

# ESSAY WRITING

An essay is a piece of writing, which is written to a set of writing conventions.

## **Two Aspects Within Essays**

1. **Cognitive component**           •the knowledge required
  - **Main topic**- *the main theme studied*
  - **Sub topics** - *Group of ideas, points or issues, which are linked in some way*
  - **Key ideas, key points or issues** - *Areas of interest within these sub topics*
  - **Key words** - *Specific words which re-present key points or issues*
  
2. **Linguistic component**           • the layout & format of the essay

## GUIDE TO ESSAY STRUCTURE

- Introduction           – **10%** of total essay length
- Body                   – **80%** of total essay length  
                            •Paragraphs usually 100-150 words long
- Conclusion           – **10%** of total essay length

Example 1500 word essay:           **150**-word introduction  
  **1200** word body (how many paragraphs?)  
  **150**-word conclusion

## **Write First Draft**

### INTRODUCTIONS:

- Usually first in writing process (in reports abstracts come first, but are written last)
- Prepares reader for what is to come

### An introduction has three parts:

#### 1) **General statement**

- *Introduces topic Can use a question, dilemma, paradox or pertinent quote to introduce a topic!*
- *May give background information to motivate the reader*
- *Supporting statements explain the focus or perspective*

## 2) Indication of the structure of the essay.

*Outline the topics of discussion in the order that they are discussed.*

## 3) Thesis statement

- *What are you trying to prove? What is your point of view?*
- *Put forward a proposition, summarising the whole point of the essay!*

### **Please note:**

Your Thesis statement is important as it summarises the whole purpose of your essay. It is useful for you to think very carefully about this before you start to plan your essay. In an academic essay you are expected to take a point of view and back this point up with your references. There should always be a specific purpose to your essay.

### **PARAGRAPHS:**

- A group of sentences developing a **single idea or topic**
- 100-200 words depending on size and level of essay
- Paragraphs follow in a logical order or sequence each paragraph linking to the next
- Remember to make a draft reference list as you go along!

### **There are four basic types of paragraph**

*Before you start writing, be sure you know why you are writing the paragraph, as this will dictate the type of paragraph you must write.*

1. The **narrative paragraph** which tells a story
2. The **persuasive paragraph** which tries to convince the reader
3. The **descriptive paragraph** which describes something e.g. a situation or a theory
4. The **expository or explanatory** paragraph which Gives information & explains something

### **Paragraphs have three parts:**

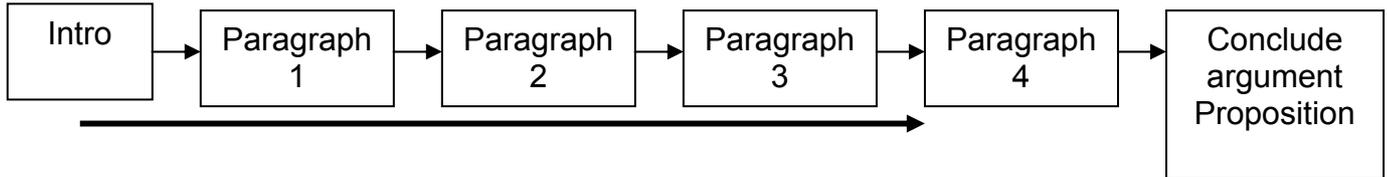
#### • **T – Topic or General Statement**

*Describes the main idea of the paragraph  
Makes a specific comment about this topic which leads the Paragraph in a specific direction (the perspective or focus)*

#### • **E – Elaboration, Explanation, Definition** *Clearly and coherently Outline the main idea and direction of the argument Link to current theory*

#### • **E – Evidence or examples (not always required)** *Evidence and examples are needed to support main idea and Direction applies the theory and makes argument meaningful*

Paragraphs are building blocks of your argument and are *linked* together to form a unified whole



### Each paragraph is;

1. A distinct section of your writing
2. Focuses on just one clearly defined idea
3. Has to be well organised, all sentences relating to each other
4. Link sentences clearly
5. A concluding sentence helps to summarise the paragraph  
(*and in essays link it to the next paragraph*)
6. Main idea should be backed up with examples and references
7. Particular perspectives on an idea should be backed up with evidence, examples or references

### Examples of Paragraphs:

#### Paragraph 1

Topic	⇒	In the 1980's and 1990's computer technology became more and more common in classrooms. But the technology was 'assimilated' in to the classroom in that there was little or no change to classroom practice (Armstrong & Casement, 2001). The first educational uses for computers were technology driven and technology controlled (Muffoletto, 1996). Use of technology was rarely integrated into curriculum teaching and objectives were outcome based. Throughout this time, increasing access to computers often led to a greater focus on individual instruction resulting in isolation e.g. keyboard skills, (Molnar, 1997). There was little effort to make learning with technology meaningful. There tended to be a focus on the technical aspects and little attention was given to the social impact technology might have (Aglianos & Cope, 1994).
Elaboration	⇒	
Example	⇒	
Link to next paragraph	⇒	

#### Paragraph 2

Introduction	⇒	Does a hot, humid summer's day make you feel grumpy? Does a rainy day make you feel depressed? The weather seems to affect
Topic	⇒	people's moods (Cage, 2003). Hot weather makes some people irritable, while others love the heat and are very happy and
Elaboration and example	⇒	cheerful on a summer's day. Others don't mind the heat, but say

that they hate it when it is humid, because the humidity makes them tired.

## **Points to note about paragraphs:**

Remember;

1. Your topic sentence Your focus or perspective 'T'
2. Your explanation 'E'
3. Your evidence and examples 'E'
4. Your references (make one up but reference it realistically!)
5. Your concluding or linking sentence

## **Connections :**

- ◆ Connections or links are useful to unify your writing
- ◆ Use connections within paragraphs to link sentences
- ◆ Use connections between one paragraph and the next

### **To add an idea**

also,  
in similar ways,  
in addition,  
likewise,  
moreover,  
similarly,  
furthermore

### **To change direction**

However,  
despite this,  
instead,  
nevertheless  
on the other hand,  
still,

### **To develop beyond an idea**

Therefore,  
as a result,  
accordingly,  
in consequence,  
because of,  
consequently,  
hence, thus.

### **To illustrate**

For example,  
for instance,  
specifically,  
to illustrate

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

- The conclusion should never contain quotes or new material.
- The conclusion is almost a mirror image of introduction
- The conclusion should summarise your argument and the main points convincingly
- Your essay should end strongly & positively You need to give the reader a sense of closure
- Last sentence should refer back to the title with a view towards the future.

**Conclusion has three parts:**

- 1. Restate thesis statement**
- 2. Summary of the main points covered**
- 3. Reflects back on title and looks to the future**

***Never  
introduce new  
material in  
your  
conclusion!***

## **Reflect on Essay, Proof Read, & Edit**

- Check for minor and major spelling errors.
- Check paragraphs are concise and each linking to the next in a logical order.
- Check your introduction includes the three parts as above and your conclusion links with the conclusions drawn in each paragraph in your discussion
- Ensure your writing is double-spaced (Format ⇒ paragraph⇒line spacing)
- Ensure you have a 3cm to 4cm margin on the left (File ⇒Page setup⇒ margins)
- Referencing should be checked and double-checked. Make sure you have all references in your work in the final reference list and vice versa. You need page numbers only for direct quotes.

