

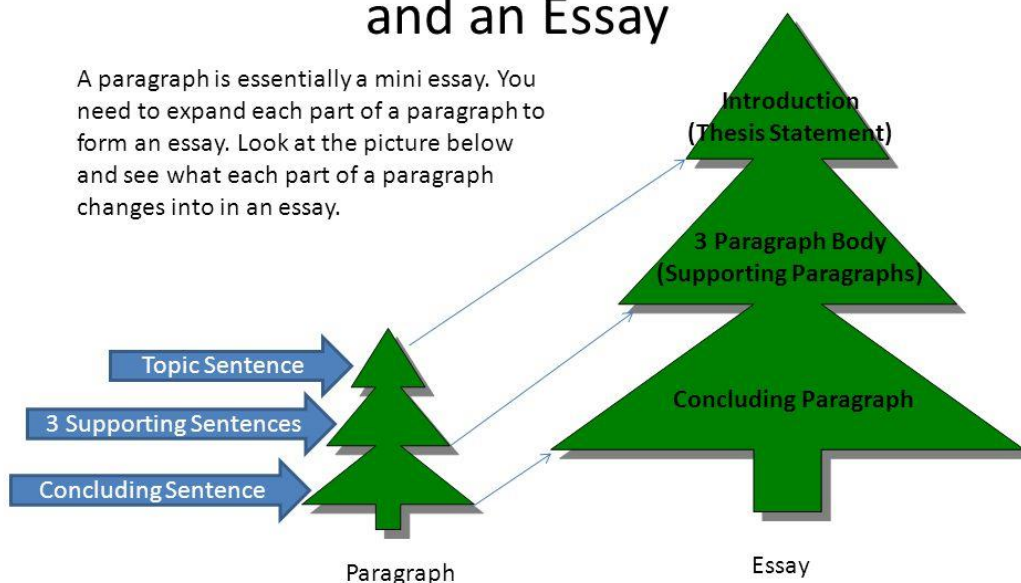
7.2 Differences between a Paragraph and an Essay

The relationship between a paragraph and an essay is symbiotic. An essay cannot exist without paragraphs, and four or more consecutive paragraphs about the same subject matter become an essay. Both paragraphs and essays have a distinct beginning, middle and end. The basic similarities and differences are given below:

Paragraphs	Essays
A paragraph typically has five sentences.	A typical essay has five paragraphs.
Paragraphs begin with a topic sentence.	Similarly, essays start with the introduction that has the thesis statement.
In a paragraph, each sentence builds upon the point made in the topic sentence.	The supporting body paragraphs build upon the thesis statement.
The supporting details need to be relevant.	The body paragraphs need to be coherent.
Paragraphs must end with a concluding sentence that states the basic point of the paragraph.	Essays end with a conclusion paragraph that summarizes the overall content.

The Difference between a Paragraph and an Essay

A paragraph is essentially a mini essay. You need to expand each part of a paragraph to form an essay. Look at the picture below and see what each part of a paragraph changes into in an essay.


[Table of Contents](#)

Writing a paragraph

Paragraphs are the building blocks of any essay. This diagram shows the three main parts of an essay and offers an explanation of what should be contained within each of the component paragraphs

Paragraph

Topic sentence

A. Argument
B. Evidence
C. Discussion

Concluding Sentence

Essay

A. INTRODUCTION (5%)

- Arouse the reader's interest
- Set the scene
- Explain how you interpret the question set
- Define or explain key terms if necessary
- Identify the issues that you are going to explore
- Give a brief outline of how you will deal with each issue, and in which order

B. BODY (80%)

Paragraph 1

- Covers the first thing you said you'd address.
- The first sentence (the topic sentence) introduces the main idea of the paragraph.
- Other sentences develop the topic.
- Include relevant examples, details, evidence, quotations and references.

