

Elements of an Essay System

Essay Components

Look at the following outline to understand what needs to go into an essay.

Introduction Paragraph

- **Hook** (1-2 sentence)
 - Catch your reader's interest
- **Background** (2-3 sentences)
 - Give relevant background information about your topic
- **Thesis** (1 sentence)

Body Paragraph #1

- **Topic Sentence** (1 sentence)
 - This should be like a mini-thesis exploring the first point of support from your thesis
 - DO NOT state a fact about your example.
- **Detail** (1-2 sentences)
 - Specific and concrete information that proves your claim
 - Focus on the most important information about your example. Leave out any irrelevant background.
- **Commentary** (2 sentences minimum)
 - What: explain what your example means. (1-2 sentences)
 - Why is this example relevant to your topic sentence and thesis statement? (1-2 sentences)
 - How are the two connected? Even if the connection seems obvious, explain it.
 - Explain why your example matters.
- **Detail** (1-2 sentences)
 - Repeat method used above
- **Commentary** (2 sentences minimum)
 - Repeat method used above
- **Conclusion/Transition Sentence** (1 sentence)
 - Restate your reason in relation to the thesis, and establish logical relationship between your argument and the counterargument you will be addressing

Body Paragraph #2

- **Topic Sentence** (1 sentence)
 - This should be like a mini-thesis exploring the second point of support from your thesis
 - DO NOT state a fact about your example.
- **Detail** (1-2 sentences)
 - Specific and concrete information that proves your claim
 - Focus on the most important information about your example. Leave out any irrelevant background.
- **Commentary** (2 sentences minimum)
 - What: explain what your example means. (1-2 sentences)
 - Why is this example relevant to your topic sentence and thesis statement? (1-2 sentences)
 - How are the two connected? Even if the connection seems obvious, explain it.

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- Explain why your example matters.
- **Detail** (1-2 sentences)
 - Repeat method used above
- **Commentary** (2 sentences minimum)
 - Repeat method used above
- **Conclusion/Transition Sentence** (1 sentence)
 - Restate your reason in relation to the thesis, and establish logical relationship between your argument and the counterargument you will be addressing

Body Paragraph #3 (may be necessary depending on your assignment)

- **Topic Sentence** (1 sentence)
 - This should be like a mini-thesis exploring the third point of support from your thesis
 - DO NOT state a fact about your example.
- **Detail** (1-2 sentences)
 - Specific and concrete information that proves your claim
 - Focus on the most important information about your example. Leave out any irrelevant background.
- **Commentary** (2 sentences minimum)
 - What: explain what your example means. (1-2 sentences)
 - Why is this example relevant to your topic sentence and thesis statement? (1-2 sentences)
 - How are the two connected? Even if the connection seems obvious, explain it.
 - Explain why your example matters.
- **Detail** (1-2 sentences)
 - Repeat method used above
- **Commentary** (2 sentences minimum)
 - Repeat method used above
- **Conclusion/Transition Sentence** (1 sentence)
 - Restate your reason in relation to the thesis, and establish logical relationship between your argument and the counterargument you will be addressing

Conclusion Paragraph

- **Thesis Restatement** (1 sentence)
 - Assert your claim again but with different presentation than at the end of your introduction
- **Recap** (1-2 sentences)
 - Summarize your body paragraphs
- **So What?** (1-2 sentences)
 - Give significance to your argument -- tell your reader why it is important in general
 - Now that the reader accepts your argument, how should his/her understanding of the situation around it change?