



Writing Center

Planning an Essay



The process of essay planning

Writing is a process, and you will need to plan a writing process that works for you. Remember that it is important not to leap too quickly from research to writing. Give some thought as to what the central argument of your essay will be, and how you will order your ideas. Again, think of the writing process: pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing.

A few questions to ask yourself when planning your essay

- Do I understand what my assignment question is asking?
- What is my initial response to the question?
- What do I already know that is of relevance to the question? What else do I need to find out?
- What have other scholars written on this topic, and do I agree/disagree with them?
- What is the main point I want to argue or put across in this essay?

I. The Introduction

- The intro contains an attention grabber (hook) for the reader.
- The intro should move from the general to the specific. It usually contains background information on the topic, information which helps the author transition into the thesis statement.

Your introduction notes:

Ia. The Thesis Statement

- The introduction should end with a thesis statement. The thesis provides the reader with a “road map” of the essay in a logical order. Your thesis should have a well-stated claim and some brief mention of support for your claim.
- Example: “With this new perspective, students are now able to investigate the Black Death’s manifold effects: demographic, economic, moral, and religious.”

Your thesis statement notes:

II. The Body Paragraphs

In the body paragraphs, you will lay the groundwork for discussing your topic and providing the supporting evidence that backs up the claim you made in your thesis statement. Your body paragraphs will present the information in the same order that you used in your thesis sentence. For example, using the example above, your first body paragraph would discuss the demographic effects, the second would discuss the economic effects, the third the psychological effects, and so on. You can have as many body paragraphs as you need to thoroughly discuss each part of your topic.

Your body paragraph notes:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

III. The Conclusion

The conclusion serves a number of purposes:

1. The first is to indicate to your reader that you have said all that you had to say. This is done by a brief recapping of your thesis sentence (in different words than you used in your thesis sentence) and any other significant points that you have made (do not include new ideas/content on your conclusion).
2. The next purpose is that your conclusion should include a "call to action." In other words, what or how do you want your reader to do, think, or feel as a result of your essay? Tell them in a subtle way. Also, check our "Conclusion DLA" for other techniques you can use in your conclusion:

**<https://www.mtsac.edu/writingcenter/dlas.html>

Your conclusion notes:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____
