

# Parts of an Essay

## What is an essay?

- An essay is a **group of paragraphs** that develop ideas around a central topic.
- An essay **has three parts**: the introductory paragraph, the supporting paragraphs, and the concluding paragraph.
- The **introductory paragraph**, or opening paragraph, usually introduces the topic of the essay, suggests its purpose, and previews the supporting points. Each supporting point is then developed in supporting paragraphs.
  - A well-written introductory paragraph:
    - States the topic and purpose of the essay (thesis statement)
    - Lists or previews the supporting points
    - Catches the reader's attention
      - Can include one of the following in the first sentence: specific example or topic, shocking statement, ask a thought provoking question, or use an effective quote.
    - Is relatively brief (about 5-7 sentences, more is okay)
- The **supporting paragraphs** form the body of the essay. They support the topic sentence. There can be as many supporting paragraphs as needed. Each supporting paragraph usually discusses a different point that develops the topic sentence. Sometimes a supporting point is broad enough to need more than one paragraph.
- The **concluding paragraph** is the last paragraph of the essay. It refers to both the topic and the supporting points of the essay. It brings the essay to a powerful close. The concluding paragraph should do more than simply repeat the topic and supporting points, but it should never introduce new ideas or details.

\*The paragraphs in an essay should be coherent, meaning they all flow together and support each other through a common topic. An essay is coherent when its paragraphs are logically and clearly related to one another in developing the topic. To achieve coherence, organize your essay using the following techniques:

1. Chronological (time) order
  2. Spatial (space) order
  3. Cause-and-effect relationship
  4. Comparison and contrast
  5. Order of importance
- To achieve coherence, use logical transition words.