

# Essay Organization: One Approach

## Step #1: Draft your thesis statement.

- A. The thesis statement is what you are going to *prove* or *support* in your body paragraphs.
- B. All of your body paragraphs should work to explain the thesis statement.
- C. If necessary, mention the two or three specific issues you will address later on in your paper.

## Step #2: Write your introduction.

- A. Start broadly with an attention grabber that is general but relates to the topic of your paper in some way.  
Types of attention grabbers include:
  - a striking statement or statistic
  - an impressive quotation
  - a disagreement with accepted wisdom
- B. Give the audience some background information. All of the statements should eventually lead to the thesis statement.  
Ways to include background information include:
  - explaining important history about your topic
  - giving a reason for explaining your topic in an entire paper
  - defining terms that your reader must know in order to understand your paper
  - giving a *brief* summary and mention the title and author if you are writing about a text\*
- C. End with your thesis statement.\*  
Your thesis statement should already be written. Now, attach it to your introduction with some sort of transition.
- D. Check the body paragraphs against your thesis. Does the body of your paper accurately reflect your thesis? If not, you will want to rework your thesis.

## Step #3: Write your body paragraphs.

- A. The first sentence of each body paragraph (the *topic sentence*) should express an *idea* that reflects your thesis—the topic sentence should not be evidence, a quotation, or an example.
- B. Be sure that each topic sentence relates *directly* to the thesis statement.
- C. Any analysis should support the point you are making in each paragraph (your topic sentence).

## Step #4: Write your conclusion.

- A. Restate your thesis statement (in different words—in more depth).
- B. Reflect on your most important points.
- C. End with a powerful sentence (call to action, meaningful statement).

\*Check with your instructor because he/she may have different requirements.

Your introduction should start generally and end with a focused thesis.

- Grabber
- Background info.
- Focused thesis statement

- \*Body paragraphs**
    - Topic sentence
    - Main support
    - Evidence (examples, quotes)
    - Analysis of evidence
    - Transition
- \*this is only one way to set up your body paragraphs.

Your conclusion should progress from a narrow to a broad focus.

- Revise thesis.
- Recap main points.
- Add a powerful sentence.