

C1 Writing Guide

Parts of an Essay

An essay has three basic parts: the introduction, the body and the conclusion. The most basic and versatile format for an essay consists of five paragraphs. Paragraph one introduces the topic, paragraphs two through four develop the topic by giving details, and paragraph five concludes the essay.

The first paragraph introduces the topic to the reader and includes the thesis statement. The thesis statement states the main idea of the essay and tells what the organization of the information will be. This paragraph usually begins with a hook. The hook is one or more sentences that get the reader's attention. It can be a famous quote, a broad statement, a question, a statistic, an anecdote or short story, or an interesting piece of information.

Each paragraph in the body of the essay includes a topic sentence and supporting sentences. The topic sentence tells the reader the main topic of the paragraph. It sometimes gives information about the writer's purpose. Supporting sentences relate to the topic sentence of the paragraph in which they occur. These sentences commonly give examples, reasons, facts, or more specific information about the topic.

It is important to have a good conclusion. The introduction and the conclusion often share some of the same ideas and words in order to remind the reader of the main idea of the essay. Conclusions often present suggestions, predictions, or opinions related to the topic.

Introductory paragraph

The Hook

The opening sentence of an essay is called the hook. It is used to engage the readers in the subject and keep their attention throughout the essay. The hook is one part of the essay where you can be as creative as you

want.

Types of hook: Ask a question. Use an interesting observation. Use a unique scenario to catch readers' attention. Begin with a famous quote. Use a surprising or shocking statistic.

Connecting Information

After the hook the writer usually writes connecting information that helps connect the reader to the topic. These sentences can be background information about the topic or they can be examples.

The Thesis Statement

The thesis statement is usually the last part of the introduction. It is usually one

sentence. In the thesis statement the writer tells the reader what to expect in the essay. Thesis statements can be direct or indirect.

Direct Thesis Statement: Gives a specific outline of the essay (E.g. The main problems facing this nation are a lack of job opportunities for citizens, government corruption, and limited university programs for poor students.). From this we see that the body of the essay will have three main parts.

Indirect Thesis Statement: The reader is not given the specific information that will follow in the essay, but the general topic is clear but the reader must continue reading to find the supporting ideas of the argument (E.g. There are three important problems facing the nation today that require immediate attention.).

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Writing the body

The body of an essay is the main part. It follows a plan of organization that the writer has determined before they start writing. The organizational plan can be a general or detailed outline. Each paragraph of the body of an essay should consist of a topic sentence and supporting ideas.

Writing the conclusion

When you write a conclusion you should let the reader know that it is the conclusion. Sometimes the first sentence of the conclusion restates the thesis or main idea of the essay. Do not introduce new information in the conclusion. The final sentence or sentences of an essay often give suggestions, an opinion, or a prediction about the topic of the essay. Sometimes the final sentence or sentences simply say that the issue has been discussed in the essay with so many strong, persuasive facts that the answer to the issue is now clear.

After you write your essay, read the introductory paragraph and the concluding paragraph. These two paragraphs should contain similar information.

(Adapted from Great Writing 4)

Cancer Risks

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Studying a Cause-Effect Essay

Lung cancer kills more people in one year than all criminal and accidental deaths combined. This statistic is shocking, but the good news is that people are now well-informed about the risks connected to lung cancer. They know that their risk of contracting this terrible disease decreases if they either stop smoking or do not smoke at all. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about other types of cancer. Many people are not aware that their everyday behavior can lead to the development of different forms of cancer. By eating better, exercising regularly, and staying out of the sun, people can reduce their risks of cancer.

Instead of foods that are good for them, people often eat unhealthy foods, such as hamburgers, french fries, and pizza. These popular foods contain large amounts of saturated fat, which is one of the worst kinds of fat. Although light and fat-free products are constantly being introduced to the consumer market, many people still buy foods that contain fat because they often taste better. However, eating fatty foods can increase a person's chances for some kinds of cancer. People do not eat as many fresh vegetables and fresh fruits as they used to. Instead, they now eat a lot more processed foods that do not contain natural fiber. Lack of fiber in a person's diet can increase the chance of colon cancer. In the past, people with less information about nutrition actually had better diets than people do today. They also had fewer cases of cancer.

