

A solid outline is important for effective writing. Ensure the points covered in the outline connect well. The outline must have three main sections: an INTRODUCTION, a BODY, and a CONCLUSION.

INTRODUCTION – A good introduction captures the reader’s interest, clearly states the focus of the paper and gives essential background information. It also presents the thesis statement, a specific assertion that is backed up by arguments which form the structure of the paper.

BODY - Logically present arguments, backed by research and citations which support the thesis statement.

CONCLUSION - Restate or reword the thesis and show how it is supported by the arguments. Broaden the focus to leave the reader thinking about the wider implications of the topic.

SAMPLE OUTLINE: Essay on “Obstacles to Student Success”

I. INTRODUCTION

- a. Opening statement introduces topic
 - i. Catch reader’s attention with a surprising statistic, quote or anecdote
- b. Indicate the structure of the paper
- c. Thesis statement on *Obstacles to Student Success* (include the supporting arguments, e.g., peer pressure, personal wellness, and preparation)

II. BODY – present and interpret research that illustrates arguments supporting thesis

- a. Peer Pressure
 - i. Excessive drinking
 - ii. Drug abuse
 - iii. Social acceptance
- b. Personal Wellness
 - i. Lack of family support
 - ii. Lack of social support group
 - iii. Lack of financial support
- c. Preparation
 - i. Lack of time management
 - ii. Lack of study skills
 - iii. Lack of maturity

III. CONCLUSION

- a. Present thesis, reworded, as the logical conclusion of the summarized arguments:
 - i. Peer pressure
 - ii. Personal wellness
 - iii. Preparation
- b. Concluding statement: broaden focus to place topic in wider context.