

Parts of an essay

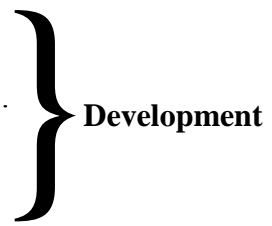
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Introduction:

- **Attention-getter** – attract reader’s attention to your general subject. Some methods:
 - a sensory experience to orient the reader emotionally
 - an anecdote (*very* brief narrative) – imagined, or from experience
 - a *brief*, thought-provoking quotation
 - a provocative fact or statistic
 - (any remark that is not ridiculously obvious *and* is at the heart of your thesis)
- **Background** – the “big picture,” a bird’s-eye view of your topic, such as:
 - A brief summary of a story you’re writing about (1-3 sentences)
 - a brief history of an event or development
 - one-sentence summaries of the various opinions on an issue
- **Thesis** statement, which should...
 - assert a **claim** of truth, value, or policy – the essay’s controlling idea
 - predict the **scope** of your essay – the **topics** you’ll discuss to support your thesis

Body (several **paragraphs**, each one devoted to developing one **topic**), preferably in the order they appeared in your thesis statement.

Body paragraphs – each contains:

- **Topic sentence** – one of your claims, one argument that support your overall **thesis**.
 - **Support** – details, facts, proofs or logical reasoning, brief quotes, a story, description, examples or illustrations, comparison, causes or effects, a process, definition of a term, analysis, classification....
Use your rhetorical options.
 - **Discussion** – As you introduce support, connect it all back to the **topic** by explaining how it makes your point.
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Transitions: From the beginning of your essay to the end, give a sense of where you’re going.

- Give an early hint at your final **synthesis**. Point the reader’s interest where you want it.
- Guide your reader from topic to topic by showing how each new idea is related to those before it: causation, contrast, sequence, a closer look, examples to come, and so on.
- Always tie the discussion back to your thesis and anticipate your closing **synthesis**.

Conclusion:

- **Synthesize** a new, greater idea that re-integrates and transcends all the parts of your discussion.
- **Evaluate** (optional). You may want to declare your subject’s value or importance.
- The conclusion must make the essay feel “finished.”
- *Do not summarize your main topics*; that is only for much longer papers. You may recall parts of your discussion through keywords or general themes.

Documentation: If you borrow ideas, **credit the sources** in a standard format (MLA, APA).

- If you use their exact words, “put them in quotation marks” and cite them (Smith par. 4).
- Otherwise, *completely* rephrase the ideas and, yes, cite the ideas (Smith par. 4).