



ESSAY STRUCTURE BASICS

What Is an Essay?

An essay is a group of paragraphs that work together to explain or argue one main idea. Each part of the essay has a clear purpose.

Basic Essay Structure

Most essays follow a simple structure:

- Introduction
- Body Paragraphs
- Conclusion

Introduction Paragraph

The introduction is the first paragraph of your essay. It prepares the reader for your topic.

- A strong introduction includes:
- A hook or attention-grabber
- Background information
- Your topic
- A thesis statement (main idea)

Example:

Stress is a common part of the college experience. Imagine studying for an exam while working a job, playing a sport, and trying to manage personal responsibilities at the same time. Many college students experience stress. Managing time and responsibilities can be

challenging. Students can reduce stress by improving time management, building support systems, and maintaining healthy habits.

Body Paragraphs

Body paragraphs explain and support your main idea. Each paragraph should focus on one point.

Each body paragraph should include:

- Topic sentence (main point of the paragraph)
- Supporting details or examples
- Explanation/analysis of how the details support the main idea

Example Structure:

Topic sentence → Details/Evidence → Explanation/Analysis

Conclusion Paragraph

The conclusion is the final paragraph of your essay. It helps bring your ideas together.

A strong conclusion includes:

- Restating the thesis (in a new way)
- Summarizing the main points
- A final thought or closing idea

Example of Essay Structure

Introduction

- Hook (1-2 sentences)
- Background information (3-4 sentences)
- Thesis (1-2 sentences)

Body Paragraph 1

- First main point topic sentence
- Details/Evidence
- Explanation/Analysis

Body Paragraph 2

- Second main point topic sentence

- Details/Evidence
- Explanation/Analysis

Body Paragraph 3

- Third main point topic sentence
- Details/Evidence
- Explanation/Analysis

Conclusion

- Restate thesis
- Summary
- A final thought or closing idea

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Try to avoid:

- a missing or unclear thesis
- body paragraphs without clear topic sentences
- ideas that are not organized logically
- weak or missing conclusion

Tips for Writing a Strong Essay

- For a strong essay, here are some things to consider:
- Plan, and even outline, your essay before writing
- Follow a clear structure
- Focus on one main idea
- Use transitions between paragraphs
- Revise your writing for clarity and organization

Final Takeaway

A strong essay has a clear structure and organized ideas. When each part of your essay has a purpose, your writing will be easier to understand and more effective.