

TEMPLATE FOR A TYPICAL ESSAY

Typically, a short essay (3-6 pages) will have a one paragraph introduction, followed by the body, and a one-paragraph conclusion. Each paragraph of the body covers the main points in support of your thesis. Good essays will have titles that attract the reader's attention and reflect the thesis focus.

The third person singular (he, she, it) or the first person plural (we) are generally used in research papers (the latter particularly in literary criticism).

NOTE: What follows is a model for a typical essay. It is a flexible model and may be modified to accommodate more advanced styles.

Paragraph #1

Introduction:

In shorter essays, usually an extended definition of topic (general background or history; a striking example; a current event in the news; striking symptoms or outward signs of a current trend; striking contrast; 1-2 striking facts or statistics; set the scene by drawing a visual picture).

Close the introduction with a single sentence thesis statement which states the main point/idea that you are going to support in your essay.

Paragraph #2 (subtopic #1)

Topic/Transition sentence:

Introduce the first subtopic of your essay. This transition can be strengthened by having it reflect your thesis focus.

Body of paragraph:

Evidence to support subtopic #1 (facts, statistics, analogy, descriptive detail, direct quotes from authorities, paraphrases, summary, examples... All of these support your specific subtopic for this paragraph as it relates to your thesis).

Concluding line:

Refer back to your topic/transition sentence (see above) to close the paragraph. You can also use this sentence to relate this paragraph to your overall thesis. Do not use this sentence to introduce the next subtopic.

Paragraph #3 (subtopic #2)*Topic/Transition sentence:*

Introduce the second subtopic of your essay. This transition can be strengthened by having it reflect your thesis focus.

Body of paragraph:

Evidence to support subtopic #2 (facts, statistics, analogy, descriptive detail, direct quotes from authorities, paraphrases, summary, examples... All of these support your specific subtopic for this paragraph as it relates to your thesis).

Concluding line:

Refer back to your topic/transition sentence (see above) to close the paragraph. You can also use this sentence to relate this paragraph to your overall thesis. Do not use this sentence to introduce the next subtopic.

Paragraph #4 (subtopic #3)*Topic/Transition sentence:*

Introduce the third subtopic of your essay. This transition can be strengthened by having it reflect your thesis focus.

Body of paragraph:

Evidence to support subtopic #3 (facts, statistics, analogy, descriptive detail, direct quotes from authorities, paraphrases, summary, examples... All of these support your specific subtopic for this paragraph as it relates to your thesis).

Concluding line:

Refer back to your topic/transition sentence (see above) to close the paragraph. You can also use this sentence to relate this paragraph to your overall thesis. Do not use this sentence to introduce the next subtopic.

Paragraph #5 (subtopic #4)*Topic/Transition sentence:*

Introduce the fourth subtopic of your essay. This transition can be strengthened by having it reflect your thesis focus.

Body of paragraph:

Evidence to support subtopic #4 (facts, statistics, analogy, descriptive detail, direct quotes from authorities, paraphrases, summary, examples... All of these support your specific subtopic for this paragraph as it relates to your thesis).

Concluding line:

Refer back to your topic/transition sentence (see above) to close the paragraph. You can also use this sentence to relate this paragraph to your overall thesis. Do not use this sentence to introduce the next subtopic.

Paragraph #6 (subtopic #5)

And so on.... If necessary, the last paragraph of the essay's body can cover multiple minor points which are helpful in supporting your thesis but were not mentioned previously in the essay.

Final Paragraph*Conclusion:*

The first sentence of your conclusion returns to/reflects the thesis for your essay. This way, you can cue the reader that your conclusion is beginning without using tired phrases like "Finally," "All in all," or "In conclusion."

The remainder of the conclusion can include any of the following: a short summary of your major points; lessons learned; a view to the future; a final memorable quote; a call to action; a final appeal to the reader; a return to the scene or setting of the introduction; implications for society in general; etc....

NOTE: For more writing resources, see the forum "Writing: Tools & Strategies" at <http://www.iDiscourse.com>.

