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## Writing an essay Introduction

This introduces the main idea of your essay and draws the reader into the subject. A good introduction gets to the heart of the subject and captures the interest of the reader. It should:

- Summarize the issues to show an understanding of the question.
- Look at the issues raised by the question.
- Outline the main issues you intend presenting.
- Present the method of research or experiment.
- Summarize the essay.
- Answer the question set.

Most students write poor introductions that needlessly repeat information and turn off the reader with too much background information. If you want to gain a top grade for your essay, you have to start strongly and gain your reader's attention immediately. This means concentrating on either writing a powerful summary of the essay or directly answering the question set.

In trying to gain the reader's attention, you do not need to say anything controversial or mind-blowing. All you need to do is concentrate on writing the most relevant information.

Use the journalistic technique of basing your information around the Five-Ws in writing: **Who, What, When, Where** and **Why**. These will help you keep to solid information.

Remember, don't use your introduction as a warm-up — make it direct, relevant and impressive so it sets the tone for the rest of the essay.

## Writing an essay Body

This consists of supporting paragraphs, logically arranged to develop your main ideas. List the points you wish to develop, place each point in its own paragraph, and expand on each point with supporting facts, details and examples. Each paragraph should:

- clearly present the relevant information,
- discuss and evaluate information and opinions, and
- develop an argument based on the information and a review of opinions.

This is 80-90 percent of the essay and must satisfy the reader's appetite. To do this, the body of the essay must reflect solid research, show a clear understanding of the subject, and develop your points logically.

## Writing an essay Conclusion

The conclusion draws together the ideas and information presented in the essay. It summarizes or restates the main idea, argument or findings.

The conclusion often:

- gives a clear answer or restatement of the answer to the central question,
- summarizes the main points in the essay,
- repeats the key information and arguments, and
- points out what the evidence suggests.

The conclusion is vital. It is the last impression the reader has of the essay. Use it well, making sure your essay doesn't fizzle out. Make it a strong statement, confidently answering the question, summarizing the position, and reviewing the topic. If you are in doubt what to put in the conclusion, think about the key information or argument the essay has presented and repeat it in a short, direct form.

## Show your Analytical Skills

Unlike the compositions you wrote at school, you are no longer just presenting information. Most college essays are argumentative essays and you must show your analytical skills. In order to write a persuasive essay you still need to collect and present your information. But you must also work out implications, assess its relevance, judge the results, evaluate the evidence, criticize and debate the essay topic. You'll find you need to critically research propositions to decide if the evidence justifies the conclusions or if you need to question the assumptions underlying a new theory. In other words, you must show that you can think clearly and reason logically.

In most subjects, your tutors are not looking for the correct answer. If you are discussing an issue or describing an historical event, there's no one way of answering or one line of reasoning to follow. You may even disagree with the conventionally accepted view on a subject — although in doing so, you should assess and deal with opposing views.

Your tutors may agree or disagree with the views you present, but they should not mark you down for taking a standpoint. Disagreement will not result in a poor grade, writing a bad essay will. Whatever line you argue, you will gain a good grade if you back it up with firm evidence, logical reasoning and sound arguments