

Help Centres – English Support



The Basic Outline for an Essay

Introduction:

The introduction should have some of the following elements, depending on the type of paper:

- Start with an attention grabber: a short story, example, statistic, or historical context that introduces the paper topic
- Give an overview of any issues involved with the subject
- Define of any key terminology need to understand the topic
- Quote or paraphrase sources revealing the controversial nature of the subject (argumentative papers only)
- Highlight background information on the topic needed to understand the direction of the paper
- Write an antithesis paragraph, presenting the primary opposing views (argumentative paper only)

*The introduction must end with a **THESIS** statement (a 1 to 2 sentences in length):*

- Tell what the overall paper will focus on
- Briefly outline the main points in the paper

Body:

- Clearly present the main points of the paper as listed in the thesis
- Give strong examples, details, and explanations to support each main points
- If an argumentative paper, address any counterarguments and refute those arguments
- If a research paper, use strong evidence from sources—paraphrases, summaries, and quotations that support the main points

Conclusion:

- Restate your thesis from the introduction in different words
- Briefly summarize each main point found in the body of the paper (avoid going over 2 sentences for each point)
- Give a statement of the consequences of not embracing the position (argumentative paper only)
- End with a strong clincher statement: an appropriate, meaningful final sentence that ties the whole point of the paper together (may refer back to the attention grabber)

Paper Topic: _____

Audience: _____

Introduction

Possible ideas for the introduction (see front side of handout for suggestions):

Thesis Statement *(Usually the last sentence(s) in the introduction):*

Body *(A paper usually has 3 or more many main points; decide how many your paper will need)*

Main Point: _____

Examples/Details/Explanations:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

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Examples/Details/Explanations:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Conclusion

Reworded Thesis (Usually found near the beginning of the conclusion):

