

The structure of an essay is described as under. I hope it be helpful for the beginners and the junior members of the forum.

Outline Of Essay

A traditional outline begins by listing all the main ideas of an essay, and then follows by listing all the sub-topics of those ideas and facts, which support the idea or sub-topic. An example follows:

I. Geographic feature #1: Himalayan Mountains

1) Description:

- a) forms an protective arch around India's northern border.
- b) the tallest mountains in the world.
- c) very difficult to cross

2) Effects on civilization or nation

- a) acted as a barrier to invasions
- b) isolates India from cold northern winds

II. Geographic feature #2: Sahara Desert

1) Description:

- a) world's largest desert
 - b) stretches from Atlantic Ocean to Ethiopian Highlands
- 2) Effects on civilization or nation

- a) isolated northern Africa from rest of continent
- b) lack of arable land make food production difficult

III. Geographic feature #3: Yangtze River

1) Description:

- a) China's longest river
 - b) runs from East China Sea to mountains of Tibet
- 2) Effects on civilization or nation
- a) supplies good soil and water for limited arable land
 - b) supplies food
 - c) provides means of transportation and communication

Why Should Your Essay Contain A Thesis Statement?• to test your ideas by distilling them into a sentence or two

- to better organize and develop your argument
- to provide your reader with a "guide" to your argument

In general, your thesis statement will accomplish these goals if you think of the thesis as the answer to the question your paper explores.

A strong thesis takes some sort of stand.

Remember that your thesis needs to show your conclusions about a subject. For example, if you are writing a paper for a class on fitness, you might be asked to choose a popular weight-loss product to evaluate. Here are two thesis statements: There are some negative and positive aspects to the Banana Herb Tea Supplement. This is a weak thesis. First, it fails to take a stand. Second, the phrase "negative and positive" aspects" are vague.

Because Banana Herb Tea Supplement promotes rapid weight loss that results in the loss of muscle and lean body mass, it poses a potential danger to customers.

This is a strong thesis because it takes a stand.

2. A strong thesis justifies discussion.

Your thesis should indicate the point of the discussion. If your assignment is to write a paper on kinship systems, using your own family as an example, you might come up with either of these two thesis statements:

My family is an extended family.

This is a weak thesis because it states an observation. Your reader won't be able to

tell the point of the statement, and will probably stop reading.

While most American families would view consanguineal marriage as a threat to the nuclear family structure, many Iranian families, like my own, believe that these marriages help reinforce kinship ties in an extended family.

This is a strong thesis because it shows how your experience contradicts a widely accepted view. A good strategy for creating a strong thesis is to show that the topic is controversial. Readers will be interested in reading the rest of the essay to see how you support your point.

3. A strong thesis expresses one main idea.

Readers need to be able to see that your paper has one main point. If your thesis expresses more than one idea, then you might confuse your readers about the subject of your paper. For example:

Companies need to exploit the marketing potential of the Internet, and web pages can provide both advertising and customer support.

This is a weak thesis statement because the reader can't decide whether the paper is about marketing on the Internet or web pages. To revise the thesis, the relationship between the two ideas needs to become clearer. One way to revise the thesis would be to write:

Because the Internet is filled with tremendous marketing potential, companies should exploit this potential by using web pages that offer both advertising and customer support.

This is a strong thesis because it shows that the two ideas are related. Hint: a great many clear and engaging thesis statements contain words like "because," "since," "so," "although," "unless," and "however."

4. A strong thesis statement is specific.

A thesis statement should show exactly what your paper will be about, and will help you keep your paper to a manageable topic. For example, if you write a paper on hunger, you might say:

World hunger has many causes and effects.

This is a weak thesis statement for two major reasons. First, "world hunger" can't be discussed thoroughly in five or ten pages. Second, "many causes and effects" is vague. You should be able to identify specific causes and effects. A revised thesis might look like this:

Hunger persists in Appalachia because jobs are scarce and farming in the infertile soil is rarely profitable.

This is a strong thesis because it narrows the subject to a more specific and manageable topic and it also identifies the specific causes for the existence of hunger.

Introduction

The introduction should start with a general discussion of your subject and lead to a very specific statement of your main point, or thesis. Sometimes an essay begins with a "grabber," such as a challenging claim, or surprising story to catch a reader's attention. The thesis should tell in one (or at most two) sentence(s), what your overall point or argument is, and briefly, what your main body paragraphs will be about.

For example, in an essay about the importance of airbags in cars, the introduction might start with some information about car accidents and survival rates. It might also have a grabber about someone who survived a terrible accident because of an airbag. The thesis would briefly state the main reasons for recommending airbags, and each reason would be discussed in the main body of the essay.

The introduction should be designed to attract the reader's attention and give him/her an idea of the essay's focus.

1. Begin with an attention grabber. The attention grabber you use is up to you, but

here are some ideas:

o **Startling information**

This information must be true and verifiable, and it doesn't need to be totally new to your readers. It could simply be a pertinent fact that explicitly illustrates the point you wish to make.

If you use a piece of startling information, follow it with a sentence or two of elaboration.

o **Anecdote**An anecdote is a story that illustrates a point. Be sure your anecdote is short, to the point, and relevant to your topic. This can be a very effective opener for your essay, but use it carefully.

o **Dialogue**An appropriate dialogue does not have to identify the speakers, but the reader must understand the point you are trying to convey. Use only two or three exchanges between speakers to make your point.

Follow dialogue with a sentence or two of elaboration.

o **Summary Information**

A few sentences explaining your topic in general terms can lead the reader gently to your thesis. Each sentence should become gradually more specific, until you reach your thesis.

2. If the attention grabber was only a sentence or two, add one or two more sentences that will lead the reader from your opening to your thesis statement.
3. Finish the paragraph with your thesis statement.

Body

The body paragraphs will explain your essay's topic. Each of the main ideas that you listed in your outline will become a paragraph in your essay. If your outline contained three main ideas, you will have three body paragraphs. Start by writing down one of your main ideas, in sentence form.

If your essay topic is a new university in your hometown, one of your main ideas may be "population growth of town" you might say this:

The new university will cause a boom in the population of Fort Myers.

Build on your paragraph by including each of the supporting ideas from your outline. In the body of the essay, all the preparation up to this point comes to fruition. The topic you have chosen must now be explained, described, or argued.

Each body paragraph will have the same basic structure.

1. Start by writing down one of your main ideas, in sentence form. If your main idea is "reduces freeway congestion," you might say this: Public transportation reduces freeway congestion.

2. Next, write down each of your supporting points for that main idea, but leave four or five lines in between each point.

3. In the space under each point, write down some elaboration for that point.

Elaboration can be further description or explanation or discussion.

Supporting Point

Commuters appreciate the cost savings of taking public transportation rather than driving.

Elaboration

Less driving time means less maintenance expense, such as oil changes.

Of course, less driving time means savings on gasoline as well. In many cases, these savings amount to more than the cost of riding public transportation.

4. If you wish, include a summary sentence for each paragraph. This is not generally needed, however, and such sentences have a tendency to sound stilted, so be cautious about using them.

Each main body paragraph will focus on a single idea, reason, or example that supports your thesis. Each paragraph will have a clear topic sentence (a mini thesis that states the main idea of the paragraph). You should try to use details and

specific examples to make your ideas clear and convincing.

Conclusion

The conclusion serves to give the reader closure, summing up the essay's points or providing a final viewpoint about the topic.

The conclusion should consist of three or four convincing sentences. Clearly review the main points, being careful not to restate them exactly, or briefly describe your opinion about the topic.

Even an anecdote can end your essay in a useful way.

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