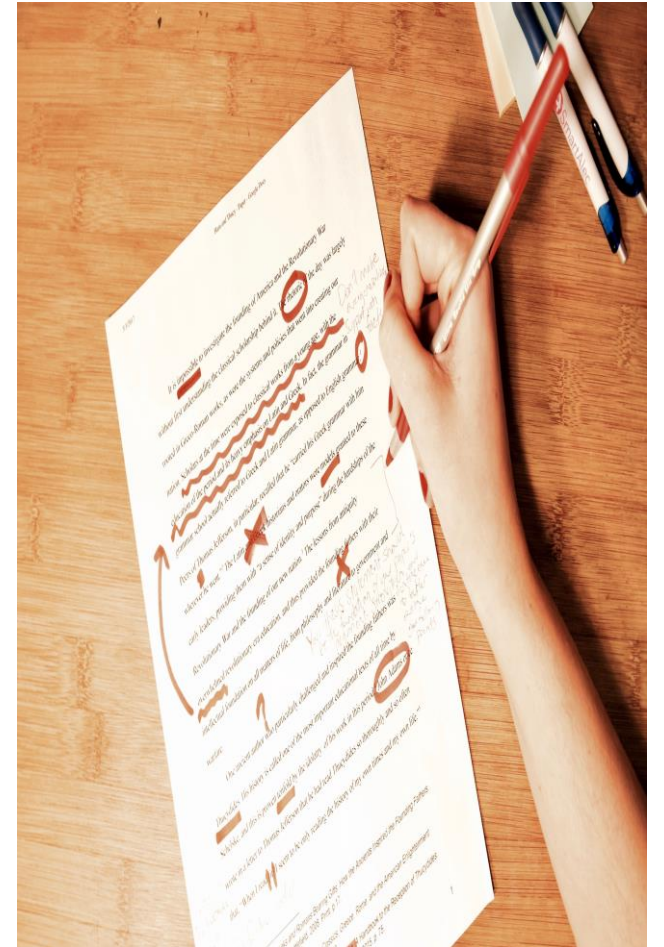


# What Is an Essay?

## Differences Between an Essay and a Paragraph



An essay is simply a paper of several paragraphs, rather than one paragraph, that supports a single point.

In an essay, subjects can and should be treated more fully than they would in a single-paragraph paper. Unlike paragraphs that are usually developed using one mode of writing, like description, essays are usually developed using several modes of writing to support the single point.

The main idea or point developed in an essay is called the ***thesis statement*** or ***thesis sentence*** (rather than, as in a paragraph, the ***topic sentence***). The thesis statement appears in the *introductory* paragraph, and it is then developed in the supporting paragraphs that follow. A *concluding* paragraph closes the essay.

# Parts of an Essay

# Introductory Paragraph

- It should start with several sentences that **attract the reader's interest**. It should then advance the central idea, or thesis, that will be developed in the essay.
- The thesis often includes a plan of development—a “preview” of the major points that will support the thesis.
- These supporting points should be listed in the order in which they will appear in the essay. Such a thesis might assert, “Winter is my favourite season because I like the weather, the holidays, and the sports,” leading to an essay that has a paragraph about weather, followed by a paragraph about the holidays, and so forth.

# Body: Supporting Paragraphs

- Many essays have three supporting points, developed at length over three separate paragraphs. However, more developed essays require four or more body paragraphs to support the thesis.
- Each of the supporting paragraphs should begin with a *topic sentence* that states the point to be detailed in that paragraph.
- Just as a thesis provides a focus for the entire essay, the topic sentence provides a focus for a supporting paragraph.

# Concluding Paragraph

- The concluding paragraph often summarizes the essay by briefly restating the thesis and, at times, the main supporting points.
- In addition, the writer often presents a concluding thought about the subject of the paper.

# Activity

- Each cluster below contains one topic, one thesis statement, and two supporting sentences. Label each item as follows:

- **T** topic

- **TH** thesis statement

- **S** supporting sentence



- **GROUP 1**

- a. People listen to audiobooks while doing other tasks, such as commuting or exercising.

- b. Audiobooks are more convenient than printed books for several reasons.

- c. Listeners hear a dramatization of a printed book by the actual author or an actor.

