

# Outlining an Essay

A standard essay is five paragraphs long. This includes the introduction, body, and conclusion.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction provides excitement, gives basic information, and tells the plan of the essay.

- a. **Hook** – Opening statement used to catch the reader's attention; make them want to read more.

**Examples of a “hook”:**

- i. begin with asking a question
- ii. begin with an interesting observation
- iii. begin with a unique scenario
- iv. begin with a famous quote

- b. **Connecting Information** – Use three to five sentences to connect the reader to the topic by providing background information or examples.

- c. **Thesis Statement** – **One declarative sentence** that clearly and concisely expresses the main ideas of your paper.

**Example:** The main problems facing South American countries are a lack of job opportunities for citizens, demand for better health care, and limited university programs for poor students.

## 2. BODY

The body of an essay is the main part, normally consisting of 3 paragraphs. In the body, you will explain details about the main points presented in the thesis sentence. Deal with each main point in a separate paragraph. Include facts and your own ideas/opinions.

## 3. CONCLUSION

The conclusion should contain much of the same information as the introduction.

- a. Make it clear that it is your conclusion. You can do this by using a kind of **transition:**  
“In conclusion...”, “From the information given...”, or “To summarize...”
- b. Do not introduce new information, but **help the reader reconsider the main ideas.**
- c. Make a **closing statement:**
  - i. Give a suggestion, opinion, or prediction.
  - ii. State that the issue or question has been addressed or answered.

## Sample Outline of a Research Paper

**When using sub points**, there should be at least two. (If there is an 'a', include be a 'b', if an 'i', then a 'ii'.)

- I. Introduction
  - a. Hook (Grabbing the audience's attention)
  - b. Any interesting/background information
  - c. Thesis statement
- II. First main idea
  - a. Supporting evidence for first idea
  - b. Supporting evidence for first idea
  - c. Examples from text/sources/etc.
- III. Second main idea
  - a. Supporting evidence for second idea
    - i. Example
    - ii. Second example
  - b. Supporting evidence for second idea
- IV. Third main idea
  - a. Supporting evidence for first idea
    - i. Quote
    - ii. Scripture reference
  - b. Supporting evidence for first idea
- V. Conclusion
  - a. Restatement of thesis
  - b. Concluding remarks about discussed ideas
  - c. Closing