Paragraph 2 and other paragraphs

The first sentence links the paragraph to the previous paragraph then introduces the main idea of the paragraph

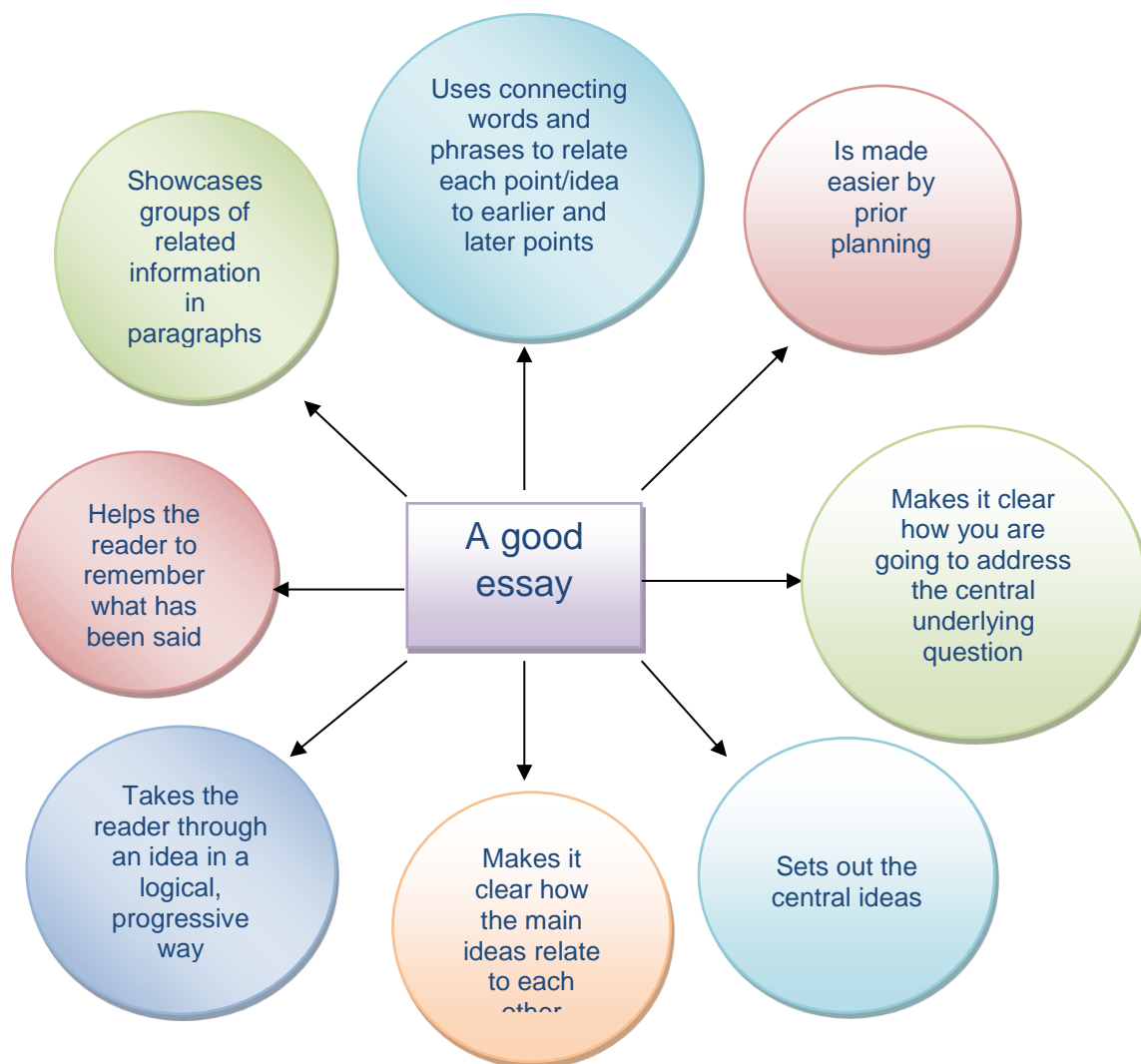
C. CONCLUSION (15%)

- Draw everything together
- Summarise the main themes
- State your general conclusions
- Make it clear why those conclusions are important or significant
- Do not introduce new material
- In the last sentence, sum up your argument very briefly, linking it to the title
- Set the issues in a broader perspective/wider context
- Discuss what you've failed to do – answers not clear, space limited
- Suggest further questions of your own

8.1 Structure of a Traditional Essay

An **essay** is a written piece with a theme, logically expressed in a well-organized structure. It requires knowledge and understanding of a topic, supported by research. Writing an academic essay means designing a coherent set of ideas under one argument or disposition. They essentially need to be linear— offering one idea at a time – presented in the order that makes most sense to a reader.

