

## Essay Structure - Key Points

### Introduction Components

**A quotation:**

A quotation - a nice illustration of the point you want to put over in your essay, or a tone setter for your paper - something interesting, get the readers curiosity tweaking. If nothing else, it'll show you've done some research. Check with your school or faculties guidelines to know if it is acceptable to use a quotation at the start of your essay.

**A brief background to the topic:**

This is a MUST DO. You are expected to give a brief background to the topic in your introduction. Help the reader place the discussion in a meaningful context, and show off quickly your own understanding of the question.

**Outline the aims of the essay:**

SIGNPOSTS - This is the main purpose of your introduction - a MUST DO! Show the reader where you are going - imagine a visitor to a new town and you are giving them an outline map to guide them through it. Aren't you nice?

**Bullet point aims for the essay:**

Does your lecturer want to see these? You'd better find out. Check with the lecturers or school's essay writing guidelines. Some departments might require it, some might forbid it. If there's no preference, then it's a matter of style.

**Outline of the structure of the essay:**

You've got to give an outline of your aims, and you could describe the order you'll present them in while you do it; help your reader have a as 'sense of direction' through the essay. However, this is not essential.

**A suggestion of the conclusion the essay will reach:**

Some people like to give this - a brief statement of where you intend to go with the essay, what idea you are working towards. However, some people prefer not to do this (perhaps they think it's like giving away the punch line to a joke). Choose your style - and again you might be best to check your lecturer's/schools preferences on this one.

### Conclusion Components

**A restatement of the question or the aims of the essay:**

Keep everything clear, don't let the purpose of the paper get out of sight, and restate your aims before you summarise how you met them - if you want to do this, or if your lecturer likes to see it.

**A summary of all the main points of the essay:**

Don't slouch on this one - this is the whole reason you're writing a conclusion. You don't need to go into details (it's a SUMMARY!) and you don't need to recap every idea you put into the paper, but make sure all the big ones are in.

**A concluding statement or comment:**

How does the reader know you've reached the end? Because you give a nice little statement of your final opinion or of a most useful thought to take away from the paper. This has the 'rhythm' of an ending, like the big cymbal crash at the end of a song.

### **A suggestion of further aims or goals arising from the essay:**

Have you dealt with it all? Is this the end of the subject? *Really?* Perhaps it's an area that you feel needs to be explored more. Perhaps you've only scratched the surface. Or perhaps your discussion or argument has opened up a whole new can of worms - an awful lot more investigation that could be done in the subject. You could use your conclusion to suggest further areas of investigation, discussion or debate if that is the case.

### **A further question arising out of the essay:**

It depends on your essay, really, doesn't it? You may be dealing with a topic that is so contentious, or so far-reaching, that you couldn't possibly tie it up in 2,000 (or however many) words. If so, the conclusions you reach may throw up some further questions that are outside of the reach of your paper. Tease your readers' interest and put these in with your concluding statement.

### **Topic Sentences**

Very often the topic sentence will be the first sentence in the paragraph, and when you are new to writing them, it might be easiest to keep it that way.

### **However:**

- Sometimes it may come further into the paragraph - perhaps a sentence linking to the previous paragraph or an introductory sentence could be used first - if you're getting a bit clever at it!
- Linking phrases are very helpful to show how your paragraph fits in with the rest, but they are not always necessary and in fact sometimes it might just be a bit too awkward to cramp one in.
- BUT, a very important thing to keep in mind is that any other sentences, whether they come before or after the topic sentence, must relate to and support the idea that you state in the topic sentence.

You want to give a new idea? **START A NEW PARAGRAPH!!!**

### **The key points to keep in mind are:**

- The essay is clearly split into introduction, main body and conclusion
- The main body can contain as many paragraphs as necessary to achieve your aims (and answer the question)
- The main body develops all of the aims given in the introduction
- Every paragraph is related to the topic
- Every paragraph adds something to the aims of your essay
- Every paragraph includes only one main idea
- The topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph
- All other sentences in the paragraph support the main idea
- The relationships between paragraphs are given with linking phrases