

Essay Organization Template: An Outlining Tool

The **introduction** should hook reader, create a sense of context or significance for the topic, indicate how the writer is addressing the prompt problem/question (though this is often implicit), and set up the argument/purpose of essay, which is the thesis statement.

The **thesis statement** is the last sentence in the introduction paragraph which clearly indicates the primary argument of the essay.

Body paragraphs begin with a **topic sentence** that indicates the main point being discussed in the paragraph. There are a number of paragraph development strategies you might use to organize and expand on your ideas, but keep in mind that everything in this paragraph relates to the topic sentence and thus back to the thesis. A four page essay will have **3-5 body paragraphs** depending on how long your paragraphs are. Repeat this pattern until you reach your conclusion. Here are three organizational strategies for paragraphs; please see the website for more. cherrreporter.com/writing.html

Make one point and elaborate	Make multiple points of equal weight and importance	Make a point and counter it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic sentence • Set up the key point or claim at work in this paragraph. • Give evidence, data, and/or information to support this point or claim. • Provide explanation and analysis of your data and/or information about this key point for the rest of the paragraph. • Closing sentence that completes this idea and moves us toward the next one. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic sentence that is broad enough to include all of the points you'll discuss • Two – four points of equal weight and importance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Point one plus your analysis or explanation. ○ Point two plus your analysis or explanation. ○ Point three plus your analysis or explanation. ○ Point four plus your analysis or explanation. • Closing sentence that completes this idea and moves us toward the next one. 	<p>(This might be compare and contrast or claim and counter claim; there are a number of kinds of thinking you can use this structure for.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic sentence that includes the main claim and a hint a the counter claim. • Set up the main point or claim. • Give evidence, data, and/or information for this point or claim. • Set up the counter claim or contrast or complication. • Give evidence, data, and/or information for this point or claim. • Closing sentence that completes this idea and moves us toward the next one.

The **conclusion** is NOT a summary of what you've written. Rather, its your last word on the topic you've been discussing for the last few pages. The content of the conclusion largely depends on what you've written in the rest of the essay. You bring your argument to a close, often reaffirming that you've addressed the prompt problem/question.