

Thesis Statements

Good expository writing usually has a statement of purpose, a controlling idea which predicts and confines the subject you are covering in your essay and expresses why your idea is relevant. This controlling idea, or thesis statement, is your essay's life and spirit; without it, the likelihood of running amok in your essay is pretty much guaranteed.

Thesis Statement Checklist:

An effective thesis statement:

- Gives your opinion about a topic or idea;
- Often contains a "map" of what you are going to say in your essay and in what order;
- Is neither too broad nor too narrow for the scope of the assignment;
- Does more than state a well known fact (it usually makes an arguable assertion of some kind);
- Gives you something to prove, back-up, or develop;
- Does more than just list the sub-topics you plan on addressing—it includes a "So What" about the overall topic, about why your opinion matters, about the greater implications;
- Establishes a contract between you and your readers: they can expect that you'll support this thesis convincingly and interestingly and will not be bothering them with extraneous information.

How to Come Up with a Good Thesis Statement:

- 1) Figure out *what primary question* the essay assignment is asking, even if it is not stated explicitly.
- 2) If you're not sure what your opinion is about the question, try free-writing about it for a while. Once you've laid out your ideas, try summarizing what you've written about. This will often give you your overall opinion on the subject.
- 3) Now think about the larger implications of your opinion. What does it mean that your idea is true? What are the effects or results of this being the case? *So What?*
- 4) Once you've gotten clear on your overall opinion, figure out how you want to support or prove that opinion: classify your support into categories or topics, each of which you'll explore and develop to support your opinion.
- 5) Once you've decided what your opinion is, what categories or topics you'll explore to support this opinion, and what the implications of your opinion are, try to construct one or two sentences that combine all these aspects. This is your rough thesis.
- 6) Now check your thesis against the checklist to see how you've done. Keep in mind that you may revise your thesis as you write—this just gives you a starting point.

Shaping a Thesis

Thinking of the components of a thesis as floors or levels in a building is just one way of describing what makes up a good thesis. Here's how it breaks down:

1st Level: describes the topic; gives the facts; makes an observation. This level is not yet a thesis because it makes observations that are non-controversial, i.e. no reasonable person would disagree with them. A person reading such a thesis immediately thinks "Yes. This is true."

Example: Some men and some women use language differently. Example: Advertisements appeal to different needs.

2nd Level: interprets, gives points of view on, and/or adds controversy to the focus of the first level. By adding controversy, I mean it takes a position on the facts, which is not obvious, a position which a reasonable person could disagree with. A person reading a 2nd level thesis thinks "That's an interesting point of view—now prove it to me." By controversial, I mean it takes one position out of a number of possible positions.

Example: Women and men are conditioned from childhood to use language differently.

Example: Advertisers shape the appeals in their print ads to reflect the perceived emotional needs of the readers.

3rd Level: relates the 2nd level thesis to the bigger picture, explains its significance. This is the most difficult type of thesis to describe (and write) because it can take so many forms. It is the answer you get when you ask of a 2nd level thesis "so what?" The reader should say: "I see why this argument matters."

Example: Because men and women have been conditioned from childhood to use language for different purposes, as adults we must learn each others' styles if we are to communicate effectively.

Example: Because advertisers shape the appeals in their print ads to reflect the perceived emotional needs of the readers, careful study of the ads provides an image of what advertisers think about their potential consumers—and it is not a pretty picture.

Think of the three levels of thesis development in this way:

observation + opinion + significance

More Examples:

- 1st level: Men and women often demonstrate three main differences in their approach to conversation: different topics, different functions and different styles.
- 2nd level: Many of the disagreements between the sexes can be attributed to our different approaches to language.
- 3rd level: Because disagreements often result from the specific identifiable, differences in how men and women use conversation, we all must make an effort to understand each other's speaking patterns if we are to live harmoniously.
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- 1st level: American teens feel pressure to buy brand name consumer goods.
- 2nd level: Families should discourage American teens from giving in to the peer pressure to buy name brand goods, like those of Abercrombie & Fitch, which are expensive and rely on sexually exploitative advertising.
- 3rd level: Until adults are able to demonstrate successful strategies for fighting the lure of name brand goods, youth will continue to be exploited by huge companies, like Abercrombie and Fitch, which seem to promise freedom but don't deliver.
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- 1st level: We are all influenced by proximity to consumer culture.
- 2nd level: Proximity to consumer culture creates desires which we cannot satisfy.
- 3rd level: Because we are surrounded by a consumer culture which makes it difficult for us to be satisfied with ourselves or with our lives, we ...

Thesis Statement Exercise:

Bearing the above criteria in mind, consider the effectiveness of each of the following as a potential thesis statement. Imagine in each case that you're writing a 3-5 page paper. Explain your opinion.

- 1. These salt and pepper shakers have been in my family for over fifty years.**

- 2. Diablo Valley College has good classes, friendly teachers, and an attractive campus.**

- 3. While it is wonderful to have people of all types in our lives in order to keep things interesting, possessive friends and lovers are dangerous to have around as they limit our personal growth and separate us from the people we love, which can result in our self-esteem dwindling down to nothing.**

- 4. There are many reasons for racism in America.**

- 5. Jib Fowles' "need for guidance" appeal touches on our belief that "if it has been around for a long time," it must be trustworthy.**

- 6. In this essay, I am going to talk about the effects on high school students of working during their teenage years, and then look at solutions to the question of whether or not this should be allowed.**

CHANGING PASSIVE SENTENCES TO ACTIVE SENTENCES

The most common sentence structure in English consists of a subject, active verb, and a direct object. A passive voice sentence reverses this order, so the subject is acted upon.

Example: Active: He ate the taco.
 Passive: The taco was eaten by him.

Sometimes students use the passive when the active voice would be better. Passive sentences tend to be wordy, less direct, and less powerful than active sentences.

DO Use Passive Voice When:

- You should use the passive voice if the doer of the action is unknown:

Ex: A cure for dandruff has been found.

Rather than:

A researcher has found a cure for dandruff.

