

What is the difference between a holiday and a vacation in the United States?

### Model Paragraph 1

Golden Week in Japan is a combined celebration of four holidays. The first takes place on April 29th, the birthday of the Emperor Showa, and *commemorates* the 64 years that he was in power. It is a time for the Japanese people to remember this important period in their history. The second holiday in Golden Week is Constitutional Memorial Day. This day marks the establishment of the Japanese Constitution on May 3, 1947. The next holiday, on May 4th, is called Midorino-hi and is a day for people to be outside enjoying the environment. In fact, Midorino-hi means "green day." Children's Day, the fourth holiday of Golden Week, is on May 5th. This holiday celebrates the health and happiness of children. Traditionally, this day was Boys' Day, and some families still recognize this. For example, they fly flags shaped like *carp* outside their homes to bring strength and success to their boys. In short, Golden Week is a whole week of celebration for the Japanese people.

### The Topic Sentence

➤ New York is a fun place to be on New Year's Eve.  
topic                      controlling idea

➤ New York has great entertainment.  
topic                      controlling idea

➤ New York is the world's loudest city.  
topic                      controlling idea

- Twenty-five people attended the company's Halloween party.
- The company's Halloween party was a bore, as usual.

➤ Ramadan has three important days within the month of fasting.  
topic                      controlling idea

**Circle the topics and underline the controlling ideas in the sentences below:**

- There are three main kinds of holidays.
- Planning a good Fourth of July party requires five specific steps.

#### ▣ PRACTICE 1: Identifying Topics and Controlling Ideas

Read each sentence. Circle the topic and underline the controlling idea.

1. India celebrates Christian, Hindu, and Islamic holidays.
2. It's fun to carve a Halloween pumpkin.
3. Independence Day is an important holiday in any country.
4. Going to big holiday parties is like a punishment to me.
5. Different countries have unique ideas about Santa Claus.
6. The Western world should have a holiday to recognize senior citizens.
7. It's important to honor your mother on Mother's Day.
8. Rain can ruin a picnic.

#### ▣ PRACTICE 3: Writing Topic Sentences

Choose two holidays that are celebrated in your country. Write a topic sentence for each holiday following this example.

Topic (holiday): Earth Day

Controlling idea (what to say about the holiday): How it is celebrated

Topic sentence: To celebrate Earth Day, my town organizes fun but useful activities.

1. Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Controlling idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Body (Supporting Sentences)

Supporting sentences explain the topic sentence. One common way to do this is with facts. Look back at the model paragraph on page 3 and note the sentences with facts, such as:

- The second holiday in Golden Week is Constitutional Memorial Day.
- This day marks the establishment of the Japanese Constitution on May 3, 1947.

#### ▣ PRACTICE 4: Analyzing Model Paragraph 2

Answer these questions about the model paragraph below.

1. In the topic sentence, circle the topic and underline the controlling idea.
2. How many facts are given as support?

Model Paragraph 2

### An Expensive Holiday

Valentine's Day is a very expensive holiday. Typically, people who are in love with each other exchange gifts. The gifts often cost a lot of money, sometimes as much as \$100. If you do not spend that much, your sweetheart might think you do not care. For example, one of the most popular gifts is chocolate. One box of nice chocolates may cost \$20 or more, which adds up to a million dollars or more spent in the United States on chocolate for a single day! Flowers are also a common gift, and they cost more than chocolate, so sales of flowers may amount to \$5 million in one day! In addition, it is often expected that you and your sweetheart will go out to dinner on that evening. A romantic dinner at a nice restaurant may cost \$100 or more per person. In conclusion, if you plan to celebrate Valentine's Day, make sure you have a lot of money.

## Major and Minor Supporting Sentences

In terms of organization, especially of expository paragraphs, there are two types of supporting sentences: **major supporting sentences** and **minor supporting sentences**. Major supporting sentences tell us about the topic sentence. Minor supporting sentences tell us more about the major supporting sentences.

### ▣ PRACTICE 7: Analyzing Supporting Sentences

Look again at the paragraph "Golden Week" on page 3. Below, it has been diagrammed to show the parts of a paragraph, including the major and minor supporting sentences. Draw arrows to show that the major supporting sentences support the topic sentence and that the minor supporting sentences support the major supporting sentence above them. The first two have been done for you.

#### Topic Sentence (TS)

➤ Golden Week in Japan is a combined celebration of four holidays.

#### Major Supporting Sentence (SS)

➤ The first takes place on April 29th, the birthday of the Emperor Showa, and commemorates the 64 years that he was in power.

#### Minor Supporting Sentence (ss)

➤ It is a time for the Japanese people to remember this important period in their history.

#### Major Supporting Sentence (SS)

➤ The second holiday in Golden Week is Constitutional Memorial Day.

#### Minor Supporting Sentence (ss)

➤ This day marks the establishment of the Japanese Constitution on May 3, 1947.

#### Major Supporting Sentence (SS)

➤ The next holiday, on May 4th, is called Midorino-hi and is a day for people to be outside enjoying the environment.

#### Minor Supporting Sentence (ss)

➤ In fact, Midorino-hi means "green day."

#### Major Supporting Sentence (SS)

➤ Children's Day, the fourth holiday of Golden Week, is on May 5th.

#### Minor Supporting Sentence (ss)

➤ This holiday celebrates the health and happiness of children.

#### Minor Supporting Sentence (ss)

➤ Traditionally, this day was Boys' Day, and some families still recognize this.

#### Minor Supporting Sentence (ss)

➤ For example, they fly flags shaped like carp outside their homes to bring strength and success to their boys.

#### Concluding Sentence (CS)

➤ In short, Golden Week is a whole week of celebration for the Japanese people.

