

Essay Writing

Introduction to Introductions

Where you should be right now...

- Research
- Position
- Beginning synthesis

Tips from Rough Drafts

- Citing Sources
- Analysis
- Claim sentences
- Proving your point

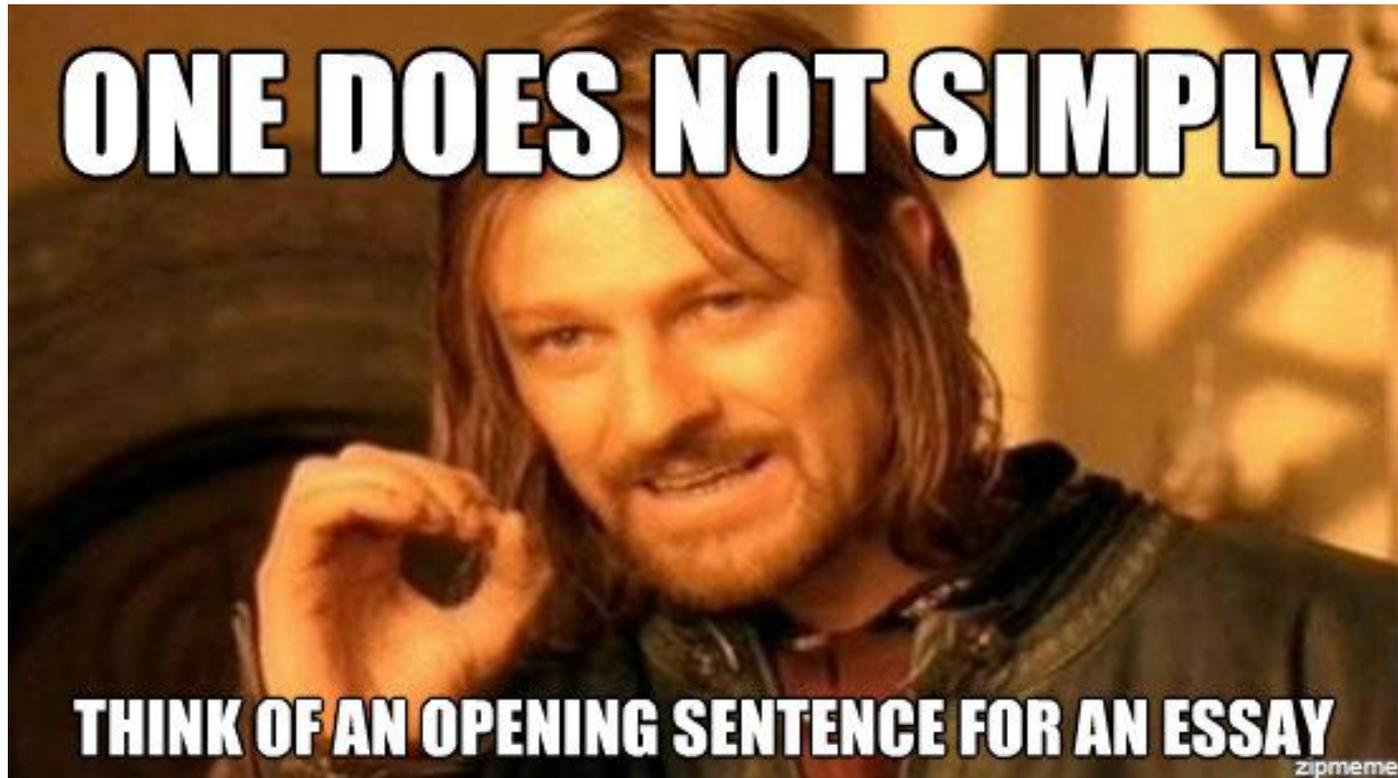
Essay Structure

- What is the format of a typical essay?
 - Introduction
 - Body Paragraph
 - Body Paragraph
 - Body Paragraph
 - Conclusion

The Introduction

- Purpose of the intro
- Components of an introduction
- Introduction
 - The topic
 - Its boundaries
 - Why it is interesting
 - Structure and/or Methodology
 - The essay's main sections (structure)
 - Why they come in that order (structural principle)
 - How the author plans to draw the necessary conclusions from the information available (methodology)
 - The Thesis Statement (usually a single sentence)
 - Its premise (the general claim about the information available)
 - Its conclusion (the consequences of the first claim)

How to start intro?!?!



Start with background info

With inflation low, many companies have understandably lowered prices, and the oil industry should be no exception. Consequently, homeowners have begun wondering whether the high price of home heating oil is justified given the economic climate. It makes sense, therefore, for us to start examining the pricing policies of the major American oil companies.

- What is this essay about?
- What direction is this essay going in?

Start with a definition

- Democracy is a form of government in which power is given to and exercised by the people. This may be true in theory, but some recent elections have raised concerns about the future of democracy. Extensive voting machine irregularities and “ghost voting” have jeopardized people’s faith in the democratic process.
- What is this essay about?
- What direction is this essay going in?

