

DEVELOPMENT

Developing an essay has two main factors, maintaining focus and organizing your ideas in a cohesive manner.

MAINTAINING FOCUS

Subject digression is dangerous for any piece of writing. It is important to stay on topic throughout the entire essay. This means that every paragraph points back to the main idea of the essay and every sentence points back to the main idea of its paragraph.

SUBJECT

Sentence

The subject is a noun or a person, place, thing, or idea that is doing the action of the sentence.

Examples:

Bobby threw the ball (Bobby is the noun in the sentence that is performing the action of throwing the ball)

Political ideologies, such as capitalism or socialism, often conflict with each other.

Paragraph

The subject of a paragraph can usually be found in the beginning sentence or the topic sentence.

Example:

The question of how to deal with violent criminals is an ongoing debate in modern societies. Citizens have had to decide if offenders such as first-degree murderers should be executed, imprisoned for life, or rehabilitated and given a second chance.

If a sentence in a paragraph does not relate back to or give relevant information regarding the topic sentence either omit it or rewrite the sentence.

Essay

The subject of an essay is usually outlined in the introduction paragraph(s)

An introduction paragraph to an essay will answer three questions:

1. What is this about?
2. Why should the audience care?
3. What does the author want the audience to do with the knowledge gained from the paper?

In order to answer these three questions an author may do three things:

1. Give context to the argument
2. State why the main idea is important
3. Give a thesis statement (for more information on how to write a thesis, refer to the "Thesis Statements" handout.

ORGANIZATION

Essays are made up of three parts Introduction, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusion. When outlining an essay organize your thoughts into these three categories.

INTRODUCTION

An introduction will outline the topic and purpose of your essay. It will answer three questions as mentioned above.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

Body Paragraphs are the meat of your essay. These paragraphs are where specific analysis and arguments will take place that will prove and support your thesis. Make sure each of your body paragraphs relate back to your thesis statement.

CONCLUSION

Your conclusion should do three things:

1. Solidify the key message in the reader's mind
2. Bring all your ideas in the essay to a full circle
3. Restate or reiterate your thesis (not word for word, just the idea)

Note: Because the conclusion is meant to wrap up your entire essay, make sure that you don't present any new material in your conclusion.