

Outlining an Essay

A standard essay is five paragraphs long. This includes the introduction, body, and conclusion.

1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction provides excitement, gives basic information, and tells the plan of the essay.

- a. **Hook** – Opening statement used to catch the reader's attention; make them want to read more.

Examples of a “hook”:

- i. begin with asking a question
- ii. begin with an interesting observation
- iii. begin with a unique scenario
- iv. begin with a famous quote

- b. **Connecting Information** – Use three to five sentences to connect the reader to the topic by providing background information or examples.

- c. **Thesis Statement** – **One declarative sentence** that clearly and concisely expresses the main ideas of your paper.

Example: The main problems facing South American countries are a lack of job opportunities for citizens, demand for better health care, and limited university programs for poor students.

2. BODY

The body of an essay is the main part, normally consisting of 3 paragraphs. In the body, you will explain details about the main points presented in the thesis sentence. Deal with each main point in a separate paragraph. Include facts and your own ideas/opinions.

3. CONCLUSION

The conclusion should contain much of the same information as the introduction.

- a. Make it clear that it is your conclusion. You can do this by using a kind of **transition:**
“In conclusion...”, “From the information given...”, or “To summarize...”
- b. Do not introduce new information, but **help the reader reconsider the main ideas.**
- c. Make a **closing statement:**
 - i. Give a suggestion, opinion, or prediction.
 - ii. State that the issue or question has been addressed or answered.

Sample Outline of a Research Paper

When using sub points, there should be at least two. (If there is an 'a', include be a 'b', if an 'i', then a 'ii'.)

- I. Introduction
 - a. Hook (Grabbing the audience's attention)
 - b. Any interesting/background information
 - c. Thesis statement
- II. First main idea
 - a. Supporting evidence for first idea
 - b. Supporting evidence for first idea
 - c. Examples from text/sources/etc.
- III. Second main idea
 - a. Supporting evidence for second idea
 - i. Example
 - ii. Second example
 - b. Supporting evidence for second idea
- IV. Third main idea
 - a. Supporting evidence for first idea
 - i. Quote
 - ii. Scripture reference
 - b. Supporting evidence for first idea
- V. Conclusion
 - a. Restatement of thesis
 - b. Concluding remarks about discussed ideas
 - c. Closing