A good essay will cover the following features:



Structure of a Traditional Essay

An essay always includes an **Introduction**, a **Body**, and a **Conclusion**. The structure of different types of essay varies with changes in the body – which generally includes **five paragraphs**. The type is defined by the approach taken by the essay. Regardless of the approach, the essay is always sectioned in these three parts:

1. **Introduction:** An introduction gives a general **outline** of the whole essay. There is a **general statement** on the topic, which may or may not be **thesis statement** of the essay. It comments on the title or topic of the essay; defines or explains any difficult or ambiguous terms in the title. The introduction directs the reader by stating which aspects of the topic the essay will cover and why.

THESIS STATEMENT: A thesis statement is the main disposition an essay takes (usually presented in one sentence, maximum two). Then, the introduction shortly dictates the points the essay will make in favor of the thesis statement.

2. **Body:** Depending on the type of the essay, the structure of the body changes. The body of a descriptive essay can have three paragraphs, each focusing on different sides of a topic. A discussion essay may only include two paragraphs in its body. So is the same for a comparative essay – one paragraph will compare and another will make a contrast between subjects. However, a comparison intensive essay will take two paragraphs for making a comparison and one for making a contrast. In the same way, a contrast-intensive essay will require more paragraphs to make a contrast. An argumentative essay needs two or three paragraphs for making the arguments and one paragraph for refutation. But the common factors in these paragraphs are- they will always start with the **topic sentence**, which will exhibit the approach; they will contain **explanation and elaboration**, supported by enough **evidences**, and a **concluding sentence**. The paragraphs will use **transitions, linking words, and connections to the previous statements**. It will create a linear flow which the reader will be able to follow easily.
3. **Conclusion:** The conclusion, again, will take 10% of the whole essay. It will summarize the points made in the body and will create a reference to the thesis statement. There will be no new information or evidence in this paragraph, and it will give a sense of ending.

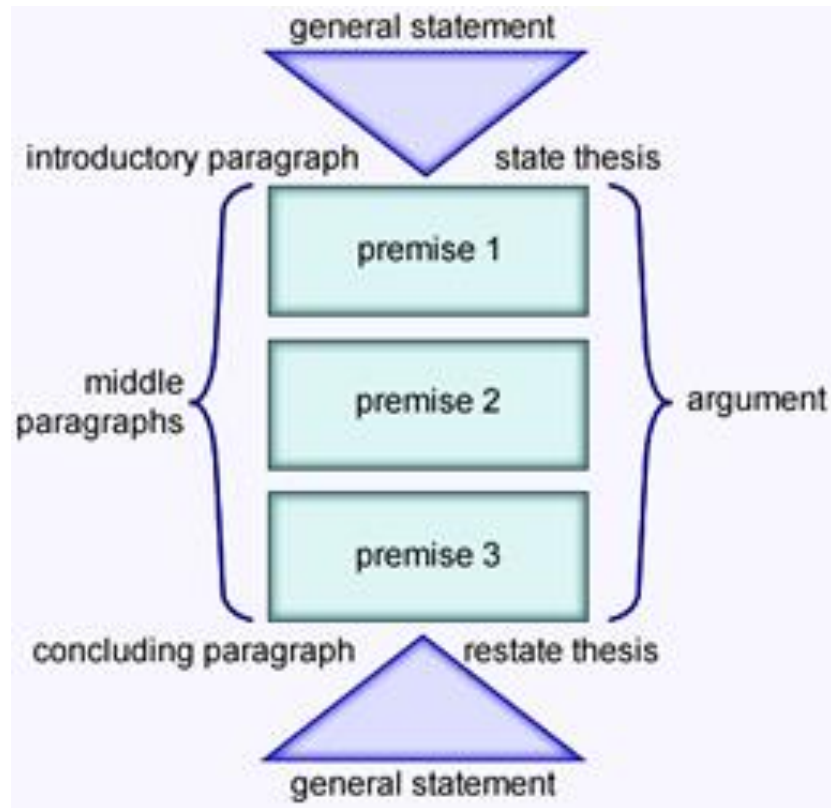


Fig: Structure of an essay

Mapping an Essay

As mentioned, the focus of an essay predicts its structure. Based on the above approaches, it decides what information readers need and the order in which they need to receive it. Thus, your essay's structure is necessarily unique to the main claim you're making. This requires mapping, and the easiest way to map an essay's ideas is using a written narrative. Such an account will give you a preliminary record of your ideas, and will allow you to remind yourself at every turn of the readers' needs in understanding your idea. Try making your map like this:

- State your thesis in a sentence or two, then write another sentence saying why it's important to make that claim.
- Begin your next sentence like this: "To be convinced by my claim, the first thing a reader needs to know is . . ." and draft why that's the first thing a reader needs to know, and name one or two items of evidence you think will make the case.
- Begin each of the following sentences like this: "The next thing my reader needs to know is . . ." Once again, say why, and name some evidence. Continue until you've mapped out your essay.

