

ACADEMIC WRITING

Essay skills

Structure of an Essay

An essay will contain three main sections :

1. The Introduction
2. The Body
3. The conclusion.

The Introduction

The introduction should fulfil these six criteria:

1. An orientation statement
2. definition(s) (if necessary)
3. background (if required)
4. The purpose of essay
5. The scope/limits of essay
6. A thesis statement

Orientation statement

Orientation statement is a general statement about the topic. It does not contain argument but simply introduces the topic free of the question in which it occurs.

Definition

Definition(s) explain terms or titles and their meaning(s).

Background

Background gives information that is necessary for the reader to be able later to follow the writer's argument.

Purpose of essay

Purpose of essay provides a focus for the reader.

Scope or limits

Scope/limits puts parameters on the areas to be discussed in the essay.

Thesis statement

Thesis statement is the writer's point of view about the essay topic, the stand the writer will take.

Essay: Using a personal reflection, write a 1000 word essay on how rising food prices are impacting people's diets

This is the information that gives the reader some orientation and background to the question and the essay topic. It is very general information. In a 1000 word essay 1-2 sentences is sufficient.

Thesis: This clearly states what your main argument of the paper is. All the rest of your information will be used to make this argument. In a 1000 word essay a thesis will be focused on one or two specific things. Doing this will help to guide your essay and keep your argument succinct and within the word limit.

INTRODUCTION

Fruit is an important part of a healthy diet. However Jones (2010 p, 12) states that people are eating less fruit because it is becoming more expensive. This paper will argue that one way of combating the rising price of fruit is for local council's to plant more fruit trees in local parks and public areas. Firstly, the paper will identify key terms in the literature around food prices. Secondly, the paper will focus on fruit, and examine its role in healthy diets and evaluate recent consumption of fruit. Finally I will use my personal reflection of the current situation in my home town to explore a possible response.

Sign Post/ Road Map: This section clearly shows the reader what evidence you are going to use and how you are going to present the evidence to support your thesis. In a 1000 word essay you might use 2-4 main pieces of evidence. And you say I will firstly ... and secondly ... and finally ...

The Body

- Body of essay is written as a **series of paragraphs**
- These paragraphs are **based from the points listed** in the scope/limits section of the introduction.
- In a shorter essay, **each point now becomes the topic for a paragraph**
It is important that *each paragraph only contains one point*.
- In a larger essay, the writer may find there is a need to sub-divide a point and to dedicate two or three paragraphs to the overall point.
- **Each point must be discussed in terms of the claim made in the thesis statement.** The argument is developed through the discussion of each point, and the content of all the other paragraphs.
- **A whole argument is being pursued**, not a disparate set of ideas.

A paragraph should include:

- **A topic-sentence** which states the idea which will be discussed in the paragraph.
- **Explanations and illustrations** of the idea
- **Evidence** which supports the explanations and illustrations.
This evidence is drawn from reading/research and accompanied by correct referencing techniques.
It illustrates the explanation and enhances the point of view or argument
Evidence should be given in a *paraphrased* form.
- **A summary sentence** to draw conclusions
- A provision of a [link to the next paragraph](#) (You can make the link at the beginning of the next paragraph too)

Example of a strong paragraph

Essay title:	What strategies do you consider to be useful in producing a good essay assignment?
Topic sentence: (main point)	Another important step in producing a good assignment is to draft and then revise the essay several times. As Murray (2006) points out, although many students expect to produce a good version of their essay the first time they write it, most successful writers go through several revisions. This approach makes sense because writing an assignment is a complex process which involves many different aspects such as organisation, clear argument, flow, grammar and choice of words. It is not possible to focus on all these aspects simultaneously as we are writing. Therefore, an effective strategy is to produce a rough draft from the essay plan and then revise it two or three times, focussing on different aspects at each revision.
Development:	
Conclusion / tie-back	

The Conclusion

The conclusion is **the last paragraph** in an essay.

Sometimes, it may be necessary to split the conclusion into two connected paragraphs

