

Study Skills: Structuring essays

Video transcript

In this video, we'll briefly discuss the general structure of an essay.

An essay is made up of three main parts.

First, we have the introduction — the introductory paragraph has a very important role. It tells the reader what to expect from the rest of the essay. Then, we have the body of the essay — this is where you expand on the points outlined in the introduction and present specific information to support your arguments. Lastly, we have the conclusion. This is the last part of the essay and wraps up your argument.

Let's look at the introduction in more detail.

In general, introductions start general and become more specific. They introduce the topic and give some general background information. This helps the reader to understand the context of what you are writing about, and it shows why the topic is important.

An introduction becomes more specific when it presents the thesis statement. This states the purpose of your paper, such as supporting an argument, making a claim, analysing an issue, or explaining a topic. The introduction should also give the overall plan of the essay, or what we call an 'outline'.

The body is the main part of an essay.

The body is made up of a series of paragraphs to build up your argument. Each paragraph presents one idea to develop the thesis statement. Each idea is presented in the order of the outline in the introduction. Each idea develops your arguments and is supported by examples, explanations and evidence from sources.

Now let's turn to the Conclusion.

Most importantly, the conclusion reinforces your main message. It does this by giving a summary of the essay. It also restates or paraphrases the thesis statement in the introduction. Conclusions often move from specific to general. They may end with final comments about the overall topic which could include possible implications or recommendations for future research.

Keep in mind that you shouldn't add any new information in the conclusion.

This is the overall structure of an essay. Use this structure to create a well-organised and cohesive essay. For further help, contact us at the library.