

Moving From Paragraph to Essay

Tips on Crafting the Basic College Essay

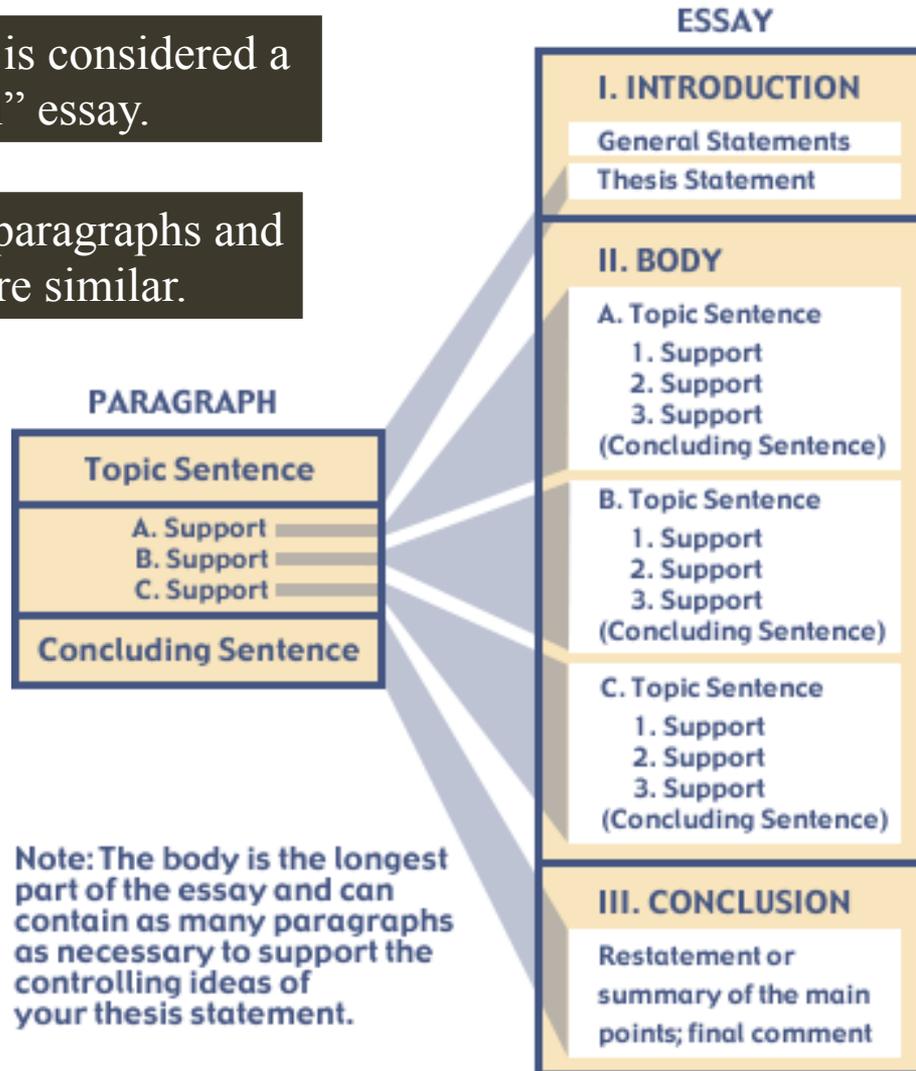
CONTENTS

- ◆ Paragraph vs. Essay
- ◆ Introductions
- ◆ Thesis Statements
- ◆ MLA Document Preparation

PARAGRAPH VS. ESSAY

A paragraph is considered a “mini” essay.

Structurally, paragraphs and essays are similar.



An essay may contain the same points as a paragraph. However, those points are obviously developed in much greater depth.

PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

TOPIC SENTENCE: **TOPIC PLUS THE CONTROLLING IDEA**

The topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph. A well-crafted topic sentence states or implies the direction of further elaboration of paragraph.

Sample topic sentence: *Too much emphasis is placed on grades in society.*

Topic: Grades

Controlling idea: Too much emphasis

Implied Content: Paragraph will cite two or three examples of how society places too much emphasis upon grades. Below, those examples are highlighted in yellow:

For Example:

Too much emphasis is placed on grades in society. First, *grades are an artificial reflection of one's intelligence.* [ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTES, ANECDOTES]. Second, *grades reward external conformity and not necessarily internal growth.* [ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTES, ANECDOTES]. Finally, *grades do not measure other important aspects of learning.* [ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTE

ESSAY STRUCTURE

THESIS STATEMENT **THE TOPIC PLUS THE CONTROLLING IDEA**

The thesis statement is typically the **last sentence in the introductory paragraph** of a basic essay, and usually follows a **brief but effective introductory discussion** of the topic in general. Sometimes, the thesis statement can **suggest** (“forecast”) **the direction of subsequent ideas** in the essay.

