



TIP SHEET: WRITING INTRODUCTIONS, BODY PARAGRAPHS AND CONCLUSIONS



Whether your essay is one page long or twenty pages, it will follow the same basic structure, with an introduction, body, and conclusion. There is not one correct way to write an essay, so everyone is free to develop his or her own style. For example, some writers choose to start by writing the body of the essay, and then write the introduction and conclusion.

You may also need to adapt your approach to meet the requirements of each assignment. This tip sheet gives a general overview, but you should also refer to the guidelines provided by your department or instructor.

INTRODUCTIONS

Your introduction is designed to draw the interest of your reader and introduce the topic and thesis of your essay. It usually contains:

- **A 'hook' to catch your reader's attention and draw them into your topic.** For example, it might include:
 - A fact or statistic that is interesting or surprising
 - A quote from an expert in the field
 - A definition of a key term related to your topic
- **Some background or context**, which introduces your topic and shows why it is important or significant.
- **A thesis statement**, which outlines your topic and what you want to say about that topic. The rest of your essay will provide evidence to support this statement (see tip sheet "Writing a Thesis Statement").

BODY PARAGRAPHS

The main body of your essay contains sub-points that provide support for your thesis. For example, if your thesis is “Concussions can have a serious long-term impact on NFL players”; your first body paragraph might be on “the long-term physical effects of concussion”. Your second body paragraph might be on “the cognitive effects of concussion”. Each paragraph builds your argument that concussions have serious effects on football players.

Each body paragraph has a structure, like a mini-essay:

- The *Topic Sentence* introduces the main point of the paragraph
- The *Supporting Sentences* provide information that backs up the main point; this could include: examples, statistics, facts or expert opinions.
- The *Concluding Sentence* summarizes the paragraph and may link back to the thesis statement.

Effective body paragraphs should:

- **Help your reader to navigate your essay**, by separating the text into meaningful chunks.
- **Contain one main point.** Usually each body paragraph contains one sub-point. Sometimes, if one point needs a lot of supporting information, it can be divided into two paragraphs.
- **Contain a single main idea.** Make sure that every supporting sentence relates to this main idea. It’s easy to get distracted by interesting points that you find in your research, but if it isn’t directly relevant, cut it out!

CONCLUSION

Your conclusion brings together all the main points in your essay. It shouldn’t introduce any new information. A conclusion usually includes:

- **A short summary** of the main points of the essay
- **A restatement of the thesis**

It may also discuss:

- **Why the thesis is significant and how it relates to wider subjects.** For example, in the essay on the long-term effects of concussion, the conclusion might say that “The evidence on the long-term effects of concussion has implications for the school system as it has a responsibility to protect children and young people taking part in contact sports”. This sentence shows why my essay topic is important and connects it to broader ideas.
- **A hope or recommendation for the future**

FINALLY...

If you need more information about essay writing, or answers to questions about specific assignments, you can:

- Check out the JIBC Library website at www.jibc.ca/library
- Contact JIBC Peer Writing Support
Email writingsupport@jibc.ca to make an appointment
- Grab additional tip sheets from the Writing Centre, located at the New Westminster Campus in room CL201