Your map should naturally take you through some preliminary answers to the basic questions of what, how, and why. It is not a contract, though—the order in which the ideas appear is not a rigid one. Essay maps are flexible; they evolve with your ideas.

Answering Questions: To map an essay or to make a draft, it's helpful to think of the different essay sections as answering a series of questions your reader might ask when encountering your thesis. (Readers should have questions. If they don't, your thesis is most likely simply an observation of fact, not an arguable claim.)

- **"What?"** The first question to anticipate from a reader is "what": What evidence shows that the phenomenon described by your thesis is true? To answer the question, you must examine your evidence, thus demonstrating the truth of your claim. This "what" or "demonstration" section comes early in the essay, often directly after the introduction. Since you're essentially reporting what you've observed, this is the part you might have most to say about when you first start writing. But be forewarned: it shouldn't take up much more than a third (often much less) of your finished essay. If it does, the essay will lack balance and may read as mere summary or description.
- **"How?"** A reader will also want to know whether the claims of the thesis are true in all cases. The corresponding question is "how": How does the thesis stand up to the challenge of a counterargument? How does the introduction of new material—a new way of looking at the evidence, another set of sources—affect the claims you're making? Typically, an essay will include at least one "how" section. (Call it "complication" since you're responding to a reader's complicating questions.) This section usually comes after the "what," but keep in mind that an essay may complicate its argument several times depending on its length, and that counterargument alone may appear just about anywhere in an essay.
- **"Why?"** Your reader will also want to know what's at stake in your claim: Why does your interpretation of a phenomenon matter to anyone beside you? This question addresses the larger implications of your thesis. It allows your readers to understand your essay within a larger context. In answering "why", your essay explains its own significance. Although you might gesture at this question in your introduction, the fullest answer to it properly belongs at your essay's end. If you leave it out, your readers will experience your essay as unfinished—or, worse, as pointless or insular.

Sample Essay

The Benefits of Regular Exercise

In recent years many people have become increasingly aware of the need for physical fitness. Almost everywhere people turn, whether it is to a newsstand, television or billboard, advice for guarding and improving health bombards them. Although much of this advice is commercially motivated by those eager to sell vitamins, natural foods and reducing gimmicks, some of it, especially that advocating a regular exercise program, merits serious attention. Such a program, if it consists of at least thirty minutes three times a week and if a person's physician approves it, provides numerous benefits. Regular exercise releases tension, improves appearance, and increases stamina.

The first of these benefits, the release of tension, is immediate. Tension builds in the body because of an over accumulation of adrenaline produced by stress, anxiety, or fear. Doctors agree that performing calisthenics or participating in an active sport such as tennis or volleyball for thirty minutes' releases tension. If a person swims, jogs or rides a bicycle for half that time, he or she should sleep better at night and have a better temperament the next day. In addition, after the release of tension, petty irritations and frustrations should be less troubling. For example, an employee upset by the day's work and by traffic congestion may rush home, argue with the family, and eat excessively. Taking about thirty minutes to release frustrations through physical exercise could help him or her to avoid this behavior. Planned physical exercise, therefore, can eliminate, or at least control, tension.

An improved appearance, which is a second benefit of regular exercise, is not as immediately apparent as a better disposition. Exercise takes perhaps a month or longer to show its results in a trimmer, firmer figure. Improvement, however, will come. A person who is ten pounds' overweight, for instance, may be able during this time to burn away most excess fat and to tighten muscles, thereby reshaping the physique. Having improved muscle tone and even posture, he or she will wear clothes more attractively and comfortably. This improved appearance will provide confidence and favorably impress others.

In addition to the self-confidence engendered by an improved appearance, increased physical strength produces stamina. A stronger, healthier body is obviously more capable of working harder, and, in fact, of withstanding normal fatigue than a tense, weak one. A worker who exercises should be able to complete a forty-hour week and still retain enough energy for mowing the grass, painting the garage, or cleaning windows. Similarly, the student who goes to school, keeps house and perhaps works part time should accomplish tasks efficiently. Equally important, this stamina helps to ward off illnesses such as- cold and influenza. Altogether, improved endurance is one of the most important benefits of a regular exercise program.

