

Writing is a uniquely individual undertaking and the same individual may use different methods to express himself. Characteristically, the writing process approach recognizes that there are many stages to writing and that these stages are fluid and overlapping (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1983; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Murray, 1982).

In other words, *The Writing Process* is a series of steps that will help you write a paper. It is like using a map to get to an unfamiliar place. It has several important stages, and you may find yourself having to engage in some of the stages more than once. You may also have to go back and repeat certain stages because they all connect and loop around each other. A writer may move back and forth between steps as needed. For example, while you are revising, you might have to return to the prewriting step to develop and expand your ideas. This means the process is recursive and not necessarily linear.

Researchers and educators have identified several logical steps that most writers go through. According to academicians, by following these common steps, students can successfully develop ideal pieces of writing.

### The Writing Process steps:

**1-Prewriting:** is the first stage in the writing process; it is a planning phase that has no set structure or organization. It is an informal process that allows you to explore ideas as they occur to you, without worrying about organization or mechanics. In this phase, you write down your first thoughts about a topic on paper. It is usually just a collection of ideas. There is no right or wrong way to approach prewriting, but there are some strategies that can help with both invention and organization of ideas. We often call them prewriting strategies:

**-Listing:** is a process of generating a lot of information within a short time by generating some broad ideas and then building on those associations for more detail. Listing is particularly useful if your starting topic is very broad and you need to narrow it down.

**-Clustering/Mind Map:** is a strategy that allows you to explore the relationships between ideas.

-Put the subject in the center of a page. Circle it.

-As you think of other ideas, write them on the page surrounding the central idea. Link the new ideas to the central circle with lines.

-As you think of ideas that relate to the new ideas, add to those in the same way.

The result will look like a web on your page. Locate clusters of interest to you, and use the terms you attached to the key ideas as departure points for your paper. Clustering is especially useful in determining the relationship between ideas. You will be able to distinguish how the ideas fit together, especially where there is an abundance of ideas. Clustering your ideas lets you see them visually in a different way, so that you can more readily understand possible directions your paper may take.

- **Freewriting:** is a process of generating a lot of information by writing non-stop for a predetermined amount of time. It allows you to focus on a specific topic, but forces you to write so quickly that you are unable to edit any of your ideas. After you have finished freewriting, look back over what you have written and highlight the most prominent and interesting ideas; then you can begin all over again, with a tighter You will narrow your topic and, in the process, you will generate several relevant points about the topic.

**Outlining:** The painstaking organization of thought required in outlining intimidates and discourages many writers. But students who diligently outline their ideas, even roughly, before starting a first draft almost always find the actual writing a much easier task.

**2- Drafting:** The drafting phase of the writing process entails the actual composing of the text. During this phase .the writer will generate a piece of writing in rough form. The writer organizes his ideas in a way that allows the reader to understand his message. He does this by focusing on which ideas or topics to include in the piece of writing. The goal is to translate ideas into a written organization without being constrained by

word choice, sentence structure or conventions. At the end of this step of the writing process, the author will have completed a “rough draft.”

When you begin to draft your writing, you need to keep in mind five separate writing techniques that will help your reader to understand your paper:

**a. Thesis statement:** At the end of your introduction, write a one-sentence statement that is the basis for your entire paper. A good thesis statement lets the reader know what your paper will cover. For example, you might write this thesis statement: “There are four possible causes for alcoholism, yet not all alcoholics drink for these reasons.” The paragraphs that follow should support this statement, and each paragraph should focus on one of the possible causes.

**b. Topic sentences:** Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that states the main idea of that paragraph. Just like the thesis statement, the topic sentence lets you know what the paragraph contains. For the first paragraph on the causes of alcoholism, you might write a topic sentence that states, ‘The most compelling cause of alcoholism is genetics.’ From this, the reader will know that you will cover the concept of heredity and alcoholism within this paragraph.

