

Basic Essay & Paragraph Organization



The essay is a common form of writing in academia and typically consists of an introduction, body, and conclusion. While this handout offers general writing principles for basic essay organization, writers should always tailor their work to their audience and assignment.

Basic Essay Format

Introduction

- Engages readers and sets the tone of the text
- Establishes the context for your work
- Leads to your main idea or thesis

Thesis Statement

- Establishes the purpose and scope of your writing through a specific, arguable claim (not a statement of fact)
- Often outlines the organization of the essay

Body

- Develops the thesis or main idea of your work
- Consists of clearly-focused body paragraphs

Body Paragraph Organization

- The **topic sentence** is typically the first sentence of each paragraph and states the topic, argument, or sub claim of the paragraph and shows how it connects to your main claim or thesis
- Evidence** can include quotes, examples, statistics, and other material that supports and increases the understanding and credibility of the paragraph's main idea or claim
- Analysis** shows readers how the evidence supports or proves your point or sub claim
- Transitions** move readers from one idea to the next, providing a connection between ideas and indicating the direction and development of your work

Conclusion

- Explains the implications of your work
- Reminds readers of your main points in a way that confirms the thesis
- Provides a sense of closure

