

Structure of an Academic Essay

For more information on improving your writing, come to the Academic Support Center, Knutti 114.

I. Introduction: Move from General to Specific, Ending with Your Thesis

1. Capture your Readers' attention; make the topic relevant to them; start with something general or familiar.
2. Narrow that general statement by moving in a new (more specific) direction, one that your thesis will take.
3. State your thesis, making a specific claim.

II. Body: Divide Your Argument into Logical Sections

1. Be sure to create **topic sentences** that use a key word or phrase from your thesis – this will show how each specific paragraph fits in to your overall argument.
2. Assert, illustrate and analyze / explain each subclaim you make in support of your thesis. In other words, back up everything you say with examples or direct quotes from your text or research.

III. Conclusion: Move from Specific to General, Restating Your Thesis

1. Summarize your support and restate your thesis (although not in the same words).
2. Give a final reflection without adding any new information. This statement should be more general than your thesis.
3. Return to your original image for closure.