

The **WRITING** CENTER

**Elftmann Student
Success Center**

A Guide On How To:

Use Essay Structure

- **Basic Structure**
- **Purpose of Sections**
- **Effective Body**
- **Effective Introduction**
- **Effective Conclusion**



The Language of English

Grammar

a lesson in proper punctuation

Using An Essay Structure

Whether it's for an assignment, test, or scholarship, the five-paragraph essay is an excellent skill to have as a writer to make your point clear and well-supported in a respectable amount of words.



What's the basic structure of an essay?

In a basic five-paragraph essay, the first paragraph is an **introduction** to the topic of the paper. The introduction should include a one-sentence statement that sums up all the main ideas of your essay, often call a **thesis statement**. The next three paragraphs present supporting details, facts, examples, causes, effects or data. This is often called the **body** of the paper. The last paragraph of the essay is a **conclusion or summary** of the ideas presented in the paper. This basic structure can also be used if the paper needs to be longer by adding more paragraphs between the introduction and conclusion until you reach the desired length.

What's the purpose of each section?

The goal of the structure of the five-paragraph essay is to allow the reader to follow the ideas you are trying to express or explain. The purpose of each part of this structure, then, also supports this goal.

Introduction	Body	Conclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes a one-statement that sums up all the main ideas in the piece (Thesis statement)• Gives context and background• Tells purpose, tone, and organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gives specific details to support your main argument• Shows the relationship between ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspires your reader to reflect or act• Connects your argument to the real world• Restates the one-sentence summary from your introduction (Thesis statement)

What does an effective body paragraph look like?

Your body paragraphs are the legs your main argument stands on. The supporting detail sentences will often come directly from your research. **Write them first** in complete sentences, and look for patterns of ideas that relate to each other. This will allow you to organize your ideas logically. After you have these detail sentences laid out, your topic and closing sentences will be easier to write and fit your paragraph.

In terms of structure, your body paragraphs might be organized like this:

1. Topic Sentence
2. Supporting Sentence detail #1
3. Supporting Sentence detail #2
4. Supporting Sentence detail #3
5. Closing Sentence such as:

Question	Amusing thought	Summary statement
Concluding statement	Connecting statement to next Body Paragraph or Conclusion	

What does an effective introduction look like?

Your introduction should grab your reader's attention and **present an overview of the points** you'll make to prove your main argument or thesis. It's also important to set the **tone** of your essay (serious, informative, scientific, passionate, etc.), usually done in response to the audience you're writing for and with your language choice.

In general, your introduction could look like this:

1. Thesis Statement - one-sentence statement that sums up all the main ideas in the piece
2. Statement of ideas to be discussed in Body Paragraph #2
3. Statement of ideas to be discussed in Body Paragraph #3
4. Closing sentence that connects to the body of the paper and the first key ideas presented.

What does an effective conclusion look like?

The conclusion of an essay is simply a paraphrase of what you just stated in the body of the paper. It will recapture the **central points** of the ideas presented and give a **closing thought**. Use the pattern you followed to find key words to help show the relationship between your body paragraphs.

Your conclusion might look like this:

1. Connection back to Introduction
2. Thesis Statement
3. Restate key idea from Body Paragraph #1
4. Restate key idea from Body Paragraph #2
5. Restate key idea from Body Paragraph #3
6. Closing thought – the last idea you want to leave with the reader.

Reflection	Take Action	Suggest Possible Solutions
Writer's Conclusion	Writer's Question	

References

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