Essential Skill: Topic Sentences
People and Their Jobs

TRANSCRIPT

HOOK 1

Hi, writers. It's Anne.

When I was a kid, people always asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. It was always hard to choose, because there are so many fun and interesting jobs. Once, I wanted to be a candy taster so I could try all of the new flavors before they came out. Another time, I wanted to be an astronaut so I could see what it felt like to float around in space. I also wanted to be a detective, because I read so many mystery books when I was young.

I had lots of ideas about things I wanted to be when I grew up, but I knew that I needed to pick something that was special to me. I always enjoyed making up stories and writing. That's why I became an author. As an author, I get to write the words that are in these books, and then people all over the world can read the stories I write.

Think about what you want to be when you grow up.

DISCUSSION 1

Discuss: What do you want to be when you grow up? You can have more than one answer.

HOOK 2

Maybe you said you wanted to be a construction worker, or a professional water slide tester, or a mascot for a sports team. Or maybe you don't know what you want to be when you grow up, and that's okay. Deciding what you want to be when you grow up isn't easy.

My friend Diego and his class want to help other students by creating a bulletin board about different jobs they can do when they grow up. Diego is meeting lots of people to learn about their jobs. One of those people is Brehanna. Here's what he wrote for the bulletin board after learning about Brehanna's job:

- "She uses a special wrench."
- "She can change a tire in less than 20 seconds!"
- "She wears a helmet and padding to stay safe."

I read what Diego wrote about Brehanna, but none of his sentences actually tell me what her job is.

DISCUSSION 2

Discuss: What do you think Brehanna's job is based on the sentences you read? You can have more than one idea.

HOOK 3

Maybe you said Brehanna is a plumber because she uses a special wrench, or she's a mechanic because she works with tires, or a football player because she wears a helmet and padding. Actually, none of these are Brehanna's job—because she works here, at a racetrack!

Brehanna is a tire changer for a car racing sport called NASCAR. She works with her team to help fix cars during a race. Brehanna and her team wear helmets and padding to stay safe at the racetrack. When she uses her special wrench, she can change a tire in less than 20 seconds.

Diego needs to help his readers out. He needs to show his readers how his ideas are connected. He can do this by telling readers what Brehanna's job is.

DISCUSSION 3

Discuss: How could you write a sentence to introduce Brehanna and her job? Try starting your sentence like this: "Brehanna's job is to..."

HOOK 4

Here's what Diego wrote: "Brehanna's job is to change tires for race cars during NASCAR races." Diego likes this as his first sentence because it tells the reader right away who they are reading about and what she does at her job.

Sometimes people ask what topic you are writing about. *Topic* is just a different word for *subject*. Diego is writing about Brehanna and her job. That is his topic. His first sentence is called a *topic sentence* because it tells the reader his topic. The other three sentences tell us little parts about Brehanna's job, but they don't actually name the job. These sentences are called *details*.

Diego could use some more help. He met more people with interesting jobs, and he took lots of notes, but he doesn't have a topic sentence for any of them. We are going to look at three sentences for each person's job we learn about. You will need to decide what their job is. Knowing their job will help you write your topic sentences.

I'll get you started, step by step.

STEP 1

Get your supplies. Each student needs a People and Their Jobs worksheet and a "Jobs" Word Bank.

STEP 2

In today's lesson, you'll need someone to share ideas with. This could be a partner or someone you sit near. When everyone knows who their talk partner is, move on to the next step.

STEP 3

This is Trenton. Trenton works at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. He uses special cleaning tools to make sure all of the dinosaur bones in the museum are clean. Each day, Trenton uses a lift machine to help him get up high and close to all of the dinosaur bones. He has to be very careful when he is doing his job because the bones can break easily.

When you're ready for the next step, click the arrow on the right.

STEP 4

Look at number 1 on your People and Their Jobs worksheet. Whisper-read the three sentences you see about Trenton's job.