Many people today are overweight, and being overweight has been connected to some kinds of cancer. Since television sets are now a standard piece of furniture in most living rooms, people spend more time sitting down and mindlessly eating snacks than they did in the past. The first generation of TV watchers started the couch potato boom, and today's couch potatoes are bigger than ever. Health experts warn that being overweight is a risk not only for heart disease but also for certain kinds of cancer. The best way to attain a healthy weight is for people to cut back on the amount of food that they consume and to exercise regularly. It is not possible to do only one of these and lose weight permanently. The improved diet must be in conjunction with regular exercise. In the past, people did more physical activity than people do today. For example, people used to walk to work; now almost no one does. In addition, people had jobs that required more physical labor. Now many people have desk jobs that require sitting in front of computers,

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Finally, health officials are gravely concerned by the astounding rise in the cases of skin cancer. Many societies value a tanned complexion, so on weekends people tend to flock to the beach or swimming pools and lie in the sun. Many of these people do not use a safe sunscreen,

and the result is that they often get sunburned. Sunburn damages the skin, and repeated damage may lead to skin cancer later in life. Once the damage is done, it cannot be undone. Thus, prevention is important. In the past, people did not lie in direct sunlight for long periods of time, and skin cancer was not as prevalent as it is now. People have started to listen to doctors' warnings about this situation, and more and more people are using proper sunscreens. Unfortunately, millions of people already have this potential cancer problem in their skin and may develop cancer later.

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Cancer has been around since the earliest days of human existence, but only recently has the public been made aware of some of the risk factors involved. Antismoking campaigns can be seen everywhere--on billboards, in television commercials, on the radio, and in newsprint. If the same amount of attention were given to proper diets, exercise, and sunscreens, perhaps the number of overall cancer cases could be reduced.

Studying a Comparison/Argument Essay

An Alternative to University Education

A high school diploma is not the end of many people's education these days. High school students who want to continue their education generally choose one of two routes after graduation. Some students opt to attend a community college and then transfer to a university, while others go directly to a university. Making this difficult choice requires a great deal of careful thought. However, if the choice is based on three specific factors, namely, cost, location, and quality of education, students will quickly see the advantages that attending a community college offers.

Attending a community college is much cheaper than attending a university. For example, tuition at a local community college might cost \$3,000 per year, especially for residents of the area. The same classes taken at a nearby university could cost over \$25,000. In addition, a university would charge more for parking, photocopying at the library, cafeteria food, and campus health clinic services. No matter how the total bill is calculated or what is included, it is more expensive to study at a university.

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Studying at a community college can be more convenient because of its location. Going to a university often requires recent high school graduates to live far from home, and many of them are reluctant to do so. These students are only seventeen or eighteen years old and may have very little experience with being away from home. It is often difficult for these young people to suddenly find themselves far away from their families. In addition, very few parents are prepared to send their teenagers to distant universities. Because almost every area has a community college, students who opt to go to a community college first can continue to be near their families for two more years.

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Finally, there are educational benefits to attending a community college. University life is very different from community college life. A university campus offers a large variety of sports events and social activities, and students can easily become distracted from their studies. Community colleges, which typically have fewer students and extracurricular activities, may be a better environment for serious study. In addition, the library facilities at a community college, though not as large as those at a university, are more than sufficient for the kind of work that is required in first- or second-year courses. Class size is also an issue to consider. Introductory courses at universities often have 50, 60, or even 100 students. In such large classes, student-teacher interaction is minimal, and learning can be more difficult for some students. Finally, the teaching at community colleges is often better than the teaching at a university. Professors at community colleges often have the same credentials as those at universities, but community college professors spend most of their time teaching instead of conducting research, as university professors have to do.