- You can choose to use the passive voice if the doer of the action is less important than the receiver:

The rock star was hit by an egg.

Rather than:

An egg hit the rock star.

- Don't shift back and forth from active to passive voice without good reason. Here's a sentence that shifts for a good reason:

He walked around the corner and *was knocked over* by a runaway horse.

In this sentence, the point of view remains the same because *he* is the subject of both the active verb *walked* and the passive verb *was knocked over*. But in the following sentence, the shift from active to passive voice is also a confusing shift in point of view:

He drove through the red light, and she was nearly run over by him.

Better: He drove through the red light and nearly ran over her.

Look at the following pairs of sentences and decide which one is active or passive. Which sentence is most effective?

1. All societies should formulate strict rules of conduct to prevent chaos.
Strict rules of conduct should be formulated by all societies in order to prevent chaos.
2. It is recommended by this college that you take a writing course.
This college recommends that you take a writing course.
3. The tackle blocked a touchdown pass.
A touchdown pass was blocked by the tackle.
4. My first kiss will always be remembered by me.
I will always remember my first kiss.
5. The election returns were tabulated by representatives of both parties.
Representatives of both parties tabulated the election returns.
6. My composition instructor assigns an essay every week.
An essay every week is assigned by my composition instructor.
7. Ms. Grant's assistant was fired by her.
Ms. Grant fired her assistant.
8. The stage manager demanded that the comedian leave the stage.
A demand was made by the stage manager that the comedian leave the stage.
9. A low-calorie lunch was prepared by my husband.
My husband prepared a low-calorie lunch.
10. I have studied the reasons for your resignation, and I agree with them.
The reasons for your resignation have been studied by me, and I agree with them.
11. The baseball team was given a standing ovation.
The crowd gave the baseball team a standing ovation.
12. My doctor referred me to a specialist in hearing problems.
I was referred by my doctor to a specialist in hearing problems.

George Orwell's Six Tips For Correct Word Choice

- 1) Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print. Be original to evoke emotional response, using clichés makes your writing comfortable, which can mean boring.

Examples: ax to grind, easy
 as pie, fishing in troubled
 waters, there's no place
 like home, filthy rich,

- 2) If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out. "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree" (Ezra Pound).

ex. have a need - need
 make a mockery of- mock
 immediately striking feature - striking feature

- 3) Never use a long word where a short one will do. Long words don't make you sound intelligent unless used skillfully. In the wrong situation they'll have the opposite effect, making you sound pretentious and arrogant.

ex. inundate - flood

 misgiving - doubt

 nonrepresentative - different

- 4) Never use the passive where you can use the active.

ex. The course was taught to my by Mr. X
 Mr. X taught the course.

- 5) Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

ex. ancien regime - ancient regime
 render – make, exhibit – show,
 forte – area

- 6) Break any of these rules sooner than say anything barbarous.

- 'Politics of the English Language'
1946

Extra Hints, No Charge!

Metapotamy (changing horses in midstream)

Try not to break parallel structures by deviating from syntactic parallelism. For example, don't write: "It seems good, it sounds good, and its appearance is pretty." Likewise, don't switch between active and passive when you can make two halves of a thought correspond. For example, don't say: "Painting houses preserves them, and houses are also beautified by shrubbery." Instead, say: "Painting houses preserves them and shrubbery beautifies them."

Weak adjectives and adverbs

Many adjectives and adverbs add little to the sense of a sentence. It is often wise to remove the adjectives "mere," "basic," "essential," "major" and "fundamental," as well as their adverbial forms. Some adjectives are advertisements without substance. Unless you explain what you mean, don't use words like "advanced," "powerful," "sophisticated," "flexible," or "special."

Weak verbs

Certain verbs, notably "make," "do," and "perform," are often used in situations where a much better verb can be found. For example, "The priest did a check after the penitent made his confession" is best recast as "The priest checked after the penitent confessed." Likewise, "I can't make a determination on the basis of one symptom" should be written as "I can't base a determination on one symptom," or, even better, "I can't determine it from one symptom." If you find that most of your meaning is in your nouns, and very little is in your verbs, you should be using stronger verbs. A symptom is excessive use of "is" and "are."

Word choice

Try to choose the most specific word that covers your subject. For instance, "Welshman" is more specific than "European", which is more specific than "person", which is more specific than "mammal."

Some specific suggestions:

- Don't confuse "legal" (in compliance with the law) with "valid" (in compliance with some constraint).
- Don't confuse "its" (possessive form of "it") with "it's" (contraction for "it is").
- Write "because" instead of "as" if you are showing a causal relationship.
- Write "although" or "whereas" instead of "while" if you are describing a contrasting example.
- Don't say "issue" when you mean "problem" or "difficulty".
- Don't say "as such" when you mean "therefore" or "so".
- Write "different from" or even "different to" instead of "different than", which is unacceptable.
- Don't use "while" or "meanwhile", which position events in a time line, to mean "but" or "however".

How to Integrate Quotations

Integrating quotations means “to weave the author’s words into your own sentences.” Quotations should not just be thrown into your essay – these quotations are called “floating” or “dropped.” If a quote is more than three lines long, offset the quotation and follow MLA format. Use only the best parts of your quotation. Always document ideas and quotations of others (document means the same thing as “cite”). Use signal phrases to prepare readers for the quotation. Quotes should be part of a sentence.

Floating Quote:

Mr. Hastings, CEO of Netflix, is swinging wildly looking for someone to blame for the anger of Netflix customers. “Twice in the interview, Mr. Hastings linked the hostility toward Netflix’s price change and proposed breakup to the angry mood of the country, even citing the Tea Party and the Occupy Wall Street movement by name” (Wingfield and Selter).

Quotation with a Signal Phrase:

The CEO of Netflix, Reed Hastings, asked to explain the anger of his customers during a recent interview cast blame wildly linking “the hostility toward Netflix’s price change and proposed breakup to the angry mood of the country, even citing the Tea Party and the Occupy Wall Street movement by name” (Wingfield and Selter).