Sample thesis sentence: Too much emphasis is placed on grades in society.

Topic: Grades

Controlling idea: Too much emphasis

Implied direction: Essay will probably give examples of how society places too much emphasis upon grades.

In the example on the next screen, those examples are highlighted in yellow.

SAMPLE ESSAY

The classroom was silent as the instructor began passing out the final exam. One by one the students received their packets and glanced at the test. A few of them sighed. Others hunched over their papers and began writing. One or two slouched down in their seats and groaned. It was the end of the first semester, and final exams had begun. At the end of the day, the instructor will read the exams, place a letter on the top of the page, and then prepare her semester grades. Most of her students will pass her class. Some, in fact, will do very well. A few will fail. But the one question that has yet to be answered, the question that wasn't included on this particular test, is: how important are grades to students learning? The way I see it, *too much emphasis is placed on grades in our society for several reasons.*

First, grades are an artificial reflection of one's intelligence.

[ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTES, ANECDOTES].

Second, grades reward external conformity and not necessarily internal growth. [ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTES, ANECDOTES].

Finally, grades do not measure other important aspects of learning.

[ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTES, ANECDOTES].

To sum up [conclude paragraph by reiterating your thesis and tying together the above points].

Engaging introduction

Clearly-stated thesis

Transition and topic sentence

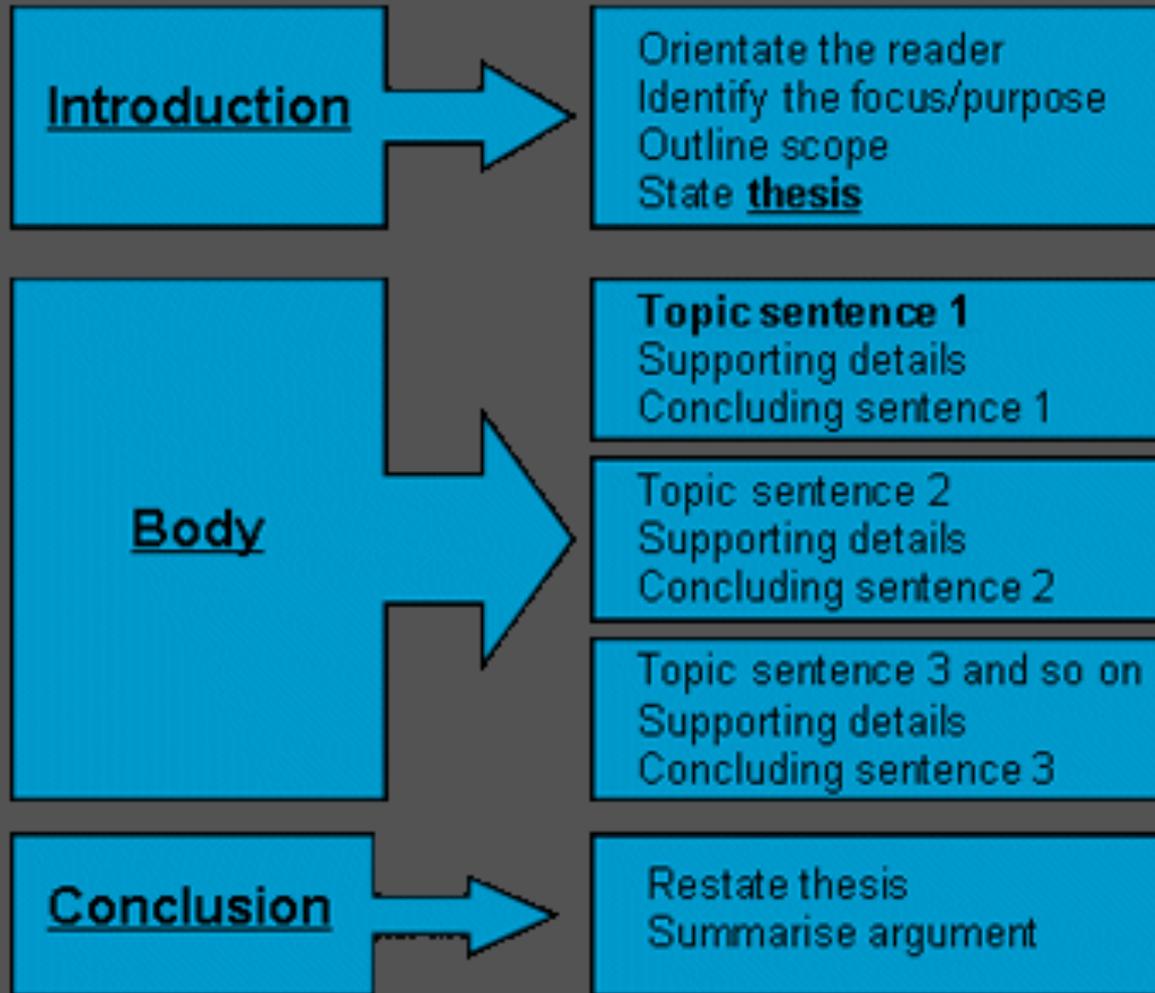
Transition and topic sentence

Transition and topic sentence

Conclusion

Essay Outline

Paragraphs



BASIC ESSAY AT A GLANCE

THE “BODY” OF THE ESSAY REPRESENTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THESIS STATEMENT AND CAN BE ANYWHERE FROM ONE TO 100 PARAGRAPHS!

A WORD ABOUT CRAFTING INTRODUCTIONS

INTRODUCTION: An introduction is the first paragraph (or paragraphs) of any written work.

What is the function of an introduction?

- Captures your audience's **attention**.
- Gives **background** on your topic.
- Develops **interest** in your topic.
- Informs your reader about the **focus** of your paper (i.e., states your thesis)

A WORD ABOUT THESIS STATEMENTS

A thesis statement in an essay is a sentence that **explicitly identifies the purpose** of the paper or **previews its main ideas**.

Because the thesis reflects the type of paper a student is writing, there is no one “right” way to craft a thesis.

However, there are **guidelines**.

The next slides give examples of **six different kinds of thesis statements**.

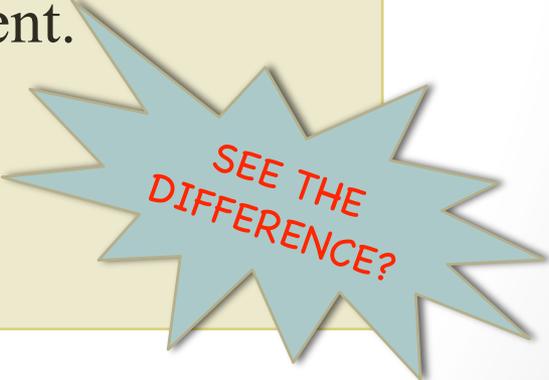
THESIS STATEMENT: A COMPLETE SENTENCE!

A thesis statement is an **actual sentence**, not a title.

COMPARE:

Title: Social Security and Old Age

Thesis Statement: Continuing changes in the Social Security System makes it almost impossible to plan intelligently for one's retirement.



SEE THE
DIFFERENCE?

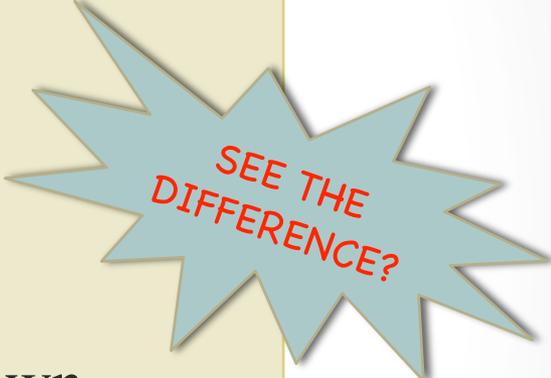
THESIS STATEMENT: AN ASSERTION

A thesis statement is an **assertion**, not a statement of fact or an observation.

COMPARE:

Fact or observation: People use many lawn chemicals.

Assertion: People are poisoning the environment with chemicals merely to keep their lawns clean.



SEE THE
DIFFERENCE?

