

This handout goes over the basic parts of an essay: the title, introduction, thesis or guiding statement, body, and conclusion. Each part plays a different role in bringing ideas together to form a cohesive essay. Following this format will help organize an essay; however, essays should always be written with a specific audience and assignment in mind.

## Parts of an Essay

### *Title*

The title grabs the reader's attention and provides a short overview of what the essay is about. This allows readers to accurately decide whether they are interested in reading the paper for more information.

### *Introduction*

The introduction catches the reader's interest and provides background information about the topic and connects it to the larger conversation. The introduction is general enough for the reader to understand the main claim but gradually becomes more specific to lead into the thesis statement or guiding statement.

### *Thesis or Guiding Statement*

The thesis or guiding statement concisely states the main idea or argument of the essay, sets limits on the topic, and indicates the structure of the essay. The thesis or guiding statement works as a road map, showing readers the main points that will be used to support the writer's ideas.

### *Body*

The body of an essay is made up of body paragraphs. Body paragraphs support the main ideas presented in the thesis or guiding statement. Longer essays may include several sections that identify main points, with multiple paragraphs in each section. Each body paragraph has four elements: 1) **topic sentence**, 2) **supporting evidence**, 3) **analysis**, and 4) **concluding sentence**. The **topic sentence** identifies the main point of the paragraph. **Supporting evidence** (e.g., quotations, facts, examples, etc.) reinforces the topic sentence. (Remember to cite sourced material.) **Analysis** explains how the evidence supports the main idea of the paragraph. Finally, the **concluding sentence** ties the body paragraph back to the thesis or guiding statement. Topic or concluding sentences may be used to transition from one body paragraph to another.

### *Conclusion*

The conclusion gives the reader a sense of closure by referencing the thesis or guiding statement and directly connecting it to the paper's main claims. The conclusion addresses the implications and significance of the essay's main idea; however, new topics should not be introduced.



The title **targets** the desired audience.

The introduction provides **background information**.

The thesis statement acts as a **roadmap** to the paper.

The body **supports** the thesis statement.

The conclusion **illuminates** why the topic is important.