**c. Sufficient support:** While your opinions thoughts are important, they cannot be the legs your paper stands on. You need to support you topic ideas by developing the paragraphs with evidence from credible sources. Support comes in many different forms: statistics, researched information, observations, descriptions, case studies, interviews, personal experience, hypothetical situations, definitions, etc. The more specific the information, the more interesting the paragraph. So instead of writing about all alcoholics, you might want to write about one particular alcoholic—someone you know, someone you observed, someone you interviewed, someone you researched.

**d. Coherence:** This means it all comes together. If an essay is coherent, all the paragraphs relate to the one before it and all the sentences relate to the one before it. Transitional words and phrases help to create bridges between sentences, words such as: however, for example, in other words, in contrast, nevertheless, etc. You set up the key words to an essay and a paragraph within the thesis statement and the topic sentences.

**e. Unity:** The idea here is not to veer off into the woods. Stay on the path. Make sure all sentences relate to the topic sentence and all paragraphs relate to the thesis. As you draft your paragraphs, you want to try to include all these effective writing techniques.

**3- Revising:** During the revision phase of the writing process, writer examines the content of his writing. He reviews his text for clarity and craft and considers changes that would improve the piece. Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, and Sentence Fluency are essential traits for effective revision of the content. Based on their own critical review and feedback, writers may keep elements of the writing as well as make revisions as they add, delete, move, or change elements. Eg: they make sure each paragraph has a topic sentence. That there are smooth transitions between paragraphs. That they have sufficient support in all paragraphs...etc.

**4-Editing:** Editing should be undertaken when all revisions to the content are complete. Writers may edit independently or engage in peer editing. Editing requires that writers proofread to find errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling and then make appropriate corrections. Writers then edit to correct the errors before preparing the final draft for publication.

**5- Publishing:** Publication entails the final preparation of a piece of writing for the intended audience and may involve preparing a neatly handwritten or word processed copy of the final draft and the addition of illustrations or other graphic elements. Publication may extend to a multimedia presentation or lead to a public performance such as a speech or a debate. The Presentation Trait is emphasized during this phase of the writing process as the writer works to make the piece appealing and inviting to the audience.

## Structure of the essay

Writing essays is a fundamental part of academic learning at every level, yet many students lose valuable marks by failing to structure their essays clearly and concisely to make the best of their ideas.

### I- What is an Essay?

An essay is a short formal piece of writing dealing with a single subject, Derived from the French word "essai" meaning "experiment or attempt," an essay is typically written to try to persuade the reader using selected research . In other words; the essay is a group of paragraphs that develops one central idea in a non-fictional way.