- Document ideas and references, especially direct quotations.
- Do NOT put ellipses IN FRONT of a quotation, even if the front is missing.
- Do NOT put ellipses AT THE END of a quotation, even if the back is missing.
- Do NOT use more than one period per sentence.
- ALWAYS make the mixture of the author’s words and your words grammatically correct.
- If you need to insert a word of your own, or if you need to change a letter in order to make the sentence grammatically correct, use brackets []

If all the quotes come from the same page, you can put the documentation at the end of the sentence.

This is not hard, only time-consuming. However, it is absolutely necessary that you learn to document your textual evidence, how to choose only the best parts of the evidence, and how to smoothly integrate your evidence into your own writing.

Student Essay sample

Original:

Montague then asked Benvolio to find out what was upsetting Romeo. When Benvolio and Romeo were talking, Benvolio tells Romeo to just forget about Rosaline. This is said on (pp. 51.11.46-57) “Tut man, one fire burns out anothers burning./ One pain is less’ned by anothers anguish.” This suggests that Benvolio knows that Romeo is playing a game, or that he has never been in love. So he thinks it is very easy to fall out of love.

Revised:

(Note integrated quotation, proper documentation, and tightening of sentences. Note also that the student not quote accurately.)

Telling Romeo to forget about Rosaline, Benvolio argues that “one fire burns out another’s burning; / One pain is less’ned by another’s anguish” (I.ii.46-47), which suggests that Benvolio knows Romeo is playing a game. If falling in love is easy, Benvolio seems to be saying, then so is falling out of love.

To avoid monotony, try to vary signal phrases.

In the words of researcher Herbert Terrace, “...

As Flora Davis has noted, “...

The Gardeners, Washoe’s trainers, point out that “...

“...” claims linguist Noam Chomsky.

When your signal phrase includes a verb, choose one that is appropriate in the context. Is your source arguing a point, making an observation, reporting a fact, drawing a conclusion, refuting an argument, or stating a belief?

Here are some helpful verbs for signal phrases:

Acknowledges	comments	endorses	reasons
Adds	compares	grants	refutes
Admits	confirms	illustrates	rejects
Agrees	contends	implies	reports
Asserts	denies	notes	suggests
Believes	disputes	observes	thinks
Claims	emphasizes	points out	writes

Follow this pattern:

In + title + authors *write*, + quotation or paraphrased claim.

OR

According to + authors in title, + quotation

USING QUOTATIONS

Quoting the words of an author is one of the academically acceptable methods for providing support for a point or backing up your argument. Quotations need to be grammatically incorporated into the natural flow of your writing. Here is a part of a paragraph written by a student. Notice how she has incorporated quotations into her paragraph.

Working long hours under stressful conditions, especially in fast-food restaurants, appears to promote some forms of delinquent behavior. Lou DeRosa, a 29 year old manager of a McDonald's, said, "This is a survival job. A lot of people can't handle it." In addition to low wages and a hot, high-speed work environment, some employees complain of poor treatment by managers. Through Mark Kershaw's own experience as a manager he agrees that "there are some managers who treat them like slaves."

Punctuating Titles of Works

The general rule is that we underline or italicize the titles of long works and put quotation marks around the titles of short works. So the names of books, movies, magazines, newspapers, and record albums get underlined or italicized:

The Great Gatsby
Citizen Kane
Cosmopolitan
The Atlantic Constitution

But we put quotation marks around the titles of essays or articles, short stories, songs and so on. The first word in titles is always capitalized and every *major* word after that.

Introducing Quotations

Suppose you are going to quote from an article by Leon Cheung and Marlene Johnson. The article is entitled "Three Issues in AIDS Research," and it appeared in Current Social Issues, a magazine. In the first reference to this article, you would give the names of the authors, the complete title of the article, and the name of the magazine. Here are three ways of doing this:

In their article, "Three Issues in AIDS Research" in Current Social Issues, Leon Cheung and Marlene Johnson write, "Now that we have"

In "Three Issues in AIDS Research" in Current Social Issues, Leon Cheung and Marlene Johnson write, "Now that we have"

According to Leon Cheung and Marlene Johnson in "Three Issues in AIDS Research" (Current Social Issues), "Now that we have"

Note that these three sentences are based on two simple patterns. The first two follow this pattern:

In + title, + authors *write*, + quotation (or paraphrased claim)

The third sentence uses a different pattern:

According to + authors in title, + quotation (or paraphrased claim)

Then in later references, you would simply use the last names of the two authors with no further mention of the title of the article or the name of the journal:

Cheung and Johnson write, "The evidence shows"

According to Cheung and Johnson, "The evidence shows"

Warning: A Problem

Sometimes students start a sentence with a prepositional phrase, particularly some beginning with **in**, and then get stuck continuing. Introductory prepositional phrases are handy for referring the reader to a document previously mentioned, as in these cases:

In this article

In this book

In Cheung and Johnson's essay

In such cases, remember that the word after the **in** (article, book, essay) cannot be the subject of the sentence. For example, the following sentence is incorrect:

In this article stated that Ethiopia is once again facing a famine.

Students sometimes try to solve this problem by putting the word **it** in as the subject, but this is incorrect as well. **Avoid using the word *it* as the subject when it refers to a noun immediately preceding it.** AGAIN the following sentence is INCORRECT:

In this article, it stated that Ethiopia is once again facing a famine

How do you handle such a situation? It helps to remember that articles and books don't talk or "state"; authors do. If you know the name of the author, use that as the subject of the sentence:

In this article, Fernandez states that Ethiopia is once again facing famine.

If you don't have access to the author's name just substitute "the author states."

MLA in-text parenthetical citations

The Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines require that you cite the quotations, summaries, paraphrases, and other material used from sources within parentheses typically placed at the end of the sentence in which the quoted or paraphrased material appears. The parenthetical method replaces the use of citational footnotes. These in-text parenthetical citations correspond to the full bibliographic entries found in a list of references at the end of your paper. (Note that the titles of works are underlined rather than placed in italics.) Unless otherwise indicated, on-line sources follow the same pattern as print versions.

Single author named in parentheses.

