WHAT is a topic sentence?
A topic sentence is usually one sentence that presents the main idea of a paragraph.

WHEN should I use a topic sentence?
A topic sentence should be used in every paragraph.

WHERE should a topic sentence be located within a paragraph?
The topic sentence is usually (but not always) the first sentence of the paragraph.

WHY do I need to use topic sentences in my papers?
Topic sentences are important to use in papers because they help organize your thoughts and information.

Thesis: As I prepare to graduate from Missouri Baptist University, I know I will miss the University's Christian environment, helpful faculty and staff, and the Academic Success Center.

Topic sentence #1: The distinct Christian perspective I have received in my classes and in relationships with my friends at MBU has been invaluable to me during my college years.

Topic sentence #2: My instructors at MBU have greatly influenced my perspective on life, and I hope to stay in touch with them long after graduation.

Topic sentence #3: The Academic Success Center, and the excellent services available such as tutoring and the writing lab, has been instrumental to my success in college.

In this example, the thesis statement exists as the central claim of the paper. Then, each of the topic sentences supports the thesis statement by addressing each of the components of the thesis statement: Christian environment, faculty and staff, Academic Success Center.

Each of these topic sentences represents a paragraph. Remember that each paragraph must stick to the idea presented in the topic sentence.

Paragraph #1: The Christian environment or perspective at MBU.

Paragraph #2: My instructors at MBU and how they have influenced me.

Paragraph #3: The ASC and how it is responsible for my success in college.