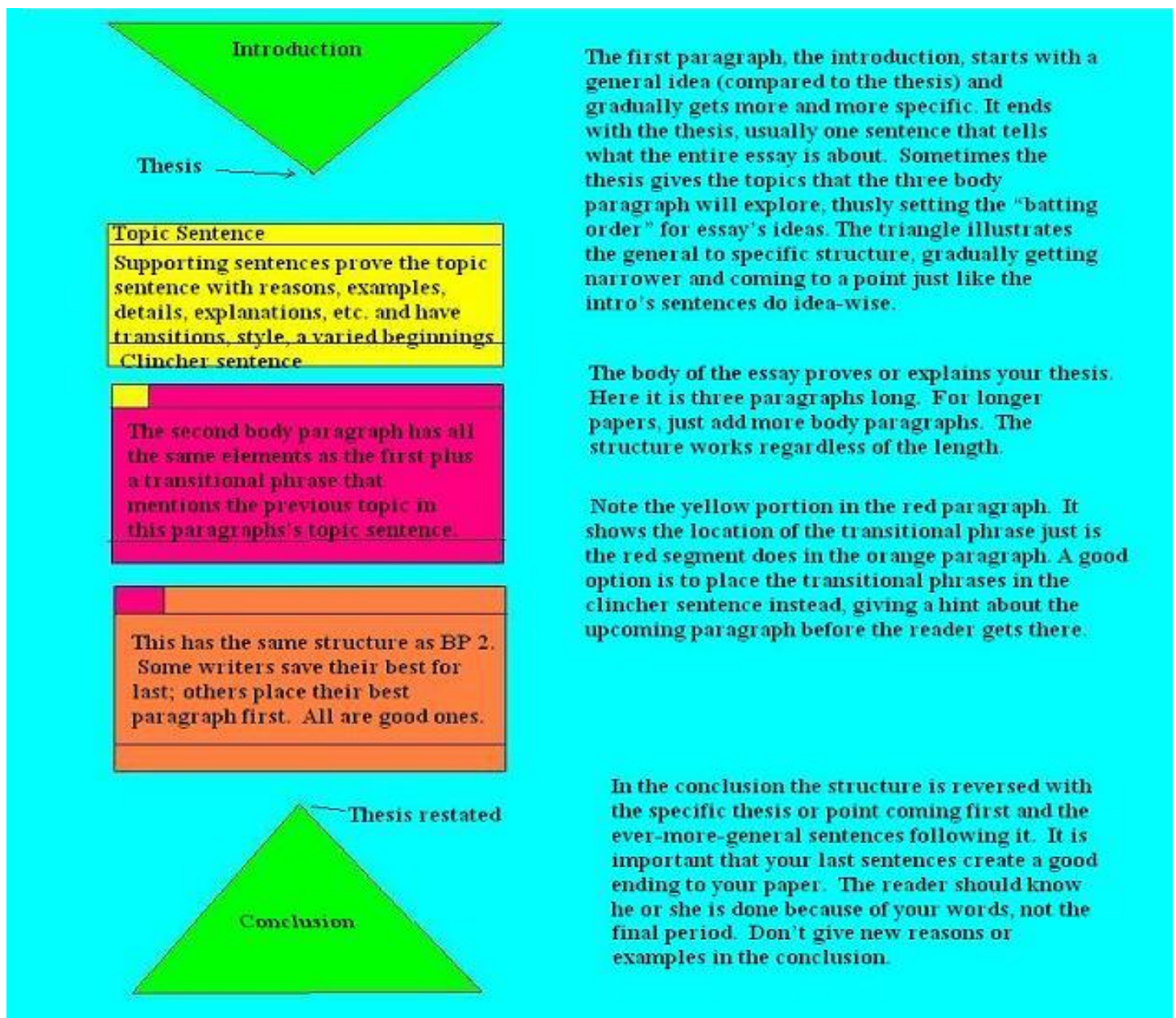
An essay can be as short as 500 words; it can also be 5000 words or more. However, most essays fall somewhere around 1000 to 3000 words; commonly organized into 5 paragraphs (one introductory paragraph, 3 developmental and one concluding); this word range provides the writer enough space to thoroughly develop his topic and work to convince the reader of the author's perspective regarding a particular issue.

-There are several different essay genres, which influences the content and structure. In general, an academic essay has three parts:

1- An introduction is usually one paragraph that introduces the topic to be discussed and the central idea of the essay in the form of a thesis statement

2-A body, or middle section, or developmental paragraphs that provides evidence used to prove and persuade the reader to accept the writer's particular point of view

3- A conclusion that summarizes the content and findings of the essay. it is the closing word.



## II- The thesis statement

A Thesis Statement is a sentence that states the main idea of the essay. It tells your reader the main points of your topic and states the overall “plan” of your essay. It is similar to the topic sentence in that it contains an expression of an attitude, opinion, or an idea about the topic. But, it is broader in the sense that it expresses the central idea not of one paragraph but of the entire essay.

Writing a strong thesis statement should summarize the topic and bring clarity to the reader. A good thesis statement combines several ideas into just one or two sentences. The thesis statement is often placed in the introduction, toward the end of the first paragraph.

### Characteristics of a good thesis statement:

1-the thesis statement should be expressed in a complete sentence, it should express a complete thought. And since it makes a statement it should not be written as question.

Ex: - My fear of the dark-----NOT a thesis statement

-My fear of the dark has made my life miserable-----Thesis statement

2-A thesis statement expresses an opinion, attitude, or idea; it does not simply announce the topic the essay will develop.