- d. Audiobooks

- **GROUP 2**

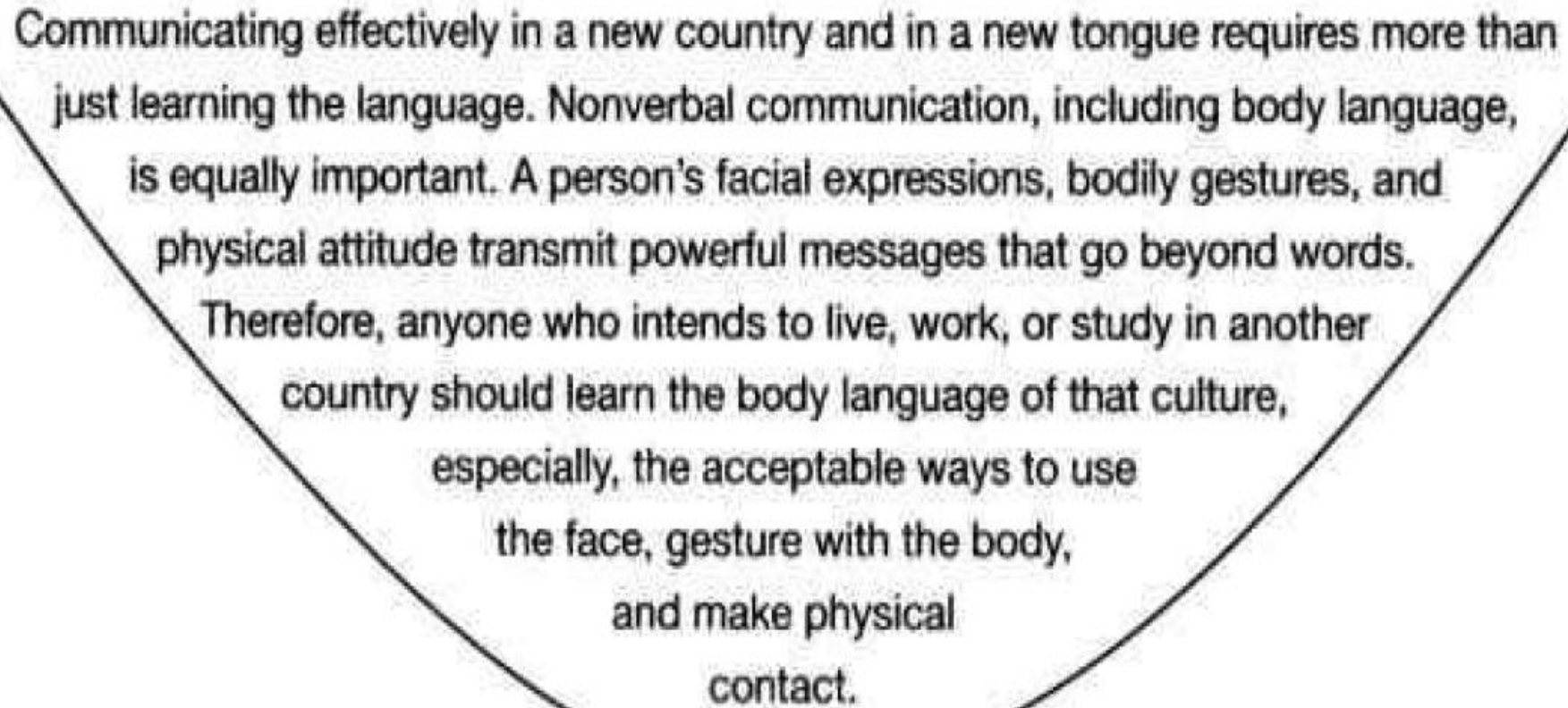
- a. Study skills
- b. Time management is essential when juggling deadlines and other responsibilities.
- c. Strong study skills are needed if a student wants to be successful in college.
- d. Notetaking provides a student with the opportunity to review information later.

# Introductory paragraph

The introduction is the first paragraph of an essay. It serves two functions:

(1) to attract the reader's interest, and

(2) to present the topic of the essay. The most common type of introductory paragraphs is the **“funnel”** introduction.



Communicating effectively in a new country and in a new tongue requires more than just learning the language. Nonverbal communication, including body language, is equally important. A person's facial expressions, bodily gestures, and physical attitude transmit powerful messages that go beyond words. Therefore, anyone who intends to live, work, or study in another country should learn the body language of that culture, especially, the acceptable ways to use the face, gesture with the body, and make physical contact.

# Practice

- Reorder the sentences in each introductory paragraph, from the most general idea to the least general one.

- **Paragraph 1**

- a. Therefore, workaholics' lifestyles can affect their families, social lives, and health.
- b. Because they work so many hours, workaholics may not spend enough time in leisure activities.
- c. These people are serious about becoming successful, so they work long hours during the week and even on weekends.
- d. People who work long hours are called "workaholics".

## • Paragraph 2

- a. As a result, anyone who wants to drive must carry a driver's licence.
- b. It is divided into four steps: studying the traffic laws, taking the written test, learning to drive, and taking the driving test.
- c. Getting a driver's license is a complicated process
- d. Driving a car is a necessity in today's busy society, and it is also a privilege.

# Body paragraphs

- Each body paragraph has a topic sentence and several supporting sentences. Concluding sentences for body paragraphs are not always necessary, especially when the ideas in consecutive paragraphs are closely related. Each body paragraph explains and gives details about the thesis statement.

## Concluding paragraphs

- The concluding paragraph is the last paragraph of an essay. It has three purposes:
  1. It signals the end of the essay
  2. It reminds the reader of what the writer wants to say in the essay
  3. It leaves the reader with the writer's final thoughts on the topic.



- In the first part of the concluding paragraph, you repeat the thesis statement in different words, and/or summarise the main points of your essay. You may need one or more than one sentence to do this.
- In the second part of the conclusion, you add a final comment. You might state your opinion or make a recommendation, judgment, or prediction about the topic. The final comment must be clearly related to the information you have already presented in the essay.