

Writing Academic Essays

College writing is also called **academic writing**. Academic writing is writing by scholars for scholars, and those scholars include college students, that presents an **informed argument**. In other words, the essays that are written for college classes should be written for a college level reading audience and should provide information about **what the writer knows** about the topic as well as **what they think** about the topic.

Style, Organization, and Writing Academic Essays

Academic writing is **highly structured** writing, and the reader has certain expectations about how information is organized and presented in an academic essay. The **language and word choice should be formal** rather than personal (avoiding using “I”, “you”, as well as contractions and slang terms) and should be appropriate for a college level reading audience. Academic writing should also be **logically organized**. The following organizational pattern is common in academic writing:

Introduction (Opening paragraph)- the **introductory paragraph** introduces the topic of the essay and the main point that is being made about the topic, which is expressed in the thesis statement. The thesis statement is usually the last sentence of the introductory paragraph.

Body (Succeeding paragraphs)- Each body paragraph usually begins with a **topic sentence**, which states the point of that particular paragraph. An academic essay usually has several body paragraphs, depending on what points are being made about the topic of the essay. The **body paragraphs** each deal with one idea or point that supports and/or explains the thesis statement.

Conclusion (Final paragraph)- This paragraph usually reiterates the thesis idea and wraps up the entire essay to bring it to a meaningful close. Sometimes the conclusion will include a broader application of the main point of the essay.

This is a common type of essay organization. It is important to remember this is form is only an idea to help writers organize a formal essay. The five paragraph essay, when rigidly adhered to, can make writing seem mechanical and unoriginal. This format is an organizational guideline for where to put information that should be included in the essay.

Remember;

“No set of conventions for preparing a manuscript can replace lively and intelligent writing, and no amount of research and documentation can compensate for a poor presentation of ideas.”

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