Ex: -Aim going to discuss the effect of radiation. -----NOT a thesis statement.

-The effect of radiation are often unpredictable-----thesis statement

3-A thesis statement should express an opinion not a fact. So, the thesis statement is really a statement that someone could disagree with. It is therefore a statement that needs to be explained or proved.

Ex -Cows produce milk-----NOT thesis statement.

- -The milk cows produce is not always fit for human consumption-----Thesis statement

-There are many advantages and disadvantages to going to college -----Not thesis (not arguable point)

-The advantages to going to college far outweigh the disadvantages. -----Thesis statement.

4-A thesis statement should express only one idea toward one topic; if it contains two or more ideas the essay runs the risk of lacking unity and coherence.

A Thesis Statement: has a clearly stated **opinion**, but does **not bluntly announce** the opinion ("In this essay I will..."),it is **narrow** enough to write a focused essay, but is also **broad** enough to write at least 3 body paragraphs, it is clearly stated in **specific** terms, **easily recognized** as the main idea, and **direct, not softened** with token phrases ("in my opinion" or "I think"), and **can list** the 3 main points that will be made.

### III-The introduction

*It is true that the first impression—whether it’s a first meeting with a person or the first sentence of a paper—sets the stage for a lasting impression. The introductory paragraph of any paper, long or short, should start with a sentence that peaks the interest of readers.*

*An introductory paragraph is the first paragraph in writing. Its function is to lead the readers into the essay. Consequently, it should give the readers a preview of the essay. If it captures their attention, the readers will find it easier to follow the writer’s flow of expression. In order to attract the readers’ attention, ideally, the introductory paragraph should be interesting, Successful introductions don’t rely on clichés or irrelevant information to demonstrate their point. Be brief, concise, and be engaging. The thesis statement appears at the end or near the end of the introductory paragraph.*

*The introductory paragraph should indicate generally how the topic is going to be developed, whether the essay is to discuss causes, effect, reasons, or examples. Whether the essay is going to describe, narrate, or explain something. Since this discussion is about expository, it should explain something.*

### Basic types of the introductory paragraph:

**1-turnabout type** : *In this type, the writer opens with a statement contrary to his or her actual thesis. Look at the following example:*

*We live in era where television is the national pastime. Since the invention of television set, people have been spending more of their free time watching television than doing anything else. Many of the television addicts feel that this particular pastime is not bad one; indeed, they argue that people can learn a great deal watching television. I am sure if you look long and hard enough; you can probably find some programs that are educationally motivating. But, for most part, watching television is a waste of time (Smalley and Hank, 1986:228)*

**2-the dramatic entrance:** *in which the author opens with narrative, descriptive, or dramatic example. Look at the following example:*

*The rain pours down as if running from a faucet, lightning streaks across the dark restless sky, and thunder pounds the roof and walls of the house. All of a sudden the wind kicks up. Trees sway madly back and forth; loose objects are picked up and thrown all way round. The house streaks and moans with every gust of wind. Windows are broken by pieces of shingle from a neighbour’s roof or by loose objects picked by the wind. Power lines snap like thread. The unprepared house and its occupants are in grave prepared for hurricane approaches. Had they prepared for hurricane, they might not be in such danger. Indeed, careful preparation before a hurricane is essential to life and property (Smalley and Hank, 1986:260)*

**3-quotation:** *In this way, the writer opens with the quotation relevant to the topic. Look at the following ex*

*“As an airplane or missile becomes more complicated,” warned James fallows in his 1981 book *National Defence*,” the probability that all its parts will be working at the same time goes down”. Indeed the reliability and power of modern U.S military hardware depend heavily on increasingly complex electronic circuits. This worrisome vulnerability prompted Pentagon officials more than two years ago to launch an extensive probe of microchip suppliers in order to spot any lax manufacturing practices. Last week the inquiry produced an indictment against a major electronic company (Smalley and Hank, 1986:299)*