Begin with an anecdote

- Three years ago, I went with my grandparents to my first auction. They live in a small town outside of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where it is common for people to auction off the contents of a home when someone moves or dies. As I walked through the crowd, I smelled the funnel cakes frying in the food trucks, heard the hypnotic chanting of the auctioneer, and sensed the excitement of the crowd. Two hours later, I walked off with an old trunk that I had bought for thirty dollars and a passion for auctions that I still have today.

Begin with a statistic

- According to a recent government study, recipients of Medicare will spend billions of dollars on drugs over the next ten years. This is a very large amount of money, and it illustrates why lawmakers must do more to help older Americans with the cost of medications. Although the current legislation is an important first step, more must be done to help the elderly afford the drugs they need.

Begin with a contradiction

- Many people think that after the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, the colonists defeated the British army in battle after battle. This commonly held belief is incorrect. The truth is that the colonial army lost most of its battles. The British were defeated not because the colonial army was stronger, but because George Washington refused to be lured into a costly winner-take-all battle and because the British government lost interest in pursuing an expensive war three thousand miles from home.

DO NOT!

- **Don't apologize.** Never use phrases such as “in my opinion” or “I may not be an expert, but. . . .” By doing so, you suggest that you don't really know your subject.
- **Don't begin with a dictionary definition.** Avoid beginning an essay **with** phrases like “According to Webster's Dictionary. . . .” This type of introduction is overused and trite. If you want to use a definition, develop your own.
- **Don't announce what you intend to do.** Don't begin with phrases **such** as “In this paper I will . . .” or “The purpose of this essay is to. . . .” Use your introduction to create interest in your topic, and let readers discover your intention when they get to your thesis statement.
- **Don't wander.** Your introduction should draw readers into your essay **as** soon as possible. Avoid irrelevant comments or annoying digressions that will distract readers and make them want to stop reading.

Body Paragraphs

Structure of the Body Paragraph

- Transition
- Claim
- Evidence
- Analysis

Transitions

Claim sentences

- This sentence connects your paragraph to your thesis
- **Fast food contains additives.**
- **Another problem with fast food is that it contains additives.**

Evidence

- For example, to give fries flavor, McDonald's used to fry their potatoes in beef fat. Shockingly, their fries actually had more saturated fat than their hamburgers did. When the public found out how unhealthy their fries were, the company switched to vegetable oil (Smith, 2004).

Evidence Continued

- For example, to give fries flavor, McDonald's used to fry their potatoes in beef fat. Shockingly, their fries actually had more saturated fat than their hamburgers did. When the public found out how unhealthy their fries were, the company switched to vegetable oil (Smith, 2004). **James (2007) found that this had an overall negative effect on the sale of fries.**

Analysis

- This proves your point to make your thesis valid.
- Fast-food companies know that to keep their customers happy, they have to give them food that tastes good, and this is where the trouble starts. What most people don't know, however, is that McDonald's adds a chemical derived from animals to the vegetable oil to give it the taste of beef tallow.

Conclusions

Wrapping it all up

What does a conclusion do?

- Reinforces your thesis and purpose without directly restating the thesis
- Restates the essays main ideas
- **IT DOES NOT INTRODUCE POINTS YOU HAVE NOT DISCUSSED EARLIER!!**

Review your key points or restate your thesis

- Rotation of crops provided several benefits. It enriched soil by giving it a rest; it enabled farmers to vary their production; and it ended the cycle of “boom or bust” that had characterized the prewar South’s economy when cotton was the primary crop. Of course, this innovation did not solve all the economic problems of the postwar South, but it did lay the groundwork for the healthy economy this region enjoys today.

End the discussion of a problem with a recommendation or a course of action

- Well-qualified teachers are becoming harder and harder to find. For this reason, school boards should reassess their ideas about what qualifies someone to teach. At the present time, people who have spent their lives working in a particular field are denied certification because they have not taken education courses. This policy deprives school systems of talented teachers. In order to ensure that students have the best possible teachers, school boards should consider applicants' real-world experience when evaluating their qualifications.

End with a prediction

- Campaign advertisements should help people understand a political candidate's qualifications and where he or she stands on critical issues. They should not appeal to people's fears or greed. Above all, they should not personally attack other candidates or oversimplify complex issues. If campaign advertisements continue to do these things, the American people will disregard them and reject the candidates they promote.
- A bit of caution!

Do not!

- Don't end by repeating the exact words of your thesis and listing your main points. Avoid boring endings that tell readers what they already know.
- Don't end with an empty phrase. Avoid ending with a cliché like “This just goes to prove that you can never be too careful.”
- Don't introduce new points or go off in new directions. Your conclusion should not introduce new points for discussion. It should reinforce the points you have already made in your essay.
- Don't end with an unnecessary announcement. Don't end by saying that you are ending — for example, “In conclusion, let me say. . . .” The tone of your conclusion should signal that the essay is drawing to a close.