

Essay Structure

Most academic essays follow a specific format. Whether a 3 or 5-paragraph essay, they will always start off with an **introduction that ends with a thesis statement**, include **body paragraphs that are used to back up the thesis statement**, and end with a **conclusion that wraps everything up** for the reader.

1

Introduction

Your introduction serves the purpose of introducing your reader to the topic of your paper. In your introduction, you'll want to start out more general and then become narrower in focus as you work your way down to your thesis statement. When writing, think of a funnel or inverted triangle that narrows down the main point, which is your thesis statement. Your thesis statement contains the main idea for your paper.

For more help with thesis statements, please see our article, "Thesis Statement" under the General Essay Writing heading.

2

Body Paragraphs

Each body paragraph should focus on one main idea that supports your thesis statement. If writing a 5-paragraph essay, each main idea noted in the thesis statement should be represented in a body paragraph.

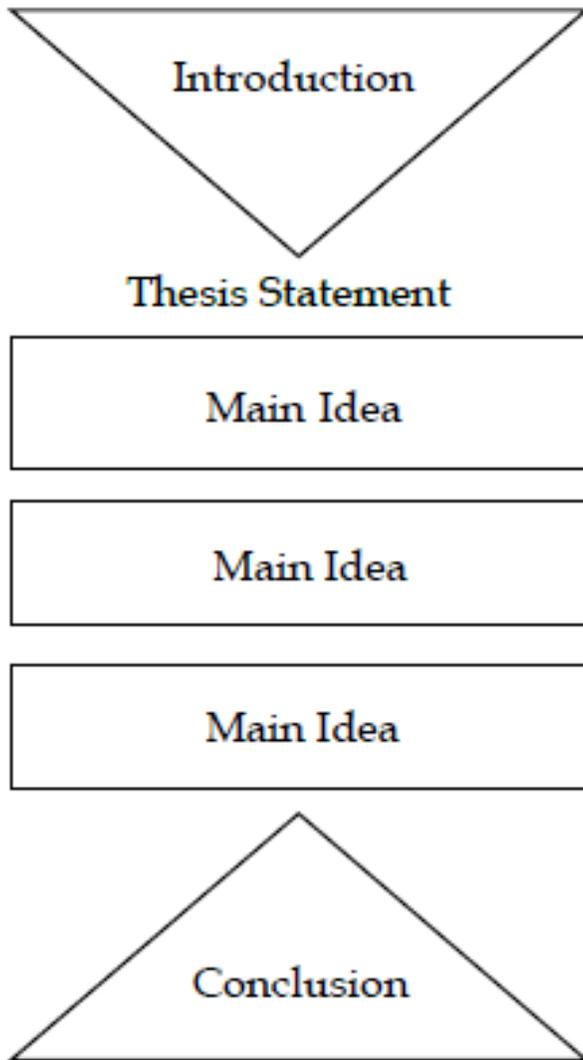
For example, if I was writing a paper on which animal makes the best pet, I might have a thesis statement that looks like this: "Dogs make the best pets because they are protective of their owners, fun to play with, and therapeutic." Then, my first body paragraph would be dedicated to discussing how dogs are protective of their owners. My second body paragraph would talk about how they are fun to play with, and my final body paragraph would focus on how dogs are therapeutic.

For more help with writing body paragraphs, please see the article, "Body Paragraphs" under General Essay Writing.

3

Conclusion

The conclusion is your way of wrapping everything up. Your first sentence should be a rewording of your thesis to draw your reader back to the main point of your paper. Then, you can take 2-3 sentences to review the ideas you've used in your body paragraphs to back up your thesis statement, showing why this subject is important. Finally, you'll want to end with any final thoughts for your reader. You will want to avoid adding in any new information in your conclusion since you are wanting to provide closure.



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