

BASIC WRITING OUTLINE

I. Introduction

- A. This is my main idea, argument, interest, question, objective. [Examples of thesis statements?]
- B. These are the two-to-four main points that I will be addressing to prove, discuss, argue, put forth, answer that idea, argument, question, etc.
- C. This is the type of evidence that I will be using to prove my point.
- D. This is the significance of my idea, argument, question, etc. to the larger world, discipline of history, human race, etc.

II. Body

Initial paragraphs will look something like this:

- A. [TOPIC SENTENCE] This is my main idea, argument, point, etc. for this paragraph, which relates to my larger idea, argument, point, etc. in this way.
- B. [EVIDENCE / ANALYSIS / EXAMPLE] This is true because (evidence). An example of this is (application). The importance of this is (analysis).
- C. [SAME AS ABOVE] Repeat structure of "B" for any other related evidence.
- D. [CONCLUSION] This paragraph has just proven my initial / main idea because... or The significance of this subthesis / idea / point to my larger point is...

Subsequent paragraphs flow similarly, except that the topic sentence (A) also serves as a transitional sentence between ideas / paragraphs. That means that it must include phrases or information that show a logical / topical link between two paragraphs.

Examples: "Just as the cardiovascular system is critical to human health, so is the digestive system."

"In addition to their roles as wives, colonial women were valued based on their roles as mothers."

"Whereas the establishment of a nation-wide system of railways meant economic prosperity to some segments, it meant the demise of businesses related to canals."

III. Conclusion

Whether your conclusion is one paragraph or several pages long, it should perform the following functions:

- A. Reintroduce your main argument / point / idea in a clear, succinct way.
- B. Map out in a logical way the central structure of your paper / argument, but in a slightly different way from how you've already articulated your points.
- C. Highlight the most important and effective pieces of evidence to substantiate / prove your main argument / point / idea.
- D. Indicate to the reader the larger significance of your findings / argument. It can do this by asking a question, offering a challenge, reflecting on the implications of what you've discovered / put forth in your paper.

"Concerns about Iraq raise questions not just for that country and the United States, but for all countries concerned about sovereignty, democracy, war, and peace."

How do I get started?

1. Identify your general TOPIC – what is the general subject about which you will be writing? Clearly identifying your topic will help you to determine if you need to narrow or broaden your approach.
2. Try to turn your topic into a question that you want to answer. Doing this will help you to focus your research and stay on-task in the body of your paper. It will also assist you in developing a clear, concise THESIS.
3. Identify RESEARCH GOALS that you need to meet in order to answer your question. These goals should reflect research expectations set forth by the instructor. They should also reflect good research practices in general – examining a variety of sources, using appropriate academic sources, and keeping track of sources used.
4. Design a WORKPLAN. Think about what you need to do in order to answer your question in the time frame you have. Then set out a plan for yourself based on ACTIONS and well as a TIMELINE. For example:

PAPER DUE DATE: NOVEMBER 10

- a. Find and take notes on my academic / written sources (2 books, 2 articles)
OCT. 15
- b. Prepare interview questions for student and administrator interviews and set up interview times.
OCT. 16
- c. Conduct interviews with student and administrator
OCT. 20
- d. Come up with thesis and create outline for paper based on research and interviews
OCT. 22
- e. Complete first draft of paper and have someone read it (writing center, writing tutor, professor, peer) – outline paper and compare to original
OCT. 30
- f. Complete final draft of paper and complete edits
NOV. 7
- g. Complete notes, bibliography, and all other final touches – get ready to hand in
NOV. 9