



Essay Structure

In writing, following the correct essay structure is an important step in constructing a well-organized and successful essay. As a beginning step in the writing process, it is important to know the type of essay that will be developed and determine which structure would work best for its development. The correct structure will allow the reader to better understand and follow the ideas presented in the paper. It can also help the reader understand important connections between ideas and highlight key points in the paper.

The Five-Paragraph Essay Structure

Introduction Thesis Statement	The introduction, as the name implies, <i>introduces</i> the topic. It can also serve to grab the readers' attention and interest. The introduction should state or imply your argumentative thesis. Thesis: <i>The thesis statement is most commonly a sentence that clearly states the position in the argument and briefly mentions the supporting reasons arranged in the same order they will follow throughout the paper.</i>
-Main Point/Claim 1 a. Topic Sentence b. Supporting Evidence/Details c. Transition Sentence	Body The body paragraphs should support the thesis presented in the introduction by providing evidence and more specific details about the topic. The body for an argumentative essay should include: Background <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presents any necessary background information, including pertinent personal narratives or stories. Lines of Argument <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presents good reasons and evidence in support of the thesis, usually in order of importance. Consideration of Alternative Arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examines alternative or opposing points of view, notes advantages and disadvantages of alternative views, and explains why one view is better than other(s).
-Main Point/Claim 2 a. Topic Sentence b. Supporting Evidence/Details c. Transition Sentence	
-Main Point/Claim 3 a. Topic Sentence b. Supporting Evidence/Details c. Transition Sentence	
Conclusion Summary of main points Re-state thesis statement	Summarizes the argument briefly, elaborates on the implications of the thesis, and makes a strong ethical or emotional appeal in a memorable way.

Research Essay Structure

The research essay structure is in many ways similar to that of the five-paragraph essay structure. The introduction must introduce the topic and include a workable thesis statement that attempts to answer a question, argument, or claim. However, the thesis statement is broader and not necessarily presents only three main points. The conclusion will summarize the main points developed throughout the paper and remind the reader of the thesis. However, the body section of a research paper varies in the following ways:

- The body section does not need to be limited to three main points. It can and is usually longer including multiple body paragraphs. Each body paragraph must have strong topic sentences and transitions to maintain the ideas connected and related to the thesis.
*Note: Refer to **Transitions Handout** for further information on how to use them in a research paper.*
- A research paper usually includes more sources providing more supporting evidence that must be integrated and explained resulting in more body paragraphs. Each source must be integrated to the paper using signal phrases and proper citations.

Some information courtesy of:

Hacker, Diana and Nancy Sommers. *A Writer's Reference*. Boston: Bedford St. Martins, 2011. Print.

Lunsford, Andrea A. *Easy Writer*. Boston: Bedford St. Martins, 2010. Print.