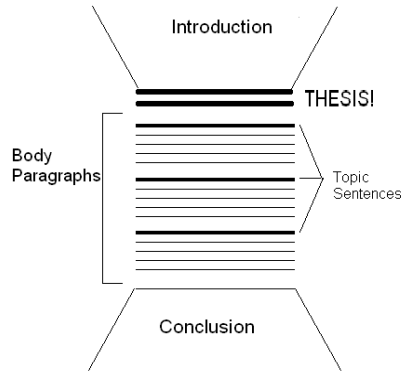


# Making Essays Easy!

## Planning and Organizing Effective Papers



### Basic Essay Structure

- The **introduction** should start with a broad focus and quickly narrows down to the thesis.
- The **thesis** is the most important sentence in the paper. It clearly states what you are arguing, and *all evidence in the paper should support it*.
- Each of the **body paragraphs** needs to support the thesis.
- All body paragraphs must start with a **topic sentence** that tells what the paragraph is about.
- The ideal **conclusion** should not only restate what you said in the rest of the paper, but also discuss the broader implications of the topic.

### Introductions

Effective introductions should

- Introduce the topic
- Capture the reader's attention
- Contain at least 4-10 sentences
- Explicitly state your thesis.

### Strategies for writing introductions:

- **Background:** May include historical or chronological information
- **Definition:** If the paper focuses on an abstract subject, such as honor, love, courage, freedom, etc., define the term.
- **Question:** Make the reader contemplate the topic. The body of the paper must thoroughly answer the question.
- **Quotation:** Start the paper with a relevant quotation. Discuss significance immediately afterward.
- **Anecdote:** Use a brief story.
- **Description:** A brief, vivid picture sets the scene.
  
- **AVOID** clichéd opening phrases like “Since the beginning of time...”
- **AVOID** excessive summary. One or two sentences of summary to give the reader some background will suffice.

### Thesis Statements

An effective thesis should

- Be a central idea that requires supporting evidence, not a factual statement
- Be of adequate scope for an essay of the assigned length, not too broad or narrow
- Be sharply focused, not vague
- Not have an immediately obvious answer

### Strategies for writing thesis statements

To craft a complex thesis that contains several ideas, “sentence paradigms” can be helpful.

*Examples:*

- Although \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Although scientists can now detect genetic predisposition to specific diseases, not everyone should be tested for these diseases.
- Because \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Because the Polygraph has not been proven reliable even under the most controlled circumstances, its use by private employers should be banned.
- By [doing something] Carl Cadet [does something else].
  - By showing Jane’s grip on reality weaken steadily as the rest cure progresses, Gilman not only disparages the treatment, but also the passive, domestic role of women at the end of the nineteenth century.

### Body Paragraphs

An effective body paragraphs should

- Be unified around one main point
- Include a topic sentence that summarizes the paragraph’s main point
- Use specific details and quotations to prove the main point. Explain why these details do indeed prove your argument; do not assume that your reader will automatically understand!
- Stick to the point! Any sentences that do not pertain to the topic should not be included.

### Transitions:

Transitions are the bridges between what has been read and what will be read. Without transitions, paragraphs and entire essays can become disjointed and hard to follow. Therefore, transitions need to connect both sentences and whole paragraphs.

*Sentence –level transitions:*

Here are some commonly used transitions to connect sentences:

Also	First	Next
Although	For example	Nevertheless
And	Furthermore	Second
Besides	However	Similarly
But	If	Since
Consequently	In fact	Therefore
Finally	Likewise	Thus

*Example* (transition words in bold):

**As** we move from small to large animals, from mice to elephants or small lizards to Komodo dragons, brain size increases, **but** not so fast as body size. **In other words**, bodies grow faster than brains, **and** large animals have low ratios of brain weight to body weight. **In fact**, brains grow only about two-thirds as fast as bodies. **Since** we have no reason to believe that large animals are consistently stupider than their smaller relatives, we must conclude that large animals require relatively less brain to do as well as smaller animals.

*Paragraph-level transitions*

Transitions between paragraphs need to take place in the first sentences of each paragraph, not the last sentences. Switching topics at the end of a paragraph confuses the reader. Ideally, look for ways to refer to the topic sentence of the previous paragraph as you write the topic sentence for the subsequent paragraph.

*Example:*

Topic Sentence 1: Consider aseptic packaging, the synthetic packaging for the “juice boxes” so many children bring to school with their lunch.

Topic Sentence 2: What is true for juice boxes is also true for other forms of synthetic packaging.

Note how the sentences connect and would lend a sense of continuity to the essay.

### Conclusions

An effective conclusion should

- Remind readers of the central point of the thesis without summarizing it or restating it word for word
- Be a fully developed paragraph
- Give the reader a sense of closure

### Strategies for writing conclusions

- Propose a course of action or offer a recommendation
- Discuss the wider significance or implications of the essay. Why is your argument important and relevant?
- Pose a question for future study
- Refer to a story, question, definition etc. from your introduction to bring readers full circle

## Five Paragraph Essay Outline

Use the following outline in conjunction with the information on the previous pages to help you organize your paper. Remember, making an outline does not set your paper in stone. Your ideas may change. In fact, outlining is a good way to see where there may be holes in your reasoning or information, or where certain sections should be rearranged.

\*Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Body Paragraph I

*Topic Sentence:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Supporting Evidence:*

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Body Paragraph II

*Topic Sentence:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Supporting Evidence:*

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Body Paragraph III

*Topic Sentence:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Supporting Evidence:*

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas for Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_