

## Elements of an Essay

Please follow the information below when writing essays. Ensure you include all the elements when you write; this will help your writing skills!

Element:	Required Information:
<b>Opening Paragraph (6-8 sentences)</b> <i>The purpose of the introduction is to introduce the topic as well as to grab the reader's attention. It also will provide the structure for the rest of the essay.</i>	
<b>Hook</b> <i>Your task is to grab their attention &amp; make them want to read your essay till the very end</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A literary quote (including the <i>Bible</i>)</li> <li>✓ A famous person's quote (NOT Yoda!)</li> <li>✓ Anecdote (a short, interesting or amusing story)</li> </ul>
<b>Theme/Thesis statement</b> <i>A thesis is the result of a lengthy thinking process. Formulating a thesis is not the first thing you do after reading an essay assignment. Before you develop an argument, you have to collect and organize evidence, look for possible relationships between known facts, and think about the significance of these relationships.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Tells the reader how you will interpret the significance of the subject</li> <li>✓ Acts as a 'road map' for the paper</li> <li>✓ Directly answers the question asked of you</li> <li>✓ Makes a claim that others might dispute</li> <li>✓ Usually 1-2 sentences <i>directly following</i> your hook</li> </ul> <p><b>Weak thesis:</b>  <i>Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn is a great American novel.</i></p> <p><b>Stronger thesis:</b>  <i>In the novel Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain develops a contrast between life on the river and life on the shore.</i></p>
<b>Forecast</b> <i>Think of a weather 'forecast'; the purpose is to prompt the reader as to what you'll be arguing throughout your essay. Depending on the type of essay you are writing, you will usually require a minimum of 3 arguments.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What are your points of argument? (*3)</li> <li>✓ Express them in a sentence or two, in the order they will be argued in your paper (start with the strongest argument first)</li> <li>✓ Ensure they are clear, and concise</li> <li>✓ These points will become the main ideas of each of your body paragraphs</li> </ul> <p><b>Example forecast:</b>  <i>Harry Potter adjusts to his new life at Hogwarts and eventually defeats the evil, Voldemort. None of this would be possible without the <b>help from his best friends, Ron and Hermione; Headmaster, Dumbledore; and, the misunderstood, Professor Snape.</b></i></p>

<b>Body Paragraphs (8-10 sentences each)</b>	
<i>A strong body paragraph explains, proves, and/or supports your paper's argumentative claim or thesis statement:</i>	
<b>Topic Sentences</b> <i>A topic sentence essentially tells what the rest of the paragraph is about. All sentences after it have to give more information about the sentence, prove it by offering facts about it, or describe it</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Every topic sentence will have a topic and a controlling idea. The controlling idea shows the direction the paragraph will take.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>i.e. "There are many possible contributing factors to global warming."</i></b></p> <p>The topic is "contributing factors to global warming" and the controlling factor is "many reasons."</p>
<b>Arguments/Points</b> <i>Ensure you are confirming your thesis/theme with clear, concrete evidence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Explain your topic sentence further, if necessary</li> <li>✓ Introduce your evidence (2-3 pieces minimum; most powerful first)</li> <li>✓ Unpack the evidence with examples; data; quotes; etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Support/Analysis</b> <i>Further develop your argument by providing a deeper understanding of its importance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No matter how good your evidence is, it won't help your argument much if your reader doesn't know why it's important. Ask yourself: how does this evidence prove the point you are trying to make in this paragraph and/or your paper as a whole? Can be opinion based and is often at least 1-3 sentences</li> </ul>
<b>Concluding Paragraph (6-8 sentences)</b>	
<i>Conclusions do not merely restate the thesis, and they should <b>never</b> begin with "In conclusion..." They represent your last chance to say something important to your readers:</i>	
<b>Restate theme/thesis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Paraphrase yourself! Stay on point.</li> </ul>
<b>Review arguments/points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 2-3 sentences explaining how the paper has fit together and leads to a stronger, more emphatic and more detailed version of your thesis</li> </ul>
<b>Final thoughts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Why the essay was important or interesting</li> <li>✓ Other areas of significance: morality; society; politics or practical applications</li> </ul>
<b>*NEVER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do not include any NEW arguments in your conclusion</li> </ul>