

EXERCISE 4-1 Topic Sentences

Underline the topic sentence in the following paragraph and cross out any material that does not clarify or develop the central idea.

Historically, quilt making has served as an important means of social, political, and artistic expression for women. In the nineteenth century, especially, quilting circles provided one of the few opportunities for the women of a community to forge social bonds outside of their families. Once a week or more, they came together to sew as well as trade small talk, advice, and news. They used dyed cotton fabrics much like the fabrics quilters use today; surprisingly, quilters' basic materials haven't changed that much over the years. Sometimes the women joined their efforts in the support of a political cause, making quilts that would be raffled to raise money for temperance societies, hospitals for sick and wounded soldiers, and the fight against slavery. The abolitionist movement, in particular, led one activist, Sarah Grimké, to memorably express her hopes for herself and fellow quilters: "May the points of our needles prick the slave owner's conscience." Quilt making also afforded women a means of artistic expression at a time when they had few other creative outlets. Within their socially acceptable roles as homemakers, many quilters subtly—and perhaps subconsciously—pushed back at the restrictions placed on them by experimenting with color, design, and technique.