**4-the Funnel:** *the progress of the idea is from general to specific one. See the following paragraph example:*

*Travelling to a foreign country is always interesting, especially if it is a country that is completely different from your own. You can delight in tasting new foods, seeing new sight, and learning about different customs, some of which may seem very curious. If you were to visit my country, for instance, you would probably think that my people have some very strange customs, as these three examples will illustrate (Smalley and Hank, 1986:143)*

#### IV-The developmental or body paragraphs

*The term body paragraph refers to any paragraph that follows the introduction and comes before the conclusion. The majority of any essay consists of multiple body paragraphs, and it is in these paragraphs where the main information is presented. The longer an essay is, the more body paragraphs there will be. Because the body paragraphs present the important facts and information from an essay, having well-written body paragraphs is essential in writing a successful essay.*

*Developmental paragraphs, which range in number in a typical student essay from about 2 to 4, are the heart of the essay, for their function is to explain, illustrate, discuss, or prove the thesis statement. Keep in mind the following points:*

*1-Each developmental paragraph discusses one aspect of the main point. If, for example, you were asked to write a paper about the effects of smoking cigarettes on a person's health, then each paragraph would have as its topic an effect.*

*2-the controlling idea in the developmental paragraph should echo the central idea in the thesis statement. If your thesis statement is about the effects of smoking cigarettes is "Cigarette smoking is a destructive habit", then the controlling idea in each paragraph should have something to do with the destructiveness of the effects.*

*3- No matter what type of essay is being written, all body paragraphs need to be fully developed and provide supporting detail. This detail can come in the form of personal examples, statistics, and/or quotes from an expert. Valid information should support the topic sentence.*

*4-The developmental paragraphs should have coherence and unity and the order of your paragraphs should not be random. All body paragraphs should also provide transitions. These transitions need to occur within the individual sentences of a paragraph and from one paragraph to the next*

#### V- The conclusion

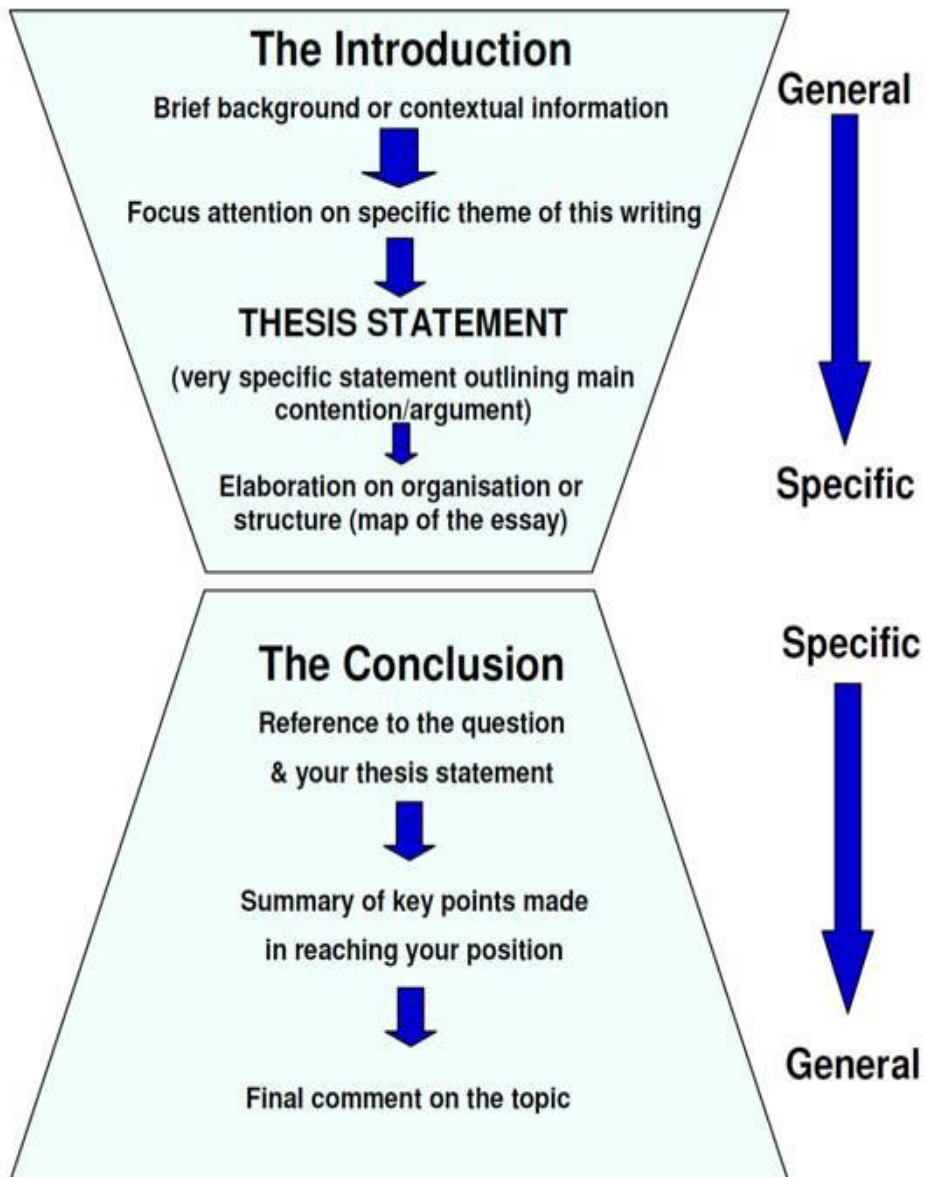
*Conclusions wrap up what you have been discussing in your paper. It should bring together different sections of your essay. The assertions you made in your introductory paragraph should have been fully developed and demonstrated through the essay. So, After moving from general to specific information in the introduction and body paragraphs, your conclusion should begin pulling back into more general information.*