The tendency to come to terms with difficult experiences is referred to as a "purification process" whereby "threatening or painful dissonances are warded off to preserve intact a clear and articulated image of oneself and one's place in the world" (Sennett 11).

Single author named in a signal phrase.

Social historian Richard Sennett names the tendency to come to terms with difficult experiences a "purification process" whereby "threatening or painful dissonances are warded off to preserve intact a clear and articulated image of oneself and one's place in the world" (11).

Two or more authors.

Certain literacy theorists have gone so far as to declare that "the most significant elements of human culture are undoubtedly channeled through words, and reside in the particular range of meanings and attitudes which members of any society attach to their verbal symbols" (Goody and Watt 323).

Corporate author (organization, association, etc.).

The federal government has funded research concerning consumer protection and consumer transactions with online pharmacies (Food and Drug Administration 125).

Works with no author.

Several critics of the concept of the transparent society ask if a large society would be able to handle the complete loss of privacy ("Surveillance Society" 115).

Two or more works by the same author.

In his investigation of social identity, *The Uses of Disorder*, Sennett defines adulthood as a stage where people "learn to tolerate painful ambiguity and uncertainty" (108).

In a surprising move, Richard Sennett combines the idea of power with that of virtue: "the idea of strength is complex in ordinary life because of what might be called the element of its integrity" (Authority 19).

Work found in an anthology or edited collection.

For an essay, short story, or other document included in an anthology or edited collection, use the name of the author of the work, not the editor of the anthology or collection, but use the page numbers from the anthology or collection.

Lawrence Rosenfield analyzes the way in which New York's Central Park held a socializing function for nineteenth-century residents similar to that of traditional republican civic oratory (222).

Bible passage.

Unfortunately, the president could not recall the truism that "Wisdom is a fountain to one who has it, but folly is the punishment of fools" (New Oxford Annotated Bible, Prov. 20-22).

Secondary source of a quotation (someone quoted within the text of another author).

As Erickson reminds us, the early psychoanalysts focused on a single objective: "introspective honesty in the service of self enlightenment" (qtd. in Weiland 42).

Web page.

Abraham Lincoln's birthplace was designated as a National Historical Site in 1959 (National Park Service).

Note: Internet citations follow the style of printed works. Personal or corporate author and page number should be given if they exist on the website.

Use of Ibid.

Ibid. is the abbreviation, ibidem the full Latin word meaning "in the same place." The abbreviated form in particular is a convention of scholarly footnoting: when you wish to cite a work and a page for which you have just given a reference, *ibid.* does the job succinctly. Consult your publisher's stylebook for precise format and ground rules if any.

Thanks to Jon Drinnon at Merritt College for this handout and Duke University Libraries

HOW TO DOCUMENT YOUR SOURCES AND AVOID PLAGIARISM

Original Passage from McEvedy (121):

"If the host animal dies, as it is likely to do, the flea moves to the next available live rodent. The disease spreads rapidly in this manner; as the number of live rats decreases, the fleas move to warm-blooded hosts on which they would not normally feed, such as human beings and their domesticated animals, and so an epidemic is launched."

Which of the following is Plagiarism of the above passage?

Example 1:

If the host animal dies, the flea moves to the next available live rodent. As more and more rats die, the fleas move to warm-blooded hosts on which they would not normally feed, such as human beings and their domesticated animals. Thus, an epidemic is launched.

Example 2:

If the host dies, the flea moves to the next available rodent. As more and more rats die, the fleas move to warm-blooded hosts on which they would not normally feed, such as human beings. Thus, an epidemic is launched.

Example 3:

If the host rat dies, the flea moves to another. As more and more rats die, the fleas hop to other, less preferable, warm-blooded hosts, such as humans and domesticated animals, and thus, the epidemic spreads.

Example 4:

If a lot of rats die from the disease, the fleas jump onto humans even though they are less preferable hosts. Thus the epidemic spreads.

Example 5:

The epidemic spreads to humans because as more and more rats die, the fleas seek out other warm-blooded, but less preferable, hosts, like humans.

PARENTHETICAL REFERENCES

H NO FOOTNOTES? Parenthetical references refer the reader to specific pages in a book, magazine or other source from which quotations, or facts are taken. They are used to provide additional information without breaking the logical development of the thoughts in your paper. Parenthetical references are used in place of footnotes.

WHAT? I'VE BEEN PLAGIARIZING? Any borrowed information in your paper must be acknowledged. Parenthetical references provide the exact source of the quotation (somebody else's words), or of the facts that were gathered by someone else. They give added authority to your paper. They also provide the reader with leads to other sources and permit the reader to verify the sources that you used to come to your conclusions.

FINE. HOW DO I DO THEM? Parenthetical references are brief references, enclosed by parentheses, within the body of your paper. They refer the reader to the list of works cited. The parenthetical reference usually includes the author's last name and the page number. The reader can then turn to the list of works cited to find complete publishing information.

Here's a typical parenthetical reference: "American society is in love with the computer" (Brod 2).

If you include the author's name in a sentence you don't need to include it in the reference, as in this example:

Brod maintains that "American society is in love with the computer" (2).

Here are some other examples, some of which are direct quotes and some of which are paraphrases. For complete publishing information please refer to the list of works cited on the other side of the sheet.

Author's name in reference:

In the 19th century, George Boole developed symbolic logic (Sippi 1045).

Author's name in text, short quotation (less than 3 lines)

As Clark Norton has written, "If you're thinking there must be laws that will protect you against such abuses, don't count on it" (126).

Two Authors named in reference, longer quotation

Siegel & Markoff offer this comment on modern surveillance systems:

Today Americans live in a state of fragile freedom. Wide-scale repression is still unacceptable, yet surveillance technology has made tremendous strides during the past decade. High-tech systems have been developed that can and are being used to monitor our lives in ways never imagine by George Orwell. (41-42)

Author's name and Book Title not mentioned in sentence

It may be true that "there will never come a time when machines can do without us" (Roszak, *Person/Planet* 230).

