

THE ESSAY

An essay is a piece of writing several paragraphs long instead of just one or two paragraphs. It is written about one topic, just as a paragraph is. However, the topic of an essay is too long and too complex to discuss in one paragraph. Therefore, the topic is divided into several paragraphs, one for each major point. Then all the separate paragraphs are tied together by adding an introduction and a conclusion.

The principles of organisation for an essay are the same as the principles of organisation for a paragraph. An essay has three main parts: an introductory paragraph, a body (at least one, but usually two or more paragraphs), and a concluding paragraph.

The **introductory paragraph** should provide a clear introduction to the content of the essay. It should introduce the central idea or the main purpose of the writing. The length of the introduction should be in proportion to the rest of the essay.

The introduction has four purposes: it introduces the topic of the essay; it gives a general background of the topic; it often indicates the overall “plan” of the essay; it should arouse the reader’s interest in the topic.

The **body** consists of one or more paragraphs where the key ideas and issues presented in the introduction should be developed in a logical and coherent manner. The purpose of the essay should be clear and the reader must be able to follow its development without any problems. The relationship between parts of the writing should be easily recognisable. Main points should be presented in separate paragraphs and should be pertinent to the main purpose of the essay.

The **conclusion** should signal to your readers that you have finished your writing and should leave them with a clear impression that the purposes of the essay have been achieved. The most common types of conclusion may include:

- a) a summary of the main points
- b) concluding statements drawn from the points made in the main body
- c) recommendations for action to be taken.

The only additional element in an essay is the linking expressions between the paragraphs of the body. These are just like transitions within a paragraph, which are used to connect the ideas between two sentences. Similarly, transitions are used between paragraphs to connect the ideas between them.

One commonly used structure for essays follows the pattern SITUATION - PROBLEM - SOLUTION(S) - EVALUATION / COMMENT , e. g.

I am a foreign student living in Britain. I find it very difficult to meet British students. I will join some university clubs so as to meet some students. This should help to put me in contact with British students.