

## Basic Essay Structure

*Note: This is a basic structure for a short essay. Not all essays follow this structure.*

### Introductory Paragraph

**Thesis** →  
(usually the last sentence or two)

- Provide a general introduction to the topic. Don't start too broadly!
- Give some background information; e.g., give some statistics and/ or briefly summarize existing arguments and issues around your topic.
- Write a thesis statement that is specific. It can be one to two sentences (though you should ask your professor). In it, present an argument and give reasons for your argument. The argument should speak to your research question. When you think your thesis is done, push further by answering "why?" and/or "how?"

### Body Paragraphs

Paragraph One

- **Topic Sentence** containing paragraph's main idea and supporting argument. Argument should have a clear connection to the thesis statement.
- Explanation
- Evidence and Example(s) (use references)
- Wrap-up Sentence

Paragraph Two

- **Topic sentence** containing a transition from previous topic and supporting argument. Argument should have a clear connection to the thesis statement.
- Explanation
- Evidence and Example(s) (use references)
- Wrap-up Sentence

Paragraph Three

- **Topic sentence** containing a transition from previous topic and supporting argument. Argument should have a clear connection to the thesis statement.
- Explanation
- Evidence and Example(s) (use references)
- Wrap-up Sentence

### Concluding Paragraph

- Restate your argument, remembering that your readers know more than they did in the introduction.
- Summarize your arguments.
- Point to the broader implications of your argument and/or some of the issues your paper addresses.
- Visit this webpage for more ideas for writing conclusions:  
<http://Writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/ending-essay- conclusions>