Work Listed By Title (You don't know the Author's Name)

Computers are used to prevent students who have refused to register for the draft from receiving student aid ("Computers").

Spiegel, Steven. Telephone Interview. 30 Aug. 1990

Website with Author

Felluga, Dino. Guide to Literary and Critical Theory. 28 Nov. 2003. Purdue University. 10 May 2006
<<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory>>.

Entire Website

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. 26 Aug. 2005. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. 23 April 2006
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Felluga, Dino. Survey of the Literature of England. Course home page. Aug. 2006-Dec. 2006. Dept. of English, Purdue University. 31 May 2007. <http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~felluga/eng241/index.html>

Blog

Hawhee, Debra. "Hail, Speech!" Weblog entry. Blogos. 30 April 2007. 23 May 2007
<http://dhawhee.blogs.com/d_hawhee/2007/04/index.html>.

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Anonymous. "The American Jew and the Diversity Debate." Weblog comment. 21 May 2007. "Imagining Jewishness." Monica Osborn. Jewcy. 23 May 2007 <http://www.jewcy.com/daily_shvitz/imagining_jewishness#comment>

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Smith, Martin. "World Domination for Dummies." *Journal of Despotry* Feb. 2000: 66-72. Expanded Academic ASAP. Gale Group Databases. Purdue University Libraries, West Lafayette, IN. 19 Feb. 2003 <<http://www.infotrac.galegroup.com>>.

Essay Introductions

Like a good host, a good introduction invites the reader in and provides entertainment appropriate to the occasion. It attracts the reader's attention and sparks her interest; it sets up the purpose and the tone of the essay, and it leads smoothly into the writer's thesis.

Use this list to choose an appropriate introductory style for your essay.

1. Present a controversial or provocative question
2. Take a contradictory position on an accepted assumption or myth
3. Present striking or startling facts or statistics
4. Connect your topic to a current event or controversy
5. Tell a funny story that makes an important point
6. Set up an historical background for you topic
7. Use a quotation that relates directly to your topic
8. Provide a definition of a key concept

TOPIC SENTENCES

1. A topic sentence must be a complete sentence, not a fragment.
2. A topic sentence is usually a direct statement, not a question.
3. The subject of the topic sentence is usually the subject idea of the paragraph.
4. The verb and complement of the topic sentence usually show the focus of the paragraph.
5. The focus part of the topic sentences usually presents a judgment or attitude about the subject.
6. A subordinate word group is sometimes used in the topic sentence to define the focus still further.

Subject + Focus = Topic Sentence

Examples

1. Myths tell how others have made the passage through life.
2. The earliest evidence of anything like myths is connected with graves.
3. Guilt, especially about killing an animal, is wiped out by the myth.
4. The Blackfoot tribe tell of the buffalo fall in a myth about a young girl.
5. The aborigines in Australia tear the young boys from their mothers to tell them the mythology of the tribe.
6. Myths can sanctify a local landscape more than a ritual can.
7. Because a woman gives birth and nourishment, in the early tradition she is the first planter.
8. An Algonquin story about the origin of maize tells of a boy having a vision.
9. A similar story, coming up throughout Polynesia, is about a girl who loves to bathe in a certain pool.
10. More than any other goal, getting back into the Garden is the aim of the myth.

ESSAY CONCLUSIONS

Information from Paragraphs and Themes by Canavan and Brandon, Sequence, A Basic Writing Course by Rory D. Stephens, and College Writing Basics by Tomas E. Tyner

Conclusions:

- A conclusion should leave the reader with a sense that the topic has been carefully and thoughtfully concluded.
- It should always support the thesis.
- The conclusion paragraph should smoothly and logically follow the previous paragraphs in the essay.
- It should leave the reader with some final thoughts on the topic. It may:
 - restate the thesis in slightly different words.
 - ask a final question or give a final statement which leaves the subject open for further thought.
 - review the main points of the essay.
 - give an anecdote related to the thesis.
 - give a quotation related to the thesis.
- The conclusion should **NEVER** introduce something new to the essay, (i.e. a new topic or a completely new line of thought that had not been discussed in the body of the essay.)
- The conclusion is often a reflection of the introduction. If you are having problems writing a conclusion, reread the introduction and work for a roundness or completeness in the paper.

Examples of relevant conclusions for:

- a personal experience essay:
The conclusion should include the effects or results of the experience, in other words, what the writer has learned.
- a problem analysis:
The conclusion should present possible solutions to the problem.
- an expository or argumentative essay:
The conclusion should summarize key points in different words and reinforce and extend the controlling idea.
- a comparison essay:
The closing paragraph should draw a conclusion based on the comparisons.
- any essay:
The conclusion may project what the future may hold for the subject of the essay.

TRANSITIONS and KEY WORDS

Transitional words and phrases are very important if your writing is to **flow smoothly from beginning to end**. *Trans* in Latin means *across*; transitions are like bridges across the gaps that occur between sentences. They are like **signposts** that guide us from where we have been to where we are going.

Transitional elements between paragraphs normally occur at the end of a paragraph. Topic sentences also have elements of transition, but are best used to remind the reader of the main thesis. Transitions are especially important to show your reader how the point you just made and developed is related to the new point that follows.

Good transitions can connect paragraphs and turn disconnected writing into a unified whole. Instead of treating paragraphs as separate ideas, transitions can help readers understand how paragraphs work together, reference one another, and build to a larger point. The key to producing good transitions is highlighting connections between corresponding paragraphs. By referencing in one paragraph the relevant material from previous one, writers can develop important points for their readers.

Key Words and Phrases

An excellent way to link your paragraphs to the thesis is to use key words and phrases. Highlight key ideas from your thesis sentence and then use the key words in the topic sentence of your paragraphs, thus guiding your reader through your essay. Transitions briefly summarize what has already been covered and hint at what will come next. Topic sentences act as signposts, a “you are here” message telling the reader what is coming next and how it relates to the main point or thesis of the essay.