*Remember that your conclusion should not offer any new material. Rather, consider telling your reader: What the significance of your findings, or the implications of your conclusion, might be; Whether there are other factors which need to be looked at, but which were outside the scope of the essay; How your topic links to the wider context ('bigger picture') in your discipline.*

*►-Don't simply repeat yourself in this section. A conclusion which merely summarises is repetitive and reduces the impact of your paper. (You can restate the thesis or main points briefly, but avoid sounding repetitious)*

## Structural elements of introductions and conclusions

Note how the Introduction moves from general information to specific, while the Conclusion works in reverse; from specific to general.



# Example Essay

## Basic Essay Structure

- Title
- Introduction
  1. General statement
  2. Focus statement
  3. MAP - what the assignment will do
  4. Thesis statement / point of understanding
- Body (for each paragraph)
  1. Topic sentence
  2. Supporting information (ideas from others and your own ideas / discussion)
  3. Conclusion sentence
- Conclusion
  1. Summary
  2. Final point
- References
  - A list of sources you referred to
  - They are in alphabetical order
  - They are formatted in a standard way (e.g. using APA style)

Which breed of dog is most suitable for small apartment living?

People have lived with dogs for thousands of years. Recently, many people are choosing to live in small apartments and are concerned about which type of dog is most suitable to apartment living. This assignment compares two commonly owned breeds of dog to determine which is best for small apartment living. These are: Labradors and Chihuahuas (pronounced "chiwawa"). It is recommended that the best dog for small apartment living is the Chihuahua.

There are two main reasons why Labradors are not suitable for apartment living. Firstly, Labradors need two hours of exercise a day and this needs to be divided into two times so that the dog can go to the toilet (Smith, 2011). Busy working people might not have time for this. Secondly, Labradors have a loud bark. Jones (2003) tested the loudness of dog barks and found that Labradors were one of the loudest. Loud barking is annoying to neighbours. Therefore, Labradors are not suitable for small apartment living because of their exercise needs and loud barking.

Chihuahuas do not have the same problems as Labradors for small apartment living. Smith (2011) pointed out that due to the smaller size of the dog, Chihuahuas need less exercise and can actually get enough exercise within the apartment. In addition, she commented that they can be toilet trained inside the apartment. There is also no problem with loud barking as research showed that Chihuahuas have quiet barks (Jones, 2003). Therefore, Chihuahuas make suitable apartment dogs because they need less exercise and have quiet barks.