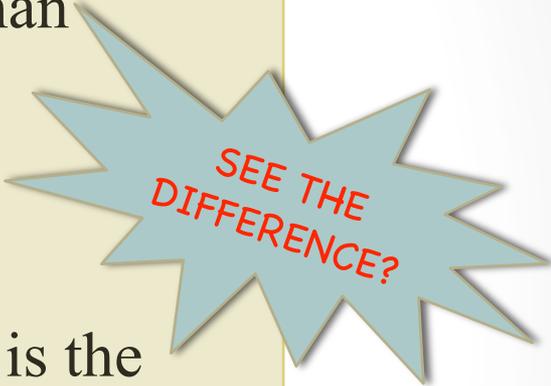
THESIS STATEMENT: TAKES A STAND

A thesis statement **takes a stand** rather than announcing a subject.

COMPARE:

Announcement: The thesis of this paper is the difficulty of solving our environmental problems.

Takes a Stand: Solving our environmental problems is more difficult than many environmentalists believe.



SEE THE
DIFFERENCE?

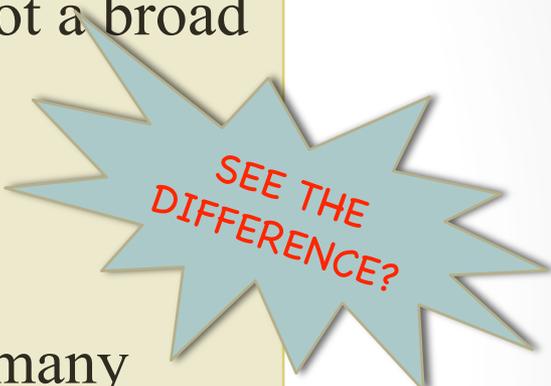
THESIS STATEMENT: FOCUSED!

A thesis statement has a **narrow focus**, not a broad focus.

COMPARE:

Broad: The American steel industry has many problems.

Focused: The primary problems of the American steel industry have to do with **lack of funds to renovate outdated plants** and **foreign imports taking steel jobs away from qualified American workers.**



SEE THE
DIFFERENCE?

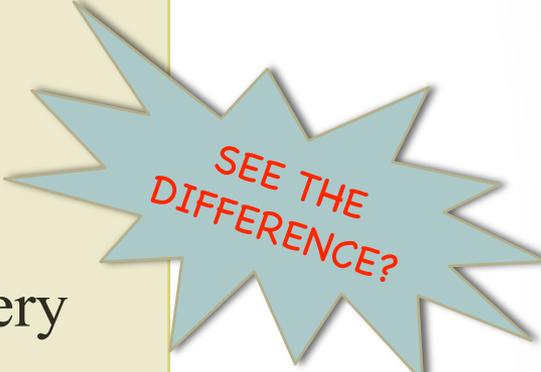
THESIS STATEMENT: SPECIFIC!

A thesis statement is **specific** rather than vague or general.

COMPARE:

Vague: Hemingway's war stories are very good.

Specific: Hemingway's stories helped create a new prose style by employing **extensive dialogue, shorter sentences, and strong, Anglo-Saxon words.**



SEE THE
DIFFERENCE?

THESIS STATEMENT: ONE MAIN POINT!

A thesis statement addresses **a single, over-arching idea** and then seeks to develop that idea in the essay.

COMPARE:

More than one point: Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world-renowned physicist, and his book is the subject of a movie.

One main point: Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world-renowned physicist.

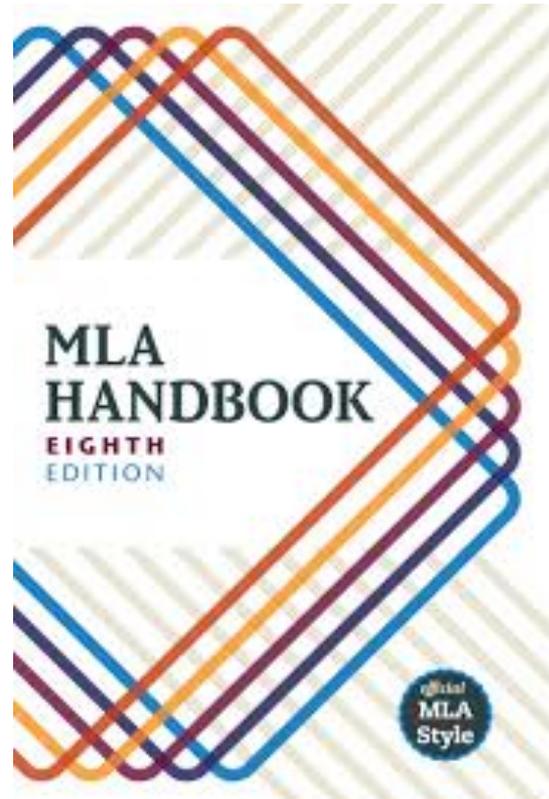


SEE THE
DIFFERENCE?

