

I. Introductory Paragraph

1. **Background.** In the first few sentences, introduce the topic and put it in historical context.
2. **Argument.** Next, write a ***thesis statement*** which states what you intend to prove. You should be able to accomplish this in one sentence.
3. **Roadmap.** Now, chart a course for how you will prove your thesis by establishing *categories for analysis*. This shows the reader ahead of time how you intend to go about proving your thesis. Think of it as a “preview” of your body paragraphs. You will need to establish at least two categories for analysis. (Note: Avoid writing “I will do this, then I will do that.”)

[illegible]

The body of the essay is where you prove your thesis by supporting it with specific evidence. Depending upon the essay, the body may contain two, three, or four paragraphs. If you have more than four body paragraphs, you may not be organizing your ideas effectively.

Each body paragraph must begin with a topic sentence. A **topic sentence** tells the reader what is going to be discussed in that paragraph. Only details that pertain to the topic sentence should appear in that paragraph. To write your topic sentence, you need to know what it is you want to prove in that paragraph. It may help to say to your self, “The point I wish to make is _____.” Whatever comes in that blank is your topic sentence!

Body Paragraph 1

Write your topic sentence.

The point I wish to make is...

What specific details will you use to support your topic sentence? (for a DBQ, include Document #)

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Body Paragraph 2

Write your topic sentence.

The point I wish to make is...

What specific details will you use to support your topic sentence? (for a DBQ, include Document #)

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Body Paragraph 3 (if necessary)

Write your topic sentence.

The point I wish to make is...

What specific details will you use to support your topic sentence? (for a DBQ, include Document #)

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Body Paragraph 4 (if necessary)

Write your topic sentence.

The point I wish to make is...

What specific details will you use to support your topic sentence? (for a DBQ, include Document #)

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III. Conclusion

Conclusions are often difficult to write because you feel like you have nothing left to say after writing the body of your essay. The purpose of the conclusion is to show the reader that you have proven your thesis. It's like saying "*You see... I told you so!*" after winning an argument. Here are some guidelines for writing an effective conclusion:

1. Make sure you restate your thesis. (It is better if you can say the same thing in a different way, instead of copying it word for word). It is most effective to make this the first sentence of your conclusion.
2. Briefly review how you proved your thesis. This should correspond to the roadmap in your introduction.
3. Conclude by emphasizing the importance of the topic, or leave the reader with a feeling or idea. This can often be accomplished by stating an opinion, looking to the future, or asking a question of the reader.

Write your conclusion.
