A model essay structure: A guide to a model essay structure

A basic structure
This guide provides a general model that can be used for structuring essays. As you become more experienced and proficient at academic writing, you may experiment with and vary this structure.

The basic structure is that any assignment should have an introduction, a body and a conclusion. It is important that you understand what goes into these three sections of your essay.

The introduction
A good introduction is essential to make it clear to the reader what is going to happen in the essay and what your essay is going to be about. The introduction has three to four main sub-parts (see How to write a good introduction Quick Guide and the Planning and writing an introduction worksheet).

Your introduction gives an orientation to the topic, explaining why it is important or relevant, and may include definitions of key terms for the topic. This tells the reader precisely what you mean when you use a term.

Your introduction tells the reader your position in relation to the topic; that is, WHAT you will argue or discuss. This is often called a thesis statement.

Your introduction should then identify WHAT you will discuss to support your argument by listing each of the main points in the same order that they will be discussed in the body of your essay.

The job of the introduction is to point forward to what is going to happen.

The body
The body of your essay should take up most of the word count. You should take up each main point you have identified in the introduction and develop it in one or more paragraphs in the same order as you mentioned it in the introduction. Do this until you have covered all points. The points you make need to be supported by evidence from the reading and research you have done on the topic. Make sure you cite your sources properly (see Understanding student academic integrity at SCU Quick Guide and the suite of Quick Guides under Avoiding plagiarism). Body paragraphs should either connect back to the introduction or connect back to the previous paragraph (see Writing paragraphs Quick Guide and the Planning and writing body paragraphs worksheet).

The conclusion
Your conclusion then, tells the reader what your essay has been about. It summarises what you have found out, discovered and concluded and restates your position or thesis. Where the introduction outlines for the reader what is to come, the conclusion reinforces the main points of the body. The conclusion ties the essay together by pointing backwards and connecting back to the introduction and body (see Writing paragraphs Quick Guide).
# Model essay structure checklist

## Essay structure

### Introduction

1. Orientation to the question > **WHY** the topic is important or relevant.
2. Definitions if required.
3. Thesis statement > **WHAT** the essay will argue or discuss.
4. Outline of the main points (A, B, C, D) you are going to discuss in the essay > **HOW** your information will be organised.

### Body

Develop each main point in order in one or more paragraphs.

**Point A**

Paragraph 1:

- **Point** explained in topic sentence
- **Evidence** and **examples** to support the point
- **Link** (final sentence to summarise point and link back to the overall thesis OR to the next point/paragraph)

If you need more than one paragraph, repeat the same pattern.

**Point B**

Paragraph 1:

- **Point** explained in topic sentence
- **Evidence** and **examples** to support the point
- **Link** (final sentence to summarise point and link back to the overall thesis OR to the next point/paragraph)

**Point C**

Paragraph 1:

- **Point** explained in topic sentence
- **Evidence** and **examples** to support the point
- **Link** (final sentence to summarise point and link back to the overall thesis OR to the next point/paragraph)

Keep going with the same pattern until you have discussed each of the main points you raised in the introduction.

### Conclusion

Restate/summarise your main points. Restate your position or thesis. Conclude with a final statement that tells the reader what you have achieved, discovered, concluded.

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### Related Quick Guides

*Writing paragraphs Quick Guide*

*Writing a good introduction Quick Guide*

Planning and writing an introduction worksheet

Planning and writing body paragraphs worksheet

*Avoiding plagiarism Quick Guides*

How to include direct quotations in your writing

How to use paraphrases in your writing

Using direct quotes as evidence

Using paraphrases as evidence

Using reporting verbs to introduce evidence

How to use concepts in your writing