It is a good idea to continue one paragraph where another leaves off (instances where this is especially challenging may suggest that the paragraphs don't belong together at all.) Picking up **key phrases** from the previous paragraph and highlighting them in the next can create an obvious progression for readers. Many times, it only takes a few words to draw these connections. Instead of writing transitions that could connect any paragraph to any other paragraph, write a transition that could only connect one specific paragraph to another specific paragraph. When revising, go back and rewrite your transitions to make sure the paragraphs flow. I write my transitions last, after I've arranged the paragraphs in the most logical order.

Transition + Key Words = Movement into the next main point

I. Transitions that signal you are simply adding another point.

A. Pointing forward

a) Another

- a. Another reason you should consider tutoring, is the good feeling it gives you inside.

b) Also

- a. Also, tutoring offers you your own learning experience.

c) As well

- a. Tutoring has other benefits as well.

d) In addition

- a. In addition, tutoring also requires mental acuity.

e) furthermore

- a. furthermore, it raises your knowledge of English.

f) further

- a. There is one further difference between a trained English tutor and just a tutor, a trained English tutor tutors the whole gamut of English while a tutor is just an editor.

B. Pointing backward

a) **However**

- a. However, Yosemite offers more than just beautiful scenery for the eyes; it also offers a plethora of odorous wonders for the nose.

b) **But**

- b. Marijuana is a primary concern, but this drug is not the only concern at rock concerts.

C. Pointing both ways

a) **In addition**

- a. In addition to flexibility, tutoring requires mental toughness.

b) **Along with**

- a. Along with a willingness to put in a lot of time, a tutor must have the ability to have lots of patience.

c) **Not only...but also a. Not only is keyboarding easy to learn, but also it is very useful**

d) **Besides**

- a. Besides being new, if you don't know keyboarding, it can be very intimidating.

II. Transitions that introduce an opposing point

A. However

- a) **However, it is useful to know just what an addiction is.**

B. On the other hand

- a) **On the other hand, if you want to keep your head in the sand, maybe you do not want to know about addictions.**

III. Transitions that introduce an opposing point

A. However

B. On the other hand

C. But

D. Yet

E. Nevertheless

F. In contrast

IV. Transitions that introduce a result

A. Consequently

B. As a result

C. Therefore

V. Transitions that introduce a concession to an opposing view

- A. Certainly
- B. Naturally
- C. Of course
- D. It is true
- E. To be sure
- F. Granted

VI. Transitions that resume the original line of reasoning after a concession

- A. Nonetheless
- B. All the same
- C. Still
- D. Nevertheless

By D. K. Mikalovich and Kathleen Meyer

Transitions Reference List

LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP	TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION
Similarity	also, in the same way, just as ... so too, likewise, similarly
Exception/Contrast	but, however, in spite of, on the one hand ... on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, in contrast, on the contrary, still, yet
Sequence/Order	first, second, third, ... next, then, finally
Time	after, afterward, at last, before, currently, during, earlier, immediately, later, meanwhile, now, recently, simultaneously, subsequently, then
Example	for example, for instance, namely, specifically, to illustrate
Emphasis	even, indeed, in fact, of course, truly
Place/Position	above, adjacent, below, beyond, here, in front, in back, nearby, there
Cause and Effect	accordingly, consequently, hence, so, therefore, thus
Additional Support or Evidence	additionally, again, also, and, as well, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, then
Conclusion/Summary	finally, in a word, in brief, in conclusion, in the end, in the final analysis, on the whole, thus, to conclude, to summarize, in sum, in summary

Steps to a Successful Research Paper

Research papers fall into the category of **formal writing**. You must follow certain rules when you write so that your writing is clear to your audience. A research paper is not intended to entertain your audience, but rather to inform them. When writing formally, follow these guidelines:

- Write in the third person. That means you cannot use pronouns such as I, you, etc.
- Do not use slang words. Try to sound professional.
- Do not use contractions.
- Use Modern Language Association Format (MLA).

Choose and limit topic.

1. Pick a topic that you are interested in but that you do not know a lot about. If you choose a topic that you are already familiar with, you will be more likely to become bored.
2. Pick a topic from the news or T.V., controversial topics or interesting stories make interesting research projects.
3. Think about current problems that are facing society today. These topics are usually interesting, meaningful, and allow for easy thesis statement development. As amusing as K-Fed's divorce proceedings may be, it might be difficult to generate a meaningful thesis out of that topic.

Write a Thesis Statement

The thesis statement is a sentence in the beginning of the paper that identifies the purpose of the paper. It tells the "mystery" you are trying to solve. It should be a statement that will cause **you to have to make an evaluation or judgment about the topic**. It should not be something that is a proven fact that cannot be argued. Your thesis should be specific and something you can answer within the page expectation.

Write Key Questions

Before you actually begin researching, I highly recommend making a list of 10 facts you're trying to find out about your topic. For example, if you are writing a paper on homelessness in San Francisco, you might list questions like "How many estimated homeless people are in San Francisco now?" "Has this number increased recently?" Once you start with one question, others will inevitably follow.

Begin Your Research

Gather books, articles (from scholarly journals and newspapers), and any other resources about your topic. Try to get the most current information possible by reputable sources. Keep track of where you found your information, you will need it for a works cited page. Make your works cited page as you go along, it might save you time. Use SPQR4 as you read your sources, and don't waste time reading non-pertinent information. Write down applicable quotes and/or paraphrase (with citation).

Write an Outline

Now that you know what your essay is about, write an outline of how you're going to organize your information. Include first sentences for paragraphs in your outline. Write your introduction to guide you throughout the rest of the paper. The major points should be included in your introduction, as should your thesis – your own evaluation on your topic.

Write a First Draft

Your first draft should just fill in the rest of the outline. Include an Introduction, all your major points and support for each of the points. Finish with a Conclusion. We will have a workshop and handouts on how to write an effective Introduction and Conclusion.