Living in a small apartment can be difficult with a dog. Important considerations are the amount of exercise a dog needs and how loud the bark is. Labradors are unsuitable because of their large exercise needs and loud barking. Chihuahuas are recommended as they need less exercise and have quiet barks. Choosing the right dog is important for the owner, the dog and the apartment neighbours.

References  
Jones, D. (2003). Dogs and decibels. *Journal of Dog Barking*, 3(1), 33-35.  
Smith, P. (2011). Labrador exercise needs. *Journal of Dog Issues*, 13(2), 12-34.

## Structure of a body paragraph





## Essay question instruction words

When you are given your essay question or instructions it is important to understand exactly what you are being asked to do. Following are brief explanations of common instruction words

**Analyse:** break down the topic into smaller pieces and discuss these in detail.

**Argue:** develop a case or argument to support a particular position or viewpoint.

**Assess/evaluate:** make a judgement about something based on evidence.

**Comment:** give your opinion about something. Discuss and explain the topic.

**Compare:** find similarities. In some cases you also need to mention differences.

**Contrast:** find differences. If you are asked to compare and contrast highlight similarities and differences.

**Criticise:** make a judgement about the value or truth of something. Discuss limitations and good points.

**Define:** Describe the nature of something. For example: 'Define the features which distinguish a networked computer system from a standalone set-up.' Or, State the meaning of something. For example: 'Define the term symbiosis'. Or, Describe the scope of something. For example: 'Define the role of a nurse in private practice.'

**Demonstrate/Illustrate:** give examples to explain or show your understanding of something.

**Describe:** give a detailed account of something.

**Discuss/Consider:** look at different ideas and viewpoints about something.

**List:** state points concisely, in a logical order.

**Examine:** have a close, critical look at something.

**Explain:** Justify something. For example: 'Explain why it is important to wash your hands before handling food'. Or, Make clear by giving detailed information. For example: 'Explain what is meant by aseptic technique'.

**Identify:** select relevant details and discuss these. For example: 'Identify the major features of an ergonomically safe work environment'.

**Justify:** prove, or give reasons/evidence for something. The aim is to convince the reader.

**Review:** critically examine or assess a subject.

**State:** briefly and clearly present the main points.

**Summarise/outline:** find the key points and use these to create an overview of the topic.

## VI- UNITY, COHERENCE AND COHESIVE DEVICES:

**-Unity:** means single idea. In other words, unity in writing is the connection of all ideas to a single topic. It describes writing that sticks to a central idea, theme, or story. Good writing doesn't wander around many topics. In an essay all ideas should relate to the thesis statement, and the supporting ideas in a main body paragraph should relate to the topic sentence. For example, if your essay is about the advantages of nuclear power, discuss only that. Do not discuss about the disadvantages

**-Coherence:** is the logical bridge between words, sentences, and paragraphs. Literally, the word means "to stick together." It is achieved when sentences and ideas are connected and flow together smoothly.

An essay without coherence can inhibit a reader's ability to understand the ideas and main points of the essay. Coherence allows the reader to move easily throughout the essay from one idea to the next, from one sentence to the next, and from one paragraph to the next. To achieve coherence in writing, several **COHESIVE DEVICES** that can be used :

**Cohesive devices:** are words and phrases that connect sentences and paragraphs together, creating a smooth flow of ideas, such as:

**1- Repeating key words or phrases** helps connect and focus idea(s) throughout the essay. Repetition also helps the reader remain focused and headed in the right direction.

Ex: Most students are intimidated by the works of William Shakespeare. They believe Shakespeare's sonnets and plays are far to complicated to read and understand.

**2- Pronoun References:** Pronouns are used to link or connect sentences by referring to preceding nouns and pronouns. Pronouns can also help create paragraphs that are easy to read by eliminating wordiness and unnecessary repetition.

