

Essay Outline Handout

The Learning Resource Centre

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CENTRE FOR
NURSING
STUDIES

OPERATED BY NL HEALTH SERVICES

Essay Outline Handout

Your introduction should be your most robust paragraph. It should be very clear and attention-grabbing. Your audience should be able to clearly and easily pick out your thesis statement and the main points from your introduction.

- Introductory sentence – attention grabber, acceptable to use emotional structure.
- Introduction of topic.
- Introduction of your **thesis statement**, argument, or statement of purpose.
- If applicable, state your position on the topic supported by a critical literature analysis.
- A statement of the general trajectory of your argument or a brief summation that gives an overview of the topic is needed.
- State the main points supporting your position and the research you will elaborate on.
- Introduce the opposing position and indicate you intend to refute it (if applicable).
- Transitional sentence.

Summation (if applicable)

Sometimes, you must devote more time explaining/introducing a topic. This usually occurs in compare/contrast essays where you must give a synopsis of a piece of literature.

- Introduction of material (article, book, website, etc.).
- Summary of main points of the material.
- Thoughtful analysis: audience? Author's intent? How effective is the material at presenting its viewpoint? Is it research? (Ex. If it is a case study, are there any points that may be brought up? Sample size, location, and how old is it? Explain why this is a good article.)
- Transition sentence to next piece of literature or first point.

First Point

This should be your strongest point or the point with the most evidence (articles) supporting it.

- Introduction of the first point.
- Supporting evidence #1 (article, book, website, etc.).
- Supporting evidence #2 (article, book, website, etc.).
- Connection to your thesis.
- Critical analysis is where you connect your thesis, the topic, and your first point.

- Transitional sentence that slides into the next point.

Second Point

This should be your second strongest point.

- Introduction of the second point.
- Supporting evidence #1 (article, book, website, etc.).
- Supporting evidence #2 (article, book, website, etc.).
- Connection to your thesis.
- Critical analysis where you make connections/explanations.
- Transitional sentence that slides into the next point.

Third Point

Your weakest point, or the point that is a supplement, but nice to include (like icing on a cake).

- Introduction of the third point.
- Supporting evidence #1 (article, book, website, etc.).
- Supporting evidence #2 (article, book, website, etc.).
- Connection to your thesis.
- Critical analysis where you make connections/explanations.
- Transitional sentence that slides into the next point.

Refutation of Opposing Viewpoint (if applicable)

Refutation of opposing viewpoint (if applicable). Sometimes, writers will have a dissenting opinion in their essay after their weakest point. This is so the essay doesn't end on the weakest point. Instead, it ends after you've proven that the opposite opinion has too many flaws based on the available evidence.

- Introductory sentence(s) presenting a dissenting opinion or oddities in the current literature/case studies.
- Cite example(s).
- If there is an opposing viewpoint, critically analyse why it is wrong.
- Supporting evidence (article, book, website, etc.).

- If there are oddities in current literature, give a thoughtful analysis on why those inconsistencies are present (this is usually where cultural ramifications, social issues, ethical implications, or various broader issues come into play).
- Supporting evidence (article, book, website, etc.).
- Thoughtful analysis.
- Transitional sentencing to your conclusion.

Conclusion

Remember, your conclusion should be just that—a conclusion. Do not introduce any new information!

- Emotional sentence/attention-grabbing sentence(s).
- Restate the topic.
- Restate the argument/ thesis statement.
- Restate the main points and how they support your thesis.
- Closing sentence(s) to indicate the paper is done and the topic/thesis has been thoroughly flushed out.

Essay outline tips:

- You can start from your weakest point and build up to your strongest point.
- You can have more than three main points.
- You can have one or more supporting evidence per point.
- You can discuss a point in one, two, or even three paragraphs if you have a lot of supporting evidence or critical analysis that needs to be covered. You are not locked into one paragraph per point.

Resources

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<https://lib.conestogac.on.ca/writing-guide>

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