



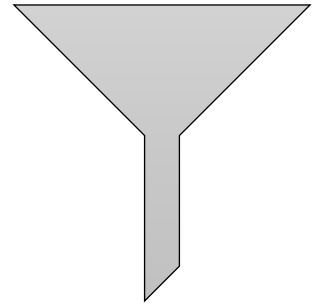
Basic Essay Structure

Introduction, Body, Conclusion

While your instructor will provide you with specific guidelines for each essay assignment, there is a basic structure that can be applied to almost any essay. Essays have three main parts: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

Introduction

The first paragraph (or, for longer essays, sometimes the first few paragraphs) functions as a funnel. Typically, the paragraph opens with a hook to inspire the reader's interest. This hook may be a quotation, a comparison, or the perhaps too-often-used rhetorical question. The next sentences provide background information regarding the topic. The last sentence of the introduction is a thesis statement, which states the main idea the essay will develop. Sentences in the introduction, therefore, are arranged as general to specific.



Body

The paragraph or paragraphs following the introduction support and elaborate upon the main points presented in the thesis statement. Body paragraphs should develop these points with specific details. For some essays, details might include support from research (remember, information from outside sources requires proper citations) and personal experiences. In some cases, the supporting sentences include your own analysis, interpretations, and insights regarding aspects of the topic.



Conclusion

The final paragraph should provide a sense of closure as it draws the main ideas of the essay back together. This paragraph shouldn't introduce new ideas, but it should reinforce the significance or implications revealed by the previous paragraphs. It shouldn't mirror the introduction; it should instead reinforce the main idea presented in the introduction, but enlightened by the information from the body.

