

A Basic Essay Format

To learn the basic structure of an essay, might look at the 5-paragraphy structure. However, keep in mind that not all essays fit this structure; depending on the length and breadth of your paper you may have more than three main points. If an instructor asks for a thesis with supporting points; the basic structure is a good place to start.

- I. Introduction
- II. Point One
- III. Point Two
- IV. Point Three
- V. Conclusion

The Introduction includes the subject, main points and thesis. It should answer three questions

1. **What am I talking about in this paper?** The answer lets the reader know *what* the paper's subject is. For example, if your paper were about a particular book, your answer to this question would give the title, author, and any other necessary information.
2. **How am I going to talk about it?** This answer lets reader know *how* your paper is organized. Here you very briefly introduce your main points or the evidence that will prove your point.
3. **Why am I writing this paper?** This is the **THESIS STATEMENT**, which clearly states the argument or point the paper will make. For beginning writers, it's most easy to place it at the end of the paragraph, but more experienced writers may choose to put it at the beginning or even at the middle. The Body...

The Body will include everything between your intro and conclusion and it is where the main points are discussed. A good starting place is to envision that each point is a separate paragraph (or in a long paper each point might be a section). Here's what the paragraph should include:

- ❖ Introduction to the first main point (topic sentence)
- ❖ Explain your point
- ❖ Give supporting evidence (this is where quotes go!)
- ❖ Explain how the point and evidence relate to your thesis
- ❖ Remember: the whole point of each paragraph is to relate to the thesis, but it helps to spell it out clearly in at least one sentence of the paragraph.
- ❖ Repeat for point 2 and point 3.

The Conclusion ties together the points the essay makes in connection to the thesis. That is, it restates the introduction, or makes an assumption based on the evidence the paper shows. It also helpful to trace the argument as it is made within the essay. A good way to do this is to create a proof that might look something like this:

- ❖ Restatement of POINT ONE+POINT TWO+POINT THREE=THESIS
OR
- ❖ POINT ONE leads to POINT TWO which leads to POINT THREE therefore THESIS is true.