The decision to enter a university directly or to attend a community college for the

first two years after high school can be difficult. Community colleges are not as glamorous as large universities. They are often perceived as second-rate alternatives to the more well-known universities. However, based on the three important factors outlined above--cost, location, and quality of education-it is clear that for many students, choosing a community college is the smarter thing to do.

Studying a Comparison Essay

The Urban and Rural Divide

Imagine life in Tokyo. Now imagine life in a rural Japanese town. Finally, picture life in Cairo, Egypt. Which of these last two places is more different from Tokyo? Many people might mistakenly choose Cairo because it is not found in Japan. However, city dwellers all over the world tend to have similar lifestyles, so the biggest differences are found between Tokyo and its smaller neighbor. Urban people and rural people, regardless of their country, live quite differently. Perhaps some of the most notable differences in the lives of these two groups include the degree of friendliness between residents, the pace of life, and the variety of available activities.

One major difference between growing up in the city and in the country is the degree of friendliness. In large cities, residents often live in huge apartment buildings with hundreds of strangers. These urban apartment dwellers tend to be wary of unknown faces and rarely get to know their neighbors well. The situation in a small town is often just the opposite. Small-town people generally grow up together, attend the same schools, and share the same friends. As a result, rural people are much more likely to treat their neighbors like family and invite them into their homes.

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Another difference is the pace of life. In the city, life moves very quickly. The streets reflect this hectic pace and are rarely empty, even late at night. City dwellers appear to be racing to get somewhere important. Life for them tends to be a series of deadlines. In the country, life is much slower. Even during peak hours, traffic jams occur less often than in a city. Stores close in the early evening, and the streets do not come alive until the next morning. The people in small towns or villages seem more relaxed and move in a more leisurely way. The pace of life in these two areas could not be more different.

A third difference lies in the way people are able to spend their free time. Although life in the city has its drawbacks, city dwellers have a much wider choice of activities that they can participate in. For example, they can go to museums, eat in exotic restaurants, attend concerts, and shop in hundreds of stores. The activities available to people in rural areas, however, are much more limited. It is rare to find museums or exotic restaurants there. Concert tours almost never include stops in country towns. Finally, people who enjoy shopping might be disappointed in the small number of stores.

Life in urban areas and life in rural areas vary in terms of human interaction, pace of life, and daily activities. Other important differences exist, too, but none of these

makes one place better than the other. The places are simply different. Only people who have experienced living in both the city and the country can truly appreciate the unique characteristics of each.

STUDY THE ESSAYS AND COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING EXERCISES

CAUSE-EFFECT ESSAY

1. What is the writer's main message in this essay? 2. What is the thesis statement of this essay? 3. The thesis statement should tell the reader how the essay will be organized. What do you know about the

organization of the essay from the thesis statement? 4. In Paragraph 2, the writer states that many people eat unhealthy food. What supporting information

explains why this food is not healthy? 5. In Paragraph 2, the writer also explains why people enjoy eating unhealthy foods. Identify the reason.

COMPARISON ESSAY

1. What is the topic of this essay? 2. What is the thesis statement? 3. In each paragraph, which type of location is discussed first - rural or urban? 4. Which paragraph talks about activities in each area? Which place offers more options for activities? 5. In Paragraph 3, the writer contrasts the pace of life in the two areas. Identify the supporting sentences for

the pace of life in each area.

COMPARISON /ARGUMENT ESSAY

1. What two things are being compared in this essay? Which one does the writer think is better? 2. What is the organization of this essay? Complete the following outline:

1. Introduction (Paragraph 1) Thesis statement: 2. Body (Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4). Topic sentences and supporting statements: 3. Conclusion (Paragraph 5). Ideas and words shared with introduction:

HOOKS

Identify the hook in the three essays and decide which one is most effective.