

Academic Writing

Lesson 6 Essay structures Introductions and conclusions

The 5-paragraph essay

- This is the most basic essay structure
 - It is useful in exam situations, as it helps you ensure that you complete a full essay in the time given.
 - For longer essays, there is more evolution in the supporting paragraphs (body text)
- The five paragraph essay consists of
 1. An introductory paragraph
 2. Three body text paragraphs (magic #3!)
 3. A concluding paragraph

The 5-paragraph essay

- The Introductory Paragraph
 - The opening paragraph sets the tone.
 - It introduces the topic and indicates where you are going with your thesis.
 - If your introduction is effective, you will draw your reader into your "experience" and keep him/her interested in the rest of your essay.
 - Briefly state what ideas you intend to cover in the body text
 - "say what you're going to say"

The 5-paragraph essay

- Supporting paragraphs (body text)
 - "say it"
 - Include a topic sentence in each paragraph
 - One topic/argument = one paragraph
 - Use a transition sentence at the start or at the end of each paragraph
 - Supporting ideas, examples, details must be specific to the sub-topic.

The 5-paragraph essay

- The concluding paragraph
 - Restate your thesis, but do not simply copy the first paragraph.
 - "say what you've said".
 - Summarise your argument with some degree of authority.
 - This paragraph should leave your reader with no doubt as to your position or conclusion of logic
 - Avoid modal verbs of possibility and doubt.

Organising information

- The ideas in an essay (or longer text) should flow smoothly on from each other in a logical sequence
 - Although all essays use the introduction-body-conclusion format, the type of logical sequence is determined by the type of essay:
 - * Descriptive
 - * Argumentative
 - * Contrastive

Essay writing

- The basic structure to follow is:

INTRODUCTION	MAIN BODY	CONCLUSION
General Statement	Sub-topic A. Introductory Sentence Point 1 - Point 2 - Point 3 Concluding Sentence	Recall issues in introduction
Organisation Statement	Sub-topic B. Introductory Sentence Point 1 - Point 2 - Point 3 Concluding Sentence	Draw together main points
	Sub-topic C. Introductory Sentence Point 1 - Point 2 - Point 3 Concluding Sentence	Final comment

Essay writing

- Within the basic structure, there is a range of sequencing types, which can be reduced to 3 main types:
 - * Chains
 - * Blocks
 - * Parallel tracks
 - → See your handout for schematic layouts using these sequences

Essay writing

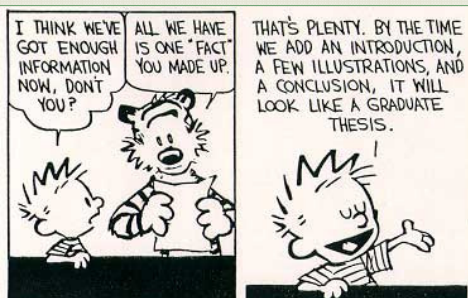
- Chains
 - Used for temporal sequencing or when the line of argumentation develops in a linear fashion
- Blocks
 - Used for comparing/contrasting two or more entities, one at a time (features of A followed by features of B etc.)
- Parallel tracks
 - Used for simultaneous comparing/contrasting (feature 1 in entities A, B & C; feature 2...)=

Essay Writing

Task 1

- Working in groups, brainstorm the content of the essay:

“Children who start learning a foreign language at primary school have an advantage over those who learn a language later in life”
- Make a note of pros and cons, and decide your stance (basically, do you agree or disagree?)



Writing introductions

- Introductions have a specific function:
 - To outline the topic
 - To state the author's intent
 - To indicate the content of the text
- The ordering of information in the introduction must parallel its ordering in the text
 - Put counter-arguments first, then dismiss them
 - Give more space to your own point of view

Writing introductions

- “Projecting” language is used in introductions
 - * This paper will focus on/examine/give an account of...
 - This paper seeks to address the following questions: ...
 - This essay critically examines/discusses/traces...
 - The purpose of this paper is to review research into...
 - In this paper I argue that...
 - * This paper has been divided into four parts. The first part deals with...
 - This paper first gives a brief overview of the recent history of X.
 - This paper begins by... It will then go on to... Finally, ...
 - www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk

Writing introductions

TASK 2

- Using the ideas you brainstormed on the *Children learning foreign languages* topic, write the introduction to a short (5-paragraph) essay
 - Follow the schemas provided on your worksheet
 - Make use of the Academic Phrasebank

Writing conclusions

- Conclusions serve:
 - To remind readers of the topic
 - To remind readers of the author's point of view
 - To remind readers of the content of the text
 - To provide an answer to the essay question
 - (Topics are discussed in the same order as in the body text)
- Final sentences can be the most difficult to write!
 - They often feature quotations, clichés, idioms, proverbs etc.

Writing conclusions

- Specific summarising language is used in conclusions
 - * This study set out to investigate...
 - The purpose of this study was to determine ...
 - * This assignment has explained the central importance of X in Y.
 - This study has shown that...
 - * One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that...
 - The following conclusions can be drawn from the present study
 - www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk

Writing conclusions

TASK 3

- Write the conclusion of your *Children learning foreign languages* essay
 - Follow the schemas provided on your worksheet
 - Make use of the Academic Phrasebank
 - If possible, use a *rhetorical device* to sum up your evaluation (idioms are good here).

Essay writing

TASK 4 (Homework)

- Complete the essay with three body text paragraphs