



Essay Writing – Thesis Statement, Introductory Paragraph, Body Paragraphs, and Concluding Paragraph

Thesis Statement:

- A thesis statement is an argumentative assertion. It tells, briefly, what your paper will be about and what you will be trying to prove.
 - Claim + Reason
 - Claim is the main idea. For example: Many women suffer from low self-esteem.
 - Include the reason for your claim. For example: The media influences how they see themselves.
 - Replace “+” with “because.” For example: Many women suffer from low self-esteem because the media influences how they see themselves.
- Make sure your thesis statement is specific and debatable.
 - A good thesis statement is an argument, not a fact.
- Have a general idea of what your thesis statement is BEFORE starting your paper, but be willing to revise it.
 - Good research and analysis can change your conclusion.
- Vague thesis statement: Many hip hop songs are negative.
- Revised: Many hip-hop songs are sexist because they portray women as sexual images with no substance.

Introductory Paragraph:

The introduction is the broad beginning of the paper that answers three important questions:

1. What is this?
2. Why am I reading it?
3. What do you want me to do?

You should answer these questions by doing the following:

1. Set the context – provide general information about the main idea, explaining the situation so the reader can make sense of the topic and the claims you make and support
2. State why the main idea is important – tell the reader why s/he should care and keep reading. Your goal is to create a compelling, clear, and convincing essay people will want to read and act upon



3. State your thesis/claim – compose a sentence or two stating the position you will support with logos (sound reasoning: induction, deduction), pathos (balanced emotional appeal), and ethos (author credibility).

For exploratory essays, your primary research question would replace your thesis statement so the audience understands why you began your inquiry. An overview of the types of sources you explored might follow your research question.

If your argument paper is long, you may want to forecast how you will support your thesis by outlining the structure of your paper, the sources you will consider, and the opposition to your position. You can forecast your paper in many different ways depending on the type of paper you are writing. Your forecast could read something like this:

First, I will define key terms for my argument, and then I will provide some background of the situation. Next I will outline the important positions of the argument and explain why I support one of these positions. Lastly, I will consider opposing positions and discuss why these positions are outdated. I will conclude with some ideas for taking action and possible directions for future research.

When writing a research paper, you may need to use a more formal, less personal tone. Your forecast might read like this:

This paper begins by providing key terms for the argument before providing background of the situation. Next, important positions are outlined and supported. To provide a more thorough explanation of these important positions, opposing positions are discussed. The paper concludes with some ideas for taking action and possible directions for future research.

Body Paragraphs

Your paper should be organized in a manner that moves from general to specific information. Every time you begin a new subject, think of an inverted pyramid - the broadest range of information sits at the top, and as the paragraph or paper progresses, the author becomes more and more focused on the argument ending with specific, detailed evidence supporting a claim. Lastly, the author explains how and why the information she has just provided connects to and supports her thesis (a brief wrap up or warrant).

The four elements of a good paragraph (TTEB)

A good paragraph should contain at least the following four elements: Transition, Topic sentence, specific Evidence and analysis, and a Brief wrap-up sentence (also known as a warrant) – TTEB!

1. A Transition sentence leading in from a previous paragraph to assure smooth reading. This acts as a handoff from one idea to the next.



2. A Topic sentence that tells the reader what you will be discussing in the paragraph.
3. Specific Evidence and analysis that supports one of your claims and that provides a deeper level of detail than your topic sentence.
4. A Brief wrap-up sentence that tells the reader how and why this information supports the paper's thesis. The brief wrap-up is also known as the warrant. The warrant is important to your argument because it connects your reasoning and support to your thesis, and it shows that the information in the paragraph is related to your thesis and helps defend it.

Concluding Paragraph

Conclusions wrap up what you have been discussing in your paper. After moving from general to specific information in the introduction and body paragraphs, your conclusion should begin pulling back into more general information that restates the main points of your argument. Conclusions may also call for action or overview future possible research. The following outline may help you conclude your paper:

In a general way,

- restate your topic and why it is important,
- restate your thesis/claim,
- address opposing viewpoints and explain why readers should align with your position,
- call for action or overview future research possibilities.

Remember that once you accomplish these tasks, unless otherwise directed by your instructor, you are finished. Don't try to bring in new points. Simplicity is best for a clear, convincing message.

One of the most effective formulas to follow for argument papers:

1. Tell what you're going to tell them (introduction).
2. Tell them (body).
3. Tell them what you told them (conclusion).