Main Parts of a Research Paper

- **Introduction**
- **Body**
- **Conclusion**

Some ideas about the Introduction

The first part of the paper is then introduction. The introduction should contain three main elements:

- Attention grabber – The very first thing you want to do when writing a research paper is grab your reader's attention.
- Start with a scenario. In other words, use an example story that illustrates some important aspect of your paper. For example, if you were writing a paper comparing Japanese education to U.S. education, you might start your paper with a scenario describing a typical school day for a Japanese student.
- Start with a question or quote. Come up with an interesting or intriguing question pertaining to your topic that will cause your reader to think about that topic.

Peer Editing

We will have an editing workshop in class where your paper will be read by your peers. There will be a handout on editing and revisions at this stage.

Final Draft

Take the notes and comments generated in your peer editing workshop and sift through them. Incorporate the suggestions as necessary, revise, rethink and edit your draft into an essay that meets or exceeds the standards outlined in the assignment and rubric. Align your final draft with MLA format, including your works cited page. Go to the style guide in Purdue's Writing center to see how your paper should look, it's one of the best style guides on the internet. The website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>

CHECKLIST FOR ARGUMENT PAPERS

(From The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors, by Leigh Ryan)

Regardless of a paper's topic, the goal in writing is to present ideas or information in a cohesive and persuasive manner. The writer must deal with issues such as organization, style and tone, as well as grammar and the mechanics of English, to produce an effective piece. In addition, there are conventions particular to certain kinds of papers that should be followed.

Argument Papers

In argument papers, writers take stands on debatable issues, such as requiring comprehensive examinations for graduation, imposing curfews for teenagers, or abolishing capital punishment. The goal of such papers is to get readers to think differently about a certain issue or to persuade them to take a certain action. Writers of argument papers should envision skeptical audiences and build arguments that are strong enough to stand up to opponents' views. As they write, they anticipate readers' objections, refuting them or conceding points while indicating, for example, that there are more important issues to be considered.

A checklist for argument papers

1. Is the claim or proposition – what the writer is trying to prove – clearly stated?
2. Are all assertions supported by evidence?
3. Is the evidence – facts, interpretations of facts, opinions – appropriate? Data should be accurate, recent, and sufficient. Sources cited should be reliable.
4. Does the arrangement of evidence make sense? Does it emphasize the most important issues? Are there more effective ways of arranging the evidence?
5. Are facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, and expert opinion placed properly? Are they used in the appropriate context?
6. Is the evidence carefully documented?
7. Is the reasoning sound?
8. Has the writer included any logical fallacies? (If you are unfamiliar with logical fallacies, refer to a writing textbook or handbook.)
9. Are terms that might be controversial or ambiguous adequately defined?
10. Have opposing arguments been considered and dealt with adequately?

A General Summary of Aristotle's Appeals . . .

The goal of argumentative writing is to persuade your audience that your ideas are valid, or more valid than someone else's. The **Greek philosopher Aristotle** divided the means of persuasion, appeals, into three categories--**Ethos, Pathos, Logos**.

*Character
formal
language
create trust*

Ethos (Credibility), or **ethical appeal**, means convincing by the character of the author. We tend to believe people whom we respect. One of the central problems of argumentation is to project an impression to the reader that you are someone worth listening to, in other words making yourself as author into an authority on the subject of the paper, as well as someone who is likable and worthy of respect.

Pathos (Emotional) means persuading by appealing to the reader's emotions. We can look at texts ranging from classic essays to contemporary advertisements to see how pathos, emotional appeals, are used to persuade. Language choice affects the audience's emotional response, and emotional appeal can effectively be used to enhance an argument.

Logos (Logical) means persuading by the use of reasoning. This will be the most important technique we will study, and Aristotle's favorite. We'll look at deductive and inductive reasoning, and discuss what makes an effective, persuasive reason to back up your claims. Giving reasons is the heart of argumentation, and cannot be emphasized enough. We'll study the types of support you can use to substantiate your thesis, and look at some of the common logical fallacies, in order to avoid them in your writing.

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos.

Logos (Greek for 'word') refers to the internal consistency of the message--the clarity of the claim, the logic of its reasons, and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence. The impact of logos on an audience is sometimes called the argument's logical appeal.

Ethos (Greek for 'character') refers to the trustworthiness or credibility of the writer or speaker. Ethos is often conveyed through tone and style of the message and through the way the writer or speaker refers to differing views. It can also be affected by the writer's reputation as it exists independently from the message--his or her expertise in the field, his or her previous record or integrity, and so forth. The impact of ethos is often called the argument's 'ethical appeal' or the 'appeal from credibility.'

[P]athos (Greek for 'suffering' or 'experience') is often associated with emotional appeal. But a better equivalent might be 'appeal to the audience's sympathies and imagination.' An appeal to pathos causes an audience not just to respond emotionally but to identify with the writer's point of view--to feel what the writer feels. In this sense, pathos evokes a meaning implicit in the verb 'to suffer'--to feel pain imaginatively.... Perhaps the most common way of conveying a pathetic appeal is through narrative or story, which can turn the abstractions of logic into something palpable and present. The values, beliefs, and understandings of the writer are implicit in the

story and conveyed imaginatively to the reader. Pathos thus refers to both the emotional and the imaginative impact of the message on an audience, the power with which the writer's message moves the audience to decision or action.

[The above text drawn verbatim from Ramage, John D. and John C. Bean. Writing Arguments. 4th Edition. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1998, 81-82.]
http://www.u.arizona.edu/ic/polis/courses021/ENGL_102-78/EthosPathosLogos


Or The Shorthand Version:

Ethos: the source's credibility, the speaker's/author's authority

Logos: the logic used to support a claim (induction and deduction); can also be the facts and statistics used to help support the argument.

Pathos: the emotional or motivational appeals; vivid language, emotional language and numerous sensory details.

The Art of Rhetoric: Learning How to Use the Three Main Rhetorical Styles

 **Rhetoric (n)** - the art of speaking or writing effectively (Webster's Definition).

According to Aristotle, rhetoric is "the ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion." He described three main forms of rhetoric: **Ethos, Logos, and Pathos.**

Rhetoric, Logos, Pathos, and Ethos **THE THREE "ARTISTIC PROOFS."**

There are three artistic proofs that we can create: the appeals from ethos, pathos, and logos.