STEP 5

Discuss with your partner: How would you write a topic sentence to let your readers know who they are reading about and what their job is? Try starting your sentence like this: "Trenton's job is to..."

STEP 6

Now look at the dotted line next to number 1 on your people and their jobs worksheet. This is where you can write your topic sentence for Trenton. Fill in the rest of the topic sentence: "Trenton's job is to..." Check your Word Bank if you need help thinking of ideas.

Give a thumbs up when you are finished writing your topic sentence.

STEP 7

A good topic sentence could be, "Trenton's job is to clean dinosaur bones at a museum," or "Trenton's job is to work at a museum cleaning dinosaur bones." You might have thought of a different way to introduce Trenton and his job, and that's okay.

When you're ready, click the arrow on the right to move on to the next step.

STEP 8

This is Wei Wei. She is a LEGO Certified Professional. As part of her job, she gets to play with LEGO bricks! She uses her knowledge of designing real buildings to create giant LEGO structures. Wei Wei teaches kids and adults how to use LEGO bricks to build cool things—like this colorful city, or like this dress.

When you're ready for the next step, click the arrow on the right.

STEP 9

Look at number 2 on your People and Their Jobs worksheet. Whisper-read the three sentences you see about Wei Wei's jo

STEP 10

Discuss with your partner: How would you write a topic sentence to let your readers know who they are reading about and what their job is? Try starting your sentence like this: "Weiwei's job is to..."

STEP 11

Now look at the dotted line above the sentences you whisper-read. This is where you can write your topic sentence for Wei Wei. Fill in the rest of this topic sentence: "Weiwei's job is to..." Check your Word Bank if you need help thinking of ideas.

Give a thumbs up when you are finished writing your topic sentence.

STEP 12

A good topic sentence could be, "Wei Wei's job is to show people how to build cool stuff with LEGO bricks," or "Wei Wei's job is to design and build things out of LEGO bricks." You might have thought of a different way to introduce Wei Wei in her job, and that's okay.

When you're ready, click the arrow on the right to move on to the next step.

STEP 13

Finally, let's meet Anton. Anton works for a show called *American Ninja Warrior*—it looks like this. Wow!

On the show, competitors race their way to the finish line by jumping, swinging, and climbing on different things in their way. Each of these things—like this platform here or this rope—is called an obstacle. Anton's job is to test these obstacles before people use them on the show. He does a lot of running and jumping to test each obstacle many

times. This helps to make sure each obstacle works and is safe. If an obstacle breaks or doesn't work, he can test different ways to make it work better. He also uses tools when he tests his jumps—like this.

When you're ready for the next step, click the arrow on the right.

STEP 14

Look at number 3 on your People and Their Jobs worksheet. Whisper-read the three sentences you see about Anton's job.

STEP 15

Discuss with your partner: How would you write a topic sentence to let your readers know who they are reading about and what their job is? Try starting your sentence like this: "Anton's job is to..."

STEP 16

Now look at the dotted line above the sentences you whisper-read. This is where you can write your topic sentence for Anton. Write his topic sentence for Anton and his job. Check your Word Bank if you need help thinking of ideas.

Give a thumbs up when you are finished writing your topic sentence.

STEP 17

A good topic sentence could be, "Anton's job is to test obstacles for *American Ninja Warrior*," or "Anton's job is to test obstacles to make sure they work and they are safe." You might have thought of a different way to introduce Anton in his job, and that's okay.

When you're ready, click the arrow on the right to move on to the next step.

WRAP UP

Wow, check out this bulletin board! There are so many awesome jobs we learned about. Great work! Diego is now confident that readers will be able to quickly understand who they are reading about and what their job is from the very first sentence.

The next time you start a piece of writing, you can be like Diego and start your writing with a topic sentence. Diego is very pleased with his bulletin board, and he's learned a lot about how to write a topic sentence.

Thanks for your help writers. I'll see you next time.