

Elements of an Excellent Essay

An essay consists of three major parts: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. An essay does not require a specific number of body paragraphs. The body of an essay may feature one paragraph or as many as 12!

Title

- ◆ Convey the main point of the essay in 10 words or fewer.
- ◆ Find a creative way to attract the reader's attention and interest.
- ◆ Capitalize the first and last word and all the important words in between.

Introduction

- ◆ Begin with a hook/lead that captures the reader's attention (thoughtful quotation, funny anecdote, interesting dialogue, amazing fact, surprising statistic, interesting example, scenario or "imagine. . .," bold statement).
- ◆ Give background information on the topic.
- ◆ Include the thesis statement: state the main idea of the essay in one sentence.
- ◆ Transition into body paragraphs. (Give general information you're covering, but don't give too much away!)
- ◆ Do NOT write "In my essay I will . . ."
- ◆ DO NOT write "I think" when you write. (It's repetitive---if you *write* it, the reader realizes you *think* it.)

Body Paragraph(s)

- ◆ Transition from the previous paragraph by first summing up the previous paragraph's topic in 1-2 words. Connect the idea with the one in the current paragraph in a transition/topic sentence.
- ◆ Fill with well-organized examples, quotations, comparisons, analogies, and/or narration that *SHOW* rather than tell information. Use imagery (the 5 senses) to describe what it sounds, smells, feels, looks, and maybe even tastes like.
- ◆ Cite evidence from text (if required).
- ◆ Consider ending with a transition linking it to next paragraph.

Conclusion

- ◆ "Echo" the thesis statement without simply repeating it. (State in a *new* way.)
- ◆ Consider posing a question for future thought or suggest a course of action.
- ◆ Include a detail or example from the introduction to "tie up" the essay.
- ◆ Summarize the major points.
- ◆ Answer any questions that weren't answered in the body.
- ◆ Emphasize the importance of one (or all) of the main points.
- ◆ End with a strong image or bit of wit (a clincher).
- ◆ Leave the reader with something to think about in the future.