Ethos

Persuasion from ethos establishes the speaker's or writer's good character. As you saw in the opening of Plato's *Phaedrus*, the Greeks established a sense of ethos by a family's reputation in the community. Our current culture in many ways denies us the use of family ethos as sons and daughters must move out of the community to find jobs or parents feel they must sell the family home to join a retirement community apart from the community of their lives' works. The appeal from a person's acknowledged life contributions within a community has moved from the

stability of the family hearth to the mobility of the shiny car. Without the ethos of the good name and handshake, current forms of cultural ethos often fall to puffed-up resumes and other papers. The use of ethos in the form of earned titles within the community-Coach Albert, Deacon Jones, Professor Miller-are diminishing as "truthful" signifiers while commercial-name signifiers or icons appear on clothing-Ralph Lauren, Louis Vuitton, Tommy Hilfiger- disclosing a person's cultural ethos not in terms of a contributor to the community, but in terms of identity-through purchase. Aristotle warns us away from such decoys, telling us that the appeal from ethos comes not from appearances, but from a person's use of language. In a culture where outward appearances have virtually subsumed or taken over the appeal from inner (moral and intellectual) character, the appeal from ethos becomes both problematic and important. Given our culture's privileges/rights of free speech and personal equality, however, we have enormous possibilities for the appeal from ethos any writer well versed in his or her subject and well spoken about it can gain credibility. This kind of persuasion comes from what a person says and how a person says it, not from any prejudice (pre-judging) of the author.

Aristotle tells us that three things "Inspire confidence in the rhetor's [speaker's/writer's] own character-the three, namely, that induce us to believe a thing apart from any proof of it: good sense, good moral character, and goodwill. False statements and bad advice come from the lack of any of these elements. Exhibiting these three aspects of character in your discourse can play a large part in gaining credibility for your ideas. As regards the academic essay, be sure to have your writing appear written by a person of good sense by following the format dictated by the Modern Language Association (M.L.A.) or American Psychological Association (A.P.A.) or whatever your particular academic community wants. Citing a bunch of sources always adds to your credibility (sense of good sense) too. Stylistically in your writing, you can show, if not your good moral character, at least some character identification by sticking some little phrase before using "I" or "we." Like, "As So-in-so's attorney, I suggest . . . Or "As a dental hygienist, I advise..... Or "As an elderly snowboarder for the past decade, I see no reason why..... Actually, using "I" or "we" without such identifiers flips the attempt at ethos into a sense of the generic nobody. Many writing teachers, therefore, just say "don't use I." Aristotle implies, use "I" or "we" to your advantage with an ethos-appeal sort of phrase out there in front, or else forget it. Despite warnings against believing discourse 'just because it appears written by someone of good sense or because the ideas "look good," you should try to create discourse that "looks good." As a reminder from the Plato chapter (now reinforced by the Aristotelian tip that people judge the credibility of your ideas by your writing skills), you should run your academic essay through the spell checker and bother numerous guinea-pig readers for fixing up the organization and Standard English before letting your essay loose on the world to do its work. If, as Aristotle says, people are going to judge your spoken and/or written ideas by virtue of the appearance of good sense, you'd best attend to that quality.

Pathos

Persuasion from pathos involves engaging the readers' or listeners' emotions. Appealing to pathos does not mean that you just emote or "go off" through your writing. Not that simple. Appealing to pathos in your readers (or listeners), you establish in them a state of reception for your ideas. You can attempt to fill your readers with pity for somebody or contempt for some wrong. You can create a sense of envy or of indignation. Naturally, in order for you to establish

at will any desired state of emotion in your readers, you will have to know everything you can about psychology. Maybe that's why Aristotle wrote so many books about the philosophy of human nature. In the Rhetoric itself, Aristotle advises writers at length how to create anger toward some ideal circumstance and how also to create a sense of calm in readers. He also explains principles of friendship and enmity as shared pleasure and pain. He discusses how to create in readers a sense of fear and shame and shamelessness and kindness and unkindness and pity and indignation and envy and indignation and emulation. Then he starts all over and shows how to create such feelings toward ideas in various types of human character' of "people" of virtue and vice; those of youth, prime of life, and old age; and those of good fortune and those of bad fortune." Aristotle warns us, however: knowing (as a good willed writer) how to get your readers to receive your ideas by making readers "pleased and friendly" or "pained and hostile" is one thing; playing on readers' emotions in ways that make them mindless of concepts and consequences can corrupt the judgment of both individuals and the community.

Logos

Finally, a writer appeals to readers through the appeal to the readers' sense of logos. This is commonly called the logical appeal, and you can use two different types of logic. You can use inductive logic by giving your readers a bunch of similar examples and then drawing from them a general proposition. This logic is pretty simple given this, that, and the other thing-poof, there you go, a conclusion. Or, you can use the deductive enthymeme by giving your readers a few general propositions and then drawing from them a specific truth. Like, "because such-'n-such is true and such-'n-such is true and such-'n-such is true and everybody agrees on this other thing, then-poof, stands to reason, a new truth.

Since the time that a bunch of guys called "The Royal Society" (Hume, Locke, Bacon, etc.) rejected deduction, our culture has generally favored induction because it's often called the "scientific method" and we like science. Historically, people have also attributed feminine metaphors to deductive logic and then easily dismissed it or dismissed the general propositions as "not documented" or "old wives tales."

Peer review checklist:

- 1) Check format for MLA, font, length, spacing, completion of assignment. Number all paragraphs.
- 2) Read introduction. Underline thesis, circle key words.
- 3) Respond to introduction:

I expect this essay to be about:

The first paragraph makes me want to know:

- 4) Read first sentence of every paragraph. Circle key words and synonyms.
- 5) Read final paragraph. Underline thesis, circle key words.
- 6) Read body of essay commenting in margins and correcting grammar, making small suggestions. Don't rewrite the essay for them, but notate what the reader might expect logically and what doesn't have enough information.
- 7) Respond to essay as a whole:

Are the paragraphs in the best order?

What are five things that worked and three things that didn't work and WHY?