

Writing an Essay: Organization

Note: These reference guides do not take the place of assignment guidelines

Introduction

Your introduction sets up the topic of the paper. Begin with a “hook,” an interesting statement that both introduces your topic and gets your reader’s attention, and then develop your background information. What is the historical context of the topic? Who is your audience? What are the key issues within your topic that you will be addressing?



Thesis

The last sentence (or few sentences) of the introduction should be the thesis statement. The thesis statement should introduce the main points that your essay will argue, serving as a roadmap for the direction that the body paragraphs will take.



Body Paragraphs

These paragraphs are where you develop specific ideas about your topic. Be sure that all ideas relate back to the thesis in your introduction. Each body paragraph has an introduction and conclusion sentence.



Topic Sentences

Each body paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that calls back to and elaborates on one of the points within the thesis.

Examples Using Sources

Develop the topic sentence by following it with evidence from your sources, which you should then analyze and relate back to your overall argument.

Transitions

Transitions move you smoothly between ideas, pieces of evidence, or paragraphs. Transitions can be single words, phrases, or full sentences.



Conclusion

Your conclusion takes the information you have developed throughout the body paragraphs and places it back within the context you established in the introduction. Your conclusion should not simply summarize or restate your thesis, but rather should suggest a broader implication to your claim that shows your reader why your claim matters.