Although easy solutions to the goals of losing weight and achieving an attractive, energetic body saturate the media, actually acquiring these benefits is not easy. The rewards, however, are fully worth the effort of an established exercise program that makes a person feel relaxed, look healthy, and have adequate strength for strenuous as well as routine activities.

For further information, please read the pages from 215- 217

Activity 1:

Introductory and concluding paragraphs are provided below. Now, write the body of the paragraph.

Essay Title: **Is unemployment a blessing or a curse? Discuss.**

Introductory paragraph:

From the close of the 1980s until the late 1990s the unemployment figures in the UK averaged approximately 3 million or 9% of the working population. This essay will firstly assess the level of ‘blessing’, giving examples of some who blossomed through unemployment, finding new life directions, career paths or hitherto untapped creative abilities. Secondly, these findings will be compared with what could be considered the ‘curse’ by examining the mental and physical debility suffered as a direct result of unemployment, taking into account economic deprivation, social disintegration and individual isolation. Next it will assess how different groups coped with unemployment, taking into consideration the generational, racial, gender and class variations together with conditioning and expectations. Finally, it will assess the effects of this particularly prolonged and harsh bout of unemployment on British society, looking at both the current position and predicting any long-term repercussions.

Concluding paragraph:

In conclusion, a small percentage of people found unemployment a ‘blessing’. However, by far the larger number experienced it as a ‘curse’ and for some unemployment was a deeply traumatic experience. Of these, white males of between 45 – 55, from all social classes, seemed to experience more psychological distress. However, perhaps the most damaging result of unemployment was, and still is to some extent, a divided nation of ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ who have rarely felt such distrust of each other. Though employment opportunities are now emerging, it is likely that the repercussions of such a sustained and acute bout of unemployment will be far-reaching. A high proportion of the generation now aged 25 – 35 have little or no experience of the world of work and are ill-equipped to take advantage of the current more buoyant job market. Finally, Britain had a reputation for being at the forefront of innovation and creative solutions. Now people’s understandable desire for personal security is unlikely to promote either the sharing climate or psychological freedom which foster such innovations.

Activity 2:

Write a concluding paragraph of the essay given below.

All cultures modern or traditional are an accumulation of shared and learned meanings. In the history of mankind traditional culture appeared before science. Science was created as a replacement for traditional culture. This does not mean, however, that in traditional culture there is no science. They are connected to each other in the beliefs of many people. Even today, these concepts are mixed together among people.

Traditional Culture is a set of practices, beliefs, values and way of life detained or held by a particular human group, which have been transferred to them from their intimates through their ancestors, people and society around them. Traditional culture may vary from place to place; it may take several forms. Within a specific religion it may be the holding and adaptation of some carnivals. Within society it may be defined as the act of behaving in a particular way that is being followed over a long period of time. For example, animal sacrifice is an integral part of Muslim Traditional Culture, and Thanksgiving Celebration is a part of American Traditional culture.

Traditional culture is somehow different from the modern culture because of which things are not that much simple in the traditional culture. For instance, personal and professional life are considered as same in it; one can't have compartmentalized personal, business, religious and political life. A disadvantage related to traditional culture is its rigidity; it tends to remain constant for the longer period of time. It is fundamentally a conservative system. There is a little room for the inventions in the traditional culture; new things took place in the same manner as genetic mutation. On the other hand, modern culture welcomes the innovation and invention. In general, one may not find any rationality in the traditional culture because they are not backed by any scientific experiment; they only follow a story or a legend that occurred a number of years ago. The only one positive aspect of traditional culture is, it focuses on aesthetic view of society, and attach humans with their historical past.

Activity 3:

Use the essay plan and fill it answering the question below:

“What difference can your actions make to reduce the effects of climate change?”

Paper Planning: A Simple Strategy

1. What are the key words or instructions in the essay question? Into how many parts is the question broken down?
2. Brainstorm ideas about the text in a spider diagram, starting to make the connections.
3. Write a thesis statement: keeping your essay question in mind, what do you plan to argue, or prove, in your paper?
4. Put ideas that will support your argument into hierarchical order.
5. Notes for introduction:

*Thesis Statement: This is where in the structure of the essay you would add the thesis statement.

6. Body Paragraphs

(Tip: When planning the main points, slot in any quotes or statistics from sources used.)

Point 1:

Point 2:

Point 3:

Point 4:

Point 5:

7. Notes for conclusion:

In addition, it may be a good...