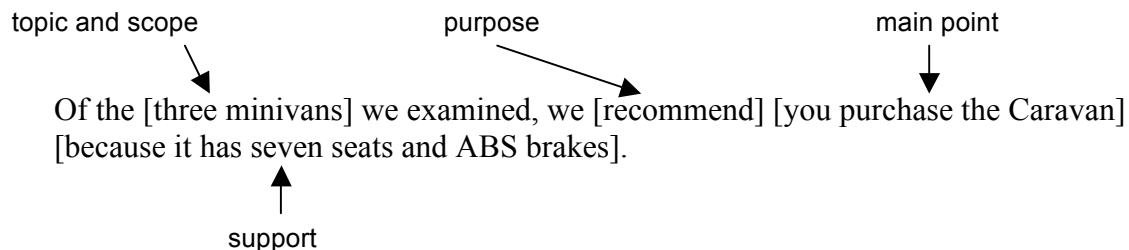
Thesis statement (see overhead on line)

There are two types of thesis statements:

- **Statement of content**—descriptions, definitions, procedures—in this type of thesis you are just saying X is Y; you are not trying to argue a point. Your assembly instructions have this type of thesis (The X™ consists of five major parts.)
- **Proposition to be defended**—recommendations, feasibility assessments, comparisons—here you want to convince your reader of something. The conclusion will be arguable (X should be the new president.)

The thesis statement consists of four main parts

- Purpose
- Topic and scope limits
- Main point
- Order of supporting statements (or number)



Topic sentences

Every time you begin a new topic, include a topic sentence. The heading does not substitute for a topic sentence because people in a hurry often skip topic sentences.

Consider the following:

Choose one place to start. Take care of the edges first and then move to the inside. Use even back and forth motions until you have covered the entire area. It's best if you use the right type of equipment. Wider is better. Finish by picking up the detritus and putting away the equipment.

What am I talking about? It could be several things. Think of a few, then make up a topic sentence using one of your choices and go back to see how it all fits. Your goal is to allow the reader to understand without having to go back and figure it out.

Something you may not know: not all paragraphs need a topic sentence.

Common Types of Engineering Writing: download “How Does Engineering Writing Differ from Other Technical Writing” from my website. The most common kind of engineering writing is the heading and paragraph format. Remember that engineering writing includes many visuals.

Parallelism and Consistency

Remember in a comparison, you need to use the **same information in the same order**. Look at the attached samples. Which two are the most consistent with each other?