

# How to Write an Effective Essay

An essay is a piece of nonfiction writing that argues a point of view about a specific topic. It can include historical context, biographical information, summary of relevant theory or criticism and the definition of a key term.

Once you have your outline or basic skeleton, it's time to flesh out the sections of your essay. This includes creating a coherent and clear essay with appropriate transition words between paragraphs.

## Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a technique that helps you generate ideas and develop an outline for your essay. It can be done by yourself or with a group. It can be a fun way to get creative and encourage your writing process to begin. Using this technique will save you countless minutes of sitting with your pencil in your mouth or staring at the screen while trying to figure out what to write next.

You can use different brainstorming techniques, such as word storming or the famous Venn diagram. These methods are a great way to see how your different ideas relate to one another. For example, you can draw two circles and write down the qualities they share in the middle and the qualities that make them unique in the left and right circle. You can also use a tree diagram to visualize the relationship between three topics.

Another great way to brainstorm is by passing an index card with your idea to your group member and adding a comment or improvement to the idea directly below it. This method is particularly useful when you are stuck on a difficult topic.

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## Thesis Statement

A thesis statement helps you control the ideas within your paper. It reflects your position on the topic and your interpretation of its significance. A thesis statement is not a simple factual statement such as, "Tocqueville believed that most women held domestic roles," because writing instructors want to see your analytical and critical thinking skills.

A well-crafted thesis statement will appear in the first paragraph of your essay. It will capture the audience's attention by making a clear and concise argument. It will also answer the question or task posed by the instructor.

If the assignment asks you to make a comparison or contrast, your thesis statement will state your position on the subject of your paper such as, "Small cars get better gas mileage than 4x4 pickup trucks." This allows you to focus on your points and organize them in the body paragraphs. It is important to stay consistent with your main point and use valid arguments throughout the essay.

## Body Paragraphs

The body paragraphs are the main part of your essay and play a crucial role in supporting your thesis claim. These paragraphs should closely follow the path forecasted by your introduction and support it with primary evidence, context, and details. If you discover a body paragraph that deviates from this path, you should examine its content to see if it can be edited without losing the information needed to support your claims.

Each body paragraph starts with a topic sentence, which states the main point that the paragraph will go on to develop. The rest of the paragraph should support this main point through description, explanations, and examples.

To fully explain your argument, you may also use outside research from other sources to provide additional evidence to back up your claims. However, this should be done properly (see the section on referencing for more information). Using too many outside sources can weaken your overall essay and make it seem unoriginal.

## Conclusion

An essay conclusion is the final paragraph of your paper and should display a clear development of the central points presented in the body of the essay. As such, it is an important part of your essay and should be considered carefully.

A common mistake many students make when writing an essay is viewing the conclusion as a recap or summary of the argument they have made. While a summary of some parts of your essay can be an important part of the conclusion, the essay conclusion is not a place for you to introduce any new information.

Instead, your essay conclusion should build upon the ideas you have already developed in your essay and push these ideas further than you have in the rest of the paper. Ideally, this will leave readers with an intriguing insight to take away from your essay and think about in the future. For example, a conclusion that connects your research to the larger implications of your topic can provide closure while showcasing the relevance and importance of your work.