TO SUM UP: THESIS STATEMENTS

- ◆ A thesis statement explicitly identifies the **purpose** of the paper or **previews** its main ideas.
- ◆ A thesis statement is the **main idea**, not the title.
- ◆ A thesis statement is an **assertion**, not a statement of fact.
- ◆ A thesis statement **takes a stand** rather than announcing a subject.
- ◆ A thesis statement is **narrow** rather than broad.
- ◆ A thesis statement is **specific** rather than vague or general.
- ◆ A thesis statement addresses **one main point** rather than several main points.

Now, a word about
document preparation!



1"
↑
↓

Your Name

Instructor's Name

Class information (English 1A)

Date

double
space
text
←

Center Title of Essay

Begin your paragraph one double-spaced line below

← 1" →

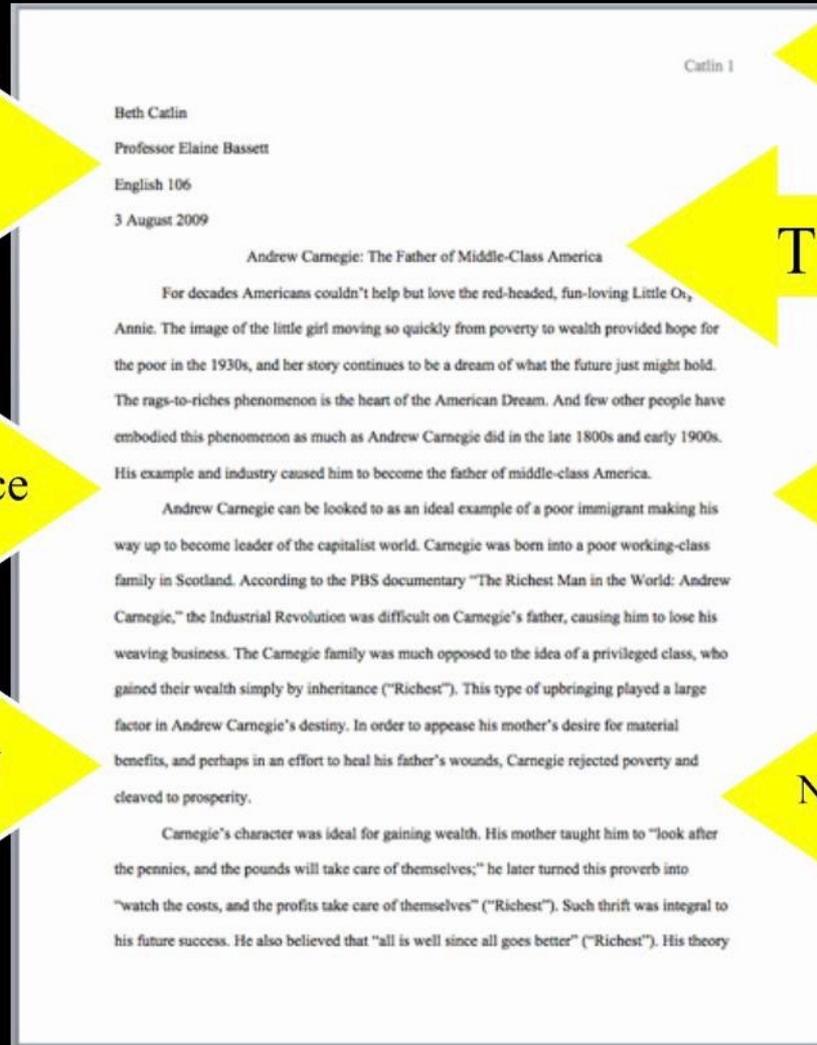
← 1" →

your centered title; the paragraph should begin with a 1/2" tabbed indent. The paper's heading goes in the upper-left corner of the first page only. Use 1" margins all around. Double space everything, including blocked quotes. Do not justify the right margin.

double
space
text
←

DOCUMENT PREPARATION

Prepare your final draft using MLA requirements for document preparation.



DOCUMENT PREPARATION

Here's another example that includes pagination in upper right hand header. Learn how to use your word processor tools to format your documents correctly.

ready. set.

go!



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Fall 2016