Example: Mr. Thompson agreed to meet with members of the worker's union before he signed the contract. He was interested in hearing their concerns about the new insurance plan.

**3- Synonyms to Link Ideas and Create Variety:** Synonyms are words that have the same or nearly the same meaning as another word. They provide alternative word choices that can add variety to an essay and can help eliminate unnecessary repetition.

Example: Teenagers face an enormous amount of peer pressure from friends and schoolmates. As a result, many young adults are exhibiting signs of severe stress or depression at an early age.

**4- Parallelism:** Parallelism is the use of matching words, phrases, clauses, or sentence structures to express similar ideas. Parallel structures allow the reader to flow smoothly from one idea, sentence, or paragraph to the next and to understand the relationships and connections between ideas.

Example: -Usually, the children spend the summer weekends playing ball in park, swimming in the neighbour's pool, eating ice cream under the tree, or camping in the backyard.

- At the museum, the class attended a lecture where the speaker demonstrated how the Native Americans made bows and arrows. They also attended a lecture where a sword smith demonstrated how the Vikings crafted swords.

**5-Transition:** *One of the best ways to improve any essay is by incorporating transitions. Effective transitions are what enable the main idea(s) and important points in an essay to flow together. In a sense, it is transitions that make a paper become an actual essay as opposed to just a random assortment of various facts. Without them, an essay will often seem to be lacking in unity.*

*Transitions are words, groups of words, or sentences that connect one sentence to another or one paragraph to another. They promote a logical flow from one idea to the next and overall unity and coherence. While they are not needed in every sentence or at the end of every paragraph, they are missed when they are omitted since the flow of thoughts becomes disjointed or even confusing*

<b>1. addition of ideas</b>	and, also, besides, further, furthermore, too, moreover, in addition, then, of equal importance, equally important, another
<b>2. time</b>	next, afterward, finally, later, last, lastly, at last, now, subsequently, then, when, soon, thereafter, after a short time, the next week (month, day, etc.), a minute later, in the meantime, meanwhile, on the following day, at length, ultimately, presently
<b>3.order or sequence</b>	first, second, (etc.), finally, hence, next, then, from here on, to begin with, last of all, after, before, as soon as, in the end, gradually
<b>4. space and place</b>	above, behind, below, beyond, here, there, to the right (left), nearby, opposite, on the other side, in the background, directly ahead, along the wall, as you turn right, at the tip, across the hall, at this point, adjacent to
<b>5. example</b>	for example, to illustrate, for instance, to be specific, such as, moreover, furthermore, just as important, similarly, in the same way
<b>6- results</b>	as a result, hence, so, accordingly, as a consequence, consequently, thus, since, therefore, for this reason, because of this
<b>7. purpose</b>	to this end, for this purpose, with this in mind, for this reason, for these reasons
<b>8. comparisons</b>	like, in the same (like) manner or way, similarly
<b>9. contrast</b>	but, in contrast, conversely, however, still, nevertheless, nonetheless, yet, and yet, on the other hand, of course, on the contrary, or, in spite of this, actually, a year ago, now, notwithstanding, for all that, strangely enough, ironically
<b>10. alternatives, exceptions, and objections</b>	although, though, while, despite, to be sure, it is true, true, I grant, granted, I admit, admittedly, doubtless, I concede, regardless
<b>11. dispute</b>	it isn't true that, people are wrong who say that, deny that, be that as it may, by the same token, no doubt, we often hear it said, many people claim, many people suppose, it used to be thought, in any case
<b>12. To intensify</b>	above all, first and foremost, importantly, again, to be sure, indeed, in fact, as a matter of fact, as I have said, as has been noted
<b>13. To summarize or repeat</b>	in summary, to sum up, to repeat, briefly, in short, finally, on the whole, therefore, as I have said, in conclusion, as you can see
<b>14- Consequence</b>	as a result, subsequently

**Coherence means the connection of ideas at the idea level,**

**and cohesion means the connection of ideas at the sentence level. ...**

**The cohesion of writing focuses on the "grammatical" aspects of writing**