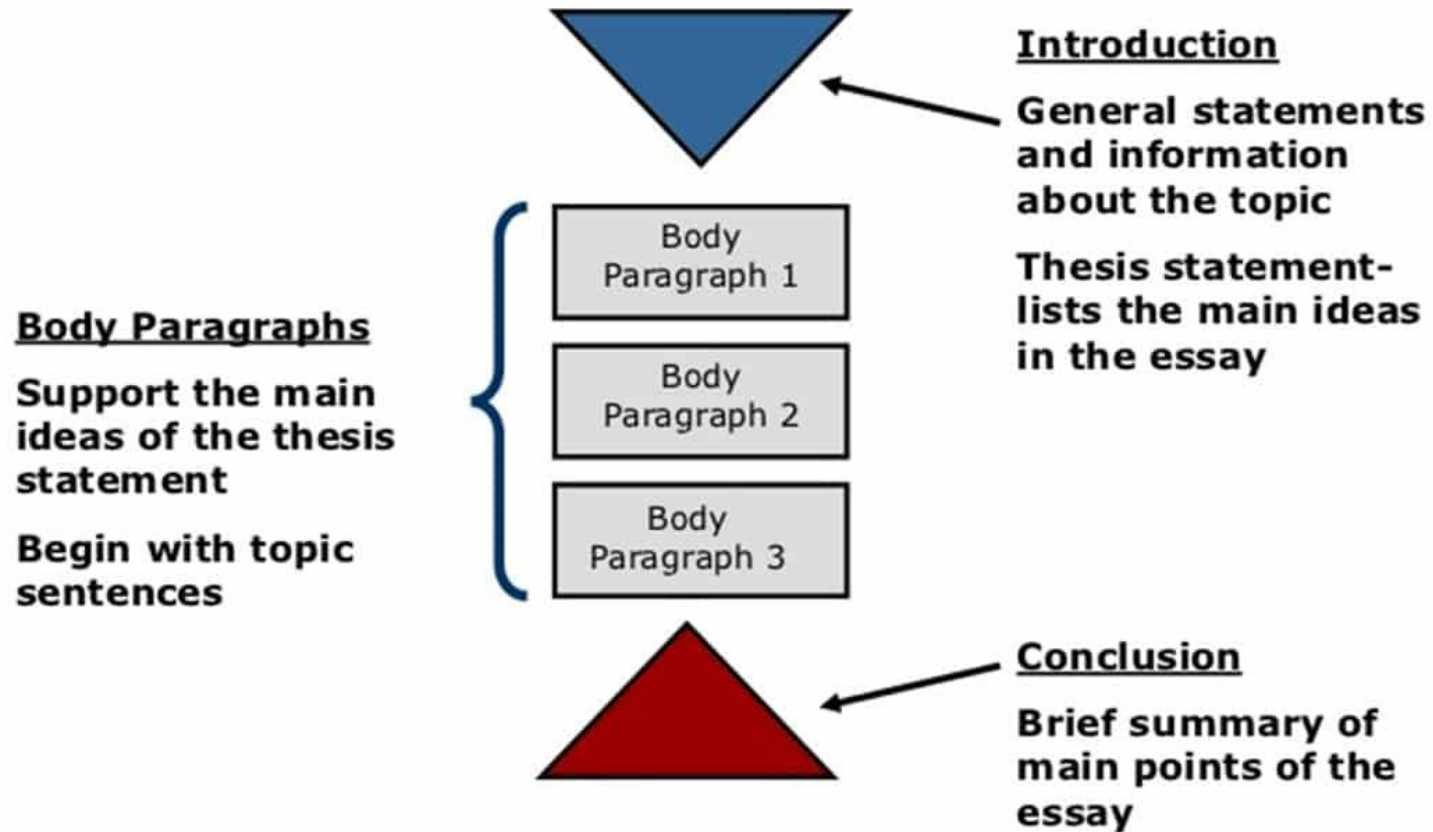
It is NOT a summary of the points in the essay

The conclusion:

- **re-states the thesis statement in different words**
(Opening sentence commences with a summary word)
- **summarises the significant points** made in each section of the essay
in relation to the thesis statement
- **makes a final comment**

NB. No new information can be introduced in the conclusion.

Overview of an Essay



COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID IN ESSAY WRITING

- Failing to address the question
- No clear introduction
- Not having a clear argument
- Describing rather than analysing
- Not using reliable references
- Quoting without understanding
- Inflated and overly elaborate style
- Not supporting statements with evidence
- Incorrect referencing
- Recommendations not drawn from analysis
- Conclusions are not forward looking
- Making assumptions
- Poor data collection

Openings:

It is often said that ... / Many people claim that...
In this day and age ... / Nowadays... / These days
We live in an age where many of us are...
... is a hotly-debated topic that often divides opinion.
... is often discussed yet rarely understood.
It goes without saying that ... is one of the most important issues facing us today.
The following essay takes a look at both sides of the argument / ..the positives and the negatives of...

Introducing points :

Firstly, lets take a look at... / To start with, ...
First of all, it is worth considering ...
Secondly,... Thirdly,...
Furthermore,... / In addition, ... / What is more, ... / On top of that,...
Another point worth noting is ... / Another factor to consider is ...
Lastly, ... / Finally... / Last but not least, ...

Presenting ideas and giving examples :

When it comes to noun,	According to expert, ...
In terms of noun ...,	Research has found that...
With respect to noun,	There are those that argue that ...
Not only But also	For instance... / For example ... / such as....

Expressing result and reason:

As a result, ... / As a result of ...,
... has lead to ... / ...has resulted in ...
Consequently, ... / Therefore,
On account of ... / Due to ...
One reason behind this is ...

Contrasting :

Although / Even though subject + verb

Despite / In spite of noun

Despite the fact that subject + verb, ...

On the other hand ... On the other hand ...

However ... / Never the less, ... / Even so ...

Concluding :

To sum it up, ... / In conclusion, ...
All things considered, ...
Taking everything into consideration, ...
Weighing up both sides of the argument,....
The advantages of ... outweigh the disadvantages

Opinion :

As far as I am concerned, ...
From my point of view,...
In my opinion, ...
Personally speaking, ...
My own view of the matter is ...

Vocabulary for Essay Writing

Common Connectives to connect/link multiplex sentences

ADDITION	SEQUENCE	CONSEQUENCE	CONTRAST
in addition to and similarly likewise as well as besides another furthermore also moreover and then too not only.....also even besides this/that in the same way	first(ly) initially in the first stage / phase one reason / advantage to begin with second(ly) etc in the second stage / phase another reason / advantage then earlier / later after this / that at this point following this / that following this / that a further reason / advantage in the final stage / phase the final reason / advantage	as a result thus so therefore consequently it follows that thereby eventually then in that case admittedly	However on the other hand despite in spite of though although but on the contrary otherwise yet instead of rather whereas nonetheless even though compared with in contrast alternatively
CERTAINTY	CONDITION	DEFINITION	SUMMARY
obviously certainly plainly of course undoubtedly	if unless whether provided that for, so that, whether depending on	is refers to means that is consists of such as like	in conclusion in summary lastly, finally to sum up to conclude to recapitulate in short
EXAMPLE	REASON/CAUSE & EFFECT	TIME	TIME: Continued
for instance one example just as in particular such as namely to illustrate	Since, as, so, because (of) due to owing to the reason why in other words leads to cause of/ caused	before from since, as until meanwhile at the moment when whenever	as soon as just as presently at the present currently