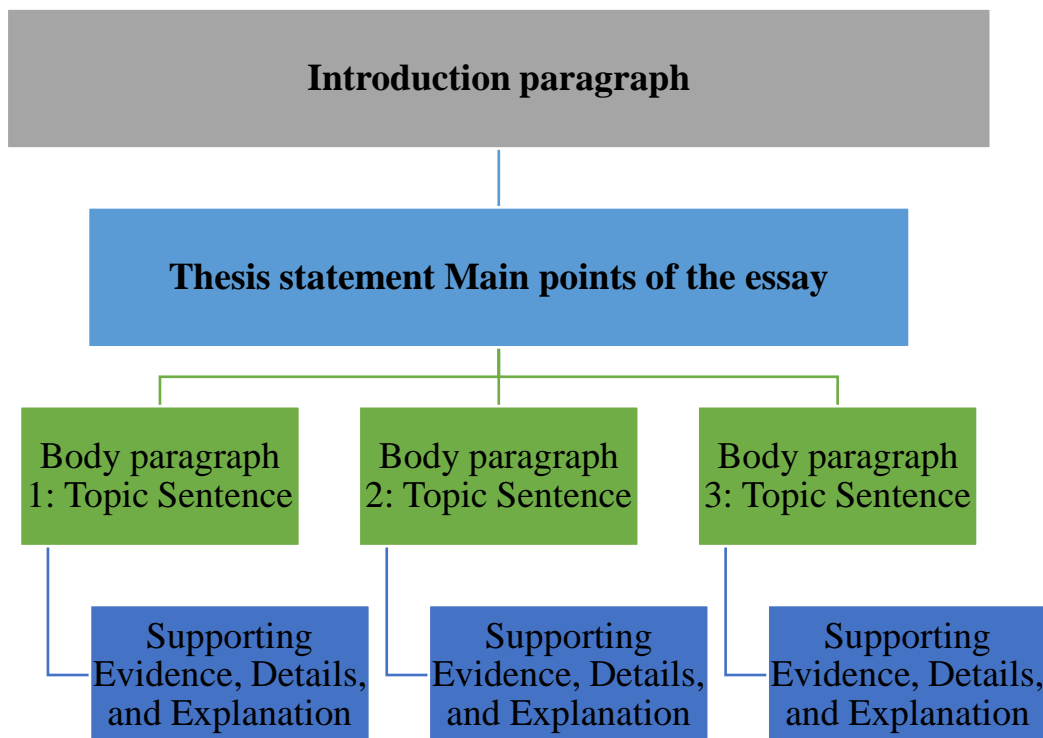


From thesis statement to body paragraphs

A thesis statement is written to state the main purpose or argument of your writing. This means that your thesis statement will be supported, and backed up through all of the body paragraphs that constitute your essay.

The topic sentences in each body paragraph indicate how your paragraph will support one idea of your thesis statement. They also indicate the main focus of that paragraph in relationship to the thesis statement. The topic sentence serves as the main idea of the paragraph and should be followed by supporting details, such as examples, reasons, or arguments. The body paragraphs should present evidence that confirms the thesis, and the information in each paragraph should support the specific point made in the topic sentence.



The Break-down of Direct Thesis Statements

When transitioning from a direct thesis statement to body paragraphs, it is important to ensure that each body paragraph aligns with and supports the main points outlined in the thesis statement. The topic sentence of each body paragraph should correspond to the main points of the thesis statement, and the supporting details within the paragraph should provide evidence and explanations that support the topic sentence.

Example:

Thesis statement: As a result of human population growth, deforestation, and hunting the number of Koalas has declined.

This thesis statement has the topic “**Koalas**”, the main idea “**their number has declined**” and the supporting points (**human population growth, deforestation, and hunting**). Accordingly, the topic sentences are:

- Because of the human population growth, the number of Koalas has declined.
- Deforestation is another reason for the decrease in Koalas number.
- The fact that makes Koalas in an increasing decline is humans’ hunting activities

The Break-down of Indirect Thesis Statements

When working with an indirect thesis statement, the body paragraphs should closely follow the roadmap provided by the thesis statement. Each body paragraph should contain a topic sentence that aligns with the indirect thesis statement and then expand upon it with specific and supported details, such as examples, reasons, or arguments.

To break down indirect thesis statements, one needs to go through the phases that follow:

- a. Turn the thesis statement into a question.
- b. Write some key-answers (maximum three).
- c. Turn the key-answers into appropriate topic sentences.

Example: Watching television **is not a waste of time**.

This thesis statement has the topic “**watching TV**”, the main idea “**is not a waste of time**” and no supporting ideas. Accordingly, the steps above should be followed to break-down this thesis.

a. Question:

Why watching TV is not a waste of time?

b. Key-answers:

- It is a valuable educational tool.
- It helps us to relax.
- It raises the viewers’ awareness and attention on several social problems

c. Topic Sentences:

- Spending time in front of television is not a waste of time, since TV is a valuable educational tool.
- TV is not a waste of time because it helps us to relax.
- The fact that makes watching TV not a waste of time is that it raises the viewers' awareness and attention on several social problems.

Unity

Effective writing must have unity. Unity occurs when all the ideas in a paragraph or an essay support each other. An essay has unity when all the body paragraphs contain a topic sentence and supporting sentences that reinforce the thesis of the essay. Without unity, the essay loses focus and goes off the topic.

Activity 1. Read the following thesis statements. Put a tick next to each topic sentence that supports the thesis statement.

Thesis: After two years of job hunting, I have finally found the perfect job for me.

