TOPIC SENTENCE EXERCISE

The following essay was written by a student. The introduction and conclusion have not been changed, but the body paragraphs have had their topic sentences removed. Complete this paper by constructing new topic sentences (with transitions) in the space provided.

Paper topic: Should movie theatres and symphony halls be permitted to fine patrons when their cell phone rings during a performance?

Cell phones ringing in public places has been a talked about issue for a while now. It is a joke between some of my friends and I when we are out somewhere and a cell phone goes off. We say comments like, “Who brought the cell phone guy?” or “Are you going to be that guy?” In more quiet places such as a movie theater or symphony hall, it is much more disturbing. Because of this, people believe that cell phone users should be fined. While it can be disturbing, I do not think people should be fined for using their cell phones.

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Emergencies can happen at any time; they are something people cannot control. Many people carry their cell phone with them because of this. Many parents go to the movies. What if something happened at home that they needed to know about? They would need their cell phone with them to find out. I’m pretty sure doctors go to movies also. What if they were in the theater and had to go to the hospital right away? Would you fine them for needing to help someone? If any kind of emergency were to occur, people should have the right to use their cell phone.

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Should people be fined for getting up to use the bathroom? When people get up to use the bathroom, they have to walk by you, and sometimes you even get people whacking into your seat. I find that more disturbing than a cell phone going off. What if someone has a cold and is blowing his/her nose. Should he/she be fined for being sick? I would say no. Sometimes things happen that people cannot control, and I don’t think they should be punished for that.

First of all, they would need workers to stand in the theaters throughout the whole show. This may distract workers from other duties. There would be a question of accuracy. How do they know whose cell phone it was? The whole process would be complicated and a long procedure that I think would be a waste of time.

People do not like being distracted when they are at a show. However, as stated earlier, there are other distractions at theaters, and workers cannot fine everyone. Also, it is not fair to fine someone because of an emergency that is out of his/her control.

Fining cell phone users is not a good idea. Even if theaters were permitted to fine people, I don’t think it would make a difference anyway. Cell phones are a part of our society, and people are going to use their cell phones no matter what—even if they do risk getting fined.
ORGANIZING A PARAGRAPH: AN EXERCISE IN STRUCTURE

The paragraph below has some issues with structure. Let’s take a look. First, read through the paragraph to decide if any sentences could be eliminated or combined. Then choose a topic sentence. Here’s a hint about the topic sentence: It’s a revised version of two of the sentences below, one more substantial sentence and one dead-weight sentence that basically just one word can be lifted from. Now rearrange! You may need to add some transitional words or perhaps a full sentence.

I have chosen to write about my room for this topic. My room has great meaning. It is a place I feel safe and comfortable. I will start with the way it looks. Our room is a new room that we recently moved into a year ago. My bedroom is in the basement of a five-bedroom house I share with my brother’s family, my mother and father, and my family. The wood trimming is a natural color oak. You can still smell the new wood just as when we first moved in. The bedroom is in the basement. It is very dark at most times because there are not many windows in the basement. This bedroom has a lot of meaning because I share it with my husband and two-year-old daughter, Julie. There is just one big window on the back wall. We have a big oak bed and a crib next to that for the baby.