Topic sentences:

- ___ a. I am enthusiastic about the challenges that I confront at work every day.
- ___ b. Last year I almost got a good job.
- ___ c. I am making more money than I have ever made and have so many benefits.
- ___ d. My boss is very supportive and is helping me to succeed.
- ___ e. I did not like the job I had before.

Activity 2. Eliminate the irrelevant sentences in the following paragraph.

Jay Gatsby was my favourite character in the novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This is a classic American novel. One of the qualities I valued most about him was his generosity and loyalty to his friends and neighbours. For example, he gave many extravagant parties and never thought about the cost. He invited anyone he knew and liked regardless of their social status. His large home was situated on the wafer on Long Island. In fact, he befriended a struggling young man and offered to help him earn more money. This

book is required reading in many college courses because it reveals the lifestyles of the 1920s. Although this young man remained faithful to Gatsby, others took advantage of his good nature.

Coherence

Just as it is important to use transition signals to show the connection of ideas within a paragraph, it is also important to use transition signals between body paragraphs to show how one paragraph is related to another. Many writers use transition signals such as *first*, *second*, *third*, and *finally*. Other transition signals can tell readers if the topic of the next paragraph follows the same line of thought or reverses direction.

Below is a list of some transition words and their use.

Emphasis	Addition	Contrast	Time
Undoubtedly	Apart from this	Unlike	Following
Unquestionably	Moreover	Nevertheless	At this time
Obviously	Furthermore	On the other hand	Previously
Clearly	In addition	Whereas	First/Firstly
Absolutely	Additionally	Alternatively	Second/Secondly
Indeed	Besides	Conversely	Third/Thirdly
It should be noted	Not only... but also	Even so	Finally
Without a doubt	Also	Differing from	Subsequently
Importantly	Too	Despite	Above all
Particularly	An additional	Nonetheless	Before
Especially		In spite of	Last but not least
Definitely		In contrast	First and foremost
In particular			

“Additional idea” transition signals	Examples
Sentence connectors	
Furthermore, In addition, Moreover, Besides,	Furthermore/ in addition/ moreover/ besides, successful people are always open to new ideas and are not afraid to take risks.

Prepositions	
Besides + noun or gerund In addition to + noun or gerund	Besides/ in addition to their ability to look ahead to the future, successful people are ready to take immediate action. Besides/ in addition to having strong personal goals, successful people are excellent time managers.

“Opposite idea” transition signals	Examples
Sentence connectors	
On the other hand, However,	On the other hand/ however, successful people are not particularly interested in spending money
Subordinators	
Although ... Even though	Although/ even though successful people earn a lot, they are more likely to invest their money than spend it.
Prepositions	
Despite In spite of	Despite/ in spite of their great wealth, some successful people have a simple lifestyle. Despite/ in spite of working very hard to become successful, they often donate to help others.

Activity. Read the paragraph carefully. Then, fill in the blanks with the appropriate connectors.

..... it is important to know about Japanese taboos. All cultures have certain actions that are considered socially unacceptable. something is acceptable in one culture, it can easily be taboo in another culture., chopsticks are used in many cultures, there are too taboos about chopsticks etiquette in Japan., you should never stand the chopsticks upright in your bowl of rice. standing chopsticks upright is done at a funeral ceremony, this action is associated with death. Second, you must never pass food from one pair of chopsticks to another. Again, this is related to burial rites in Japan.

Ordering Ideas for Coherence

One way to achieve coherence in an essay is to arrange ideas in a logical order, such as chronological order or order of importance.

- When arranging ideas in chronological order, use language such as *in the beginning*, *next*, *then*, *first*, *second*, or *finally*.

First, I went to the bank. Next, I headed to the library.

- When arranging ideas in order of importance, you order items from the most important to the least important or vice versa. Use language such as *the most/least important thing, the next priority/most important thing, or the third/final priority/goal*.

E.g., The most important thing for me was to understand the assigned topic before attempting my first draft.

Using Pronoun Reference for Coherence

Using pronoun reference is crucial for maintaining coherence within paragraphs. Pronouns, such as "it," "they," "he," and "she," connect sentences and guide readers through a paragraph. However, it is important to ensure that the referent of each pronoun is clear to avoid confusion. Faulty or vague pronoun reference can lead to ambiguity and obscure the intended meaning.

Activity. Underline the pronouns in the following paragraph. Then, say the idea to which each pronoun refers.

Canada's cheese guru, Gurth Pretty, is aiming to raise the profile of Canada's little-known artisanal and regional cheeses, including those made from cow, goat, and sheep's milk. He has conducted extensive cross-country research on them. He has also spoken at length with many cheese makers about their products. In addition, they and Gurth have developed a number of recipes that incorporate the cheeses to encourage Canadians to taste them. As a result of Gurth's efforts, Canadian artisanal cheeses are becoming better known and will no doubt become more popular in the future.

Using Parallel Forms for Coherence

Another strategy to achieve coherence is by using parallel forms. This means that all items in a list have the same grammatical form.

I like playing tennis, swimming, and dancing.

I like playing tennis, swimming, and to dance. (incorrect)

She cooked dinner, set the table, and the flowers were arranged. (incorrect)

She cooked dinner, set the table, and arranged the flowers.

Activity: Rewrite the following sentences to correct the non-parallel forms.

1. At the age of twenty, I started to write plays, taking acting lessons, and produce shows.

2. As a teenager, I reported on school events, editing articles for the high school newspaper, and published some of my stories.
3. Some of the rewards of being an author are learn about historical events, researching the lives of famous people, and discovering facts about yourself.
4. Attending workshops on writing have taught me how to receive criticism, became a more focused writer, and take more risks.