

Unit 1: Basic Essay Format and Structure

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The lectures involving this unit will enable you to have a smooth move from **paragraph format and structure** to **basic essay format and structure** (lecture 1). Then, you will delve into the structure of the three elements of any essay, namely, introduction, main body, and conclusion (lecture 2).

Lecture 1: Moving from Paragraph Structure to Basic Essay Structure

This lecture pinpoints the similar ways that a paragraph and a basic essay function in terms of format and structure.

Introduction

Writing, organizing, and formatting an essay is not more difficult than writing and organizing a paragraph, except that the essay takes in several paragraphs. Similar to the paragraph, the essay encompasses some formatting elements and parts that will be discussed below.

Paragraph Format Vs. Basic Essay Format

To format a paragraph the writer should:

- Center the title of his/her paragraph on the top of the page. The title can be a one word as it can be a group of words that tell what the paragraph is about.
- Indent the first sentence of a paragraph with a small space, usually 1 tab when typing in a computer or 1 inch (2.5 cm) when writing by hand.
- Connect all the sentences in one block. A paragraph is not a paragraph if every sentence begins on a new line.
- Double the space between the lines of his/her paragraph.

To format an essay the writer should:

- Center the title of his/her essay on the top of the page. The title can be a one word as it can be a group of words that tell what the essay is about.
- Indent the first sentence of each paragraph with a small space, usually 1 tab when typing in a computer or 1 inch (2.5 cm) when writing by hand.
- Connect the sentences of each paragraph in one block. A three-paragraph essay of, for example, should have three indents and three blocks.

- Double the space between the lines of each paragraph.

Paragraph Organization Vs Essay Organization

The table on the next page presents the constituents of a paragraph and an essay and shows how the structural parts of the paragraph correspond to the elements of the essay.

PARAGRAPH		ESSAY
Topic sentence (topic + controlling idea)	→	Introduction (general statements + thesis statement)
Supporting detail 1 (1 st detail + explanation/example/ Fact)	→	Body paragraph 1 (Topic sentence + supporting details + concluding sentence)
Supporting detail 2 (2 nd detail + explanation/example/ Fact)	→	Body paragraph 2 (Topic sentence + supporting details + concluding sentence)
Supporting detail 3 (3 rd detail + explanation/example/ Fact)	→	Body paragraph 3 (Topic sentence + supporting details + concluding sentence)
Concluding sentence (restatement of the topic sentence/advice/ general comment/prediction/ warning)	→	Conclusion (restatement of the thesis statement + restatement of the main points + final comment)

Practice:

Read the paragraph and the essay below then answer these questions.

- Label the three parts of the paragraph and the essay.
- Which is more interesting?
- What information is included in the short essay introduction that is not in the topic sentence of the paragraph?
- What extra details have been added to the body paragraph 1 of the essay?
- What additional details have been added to body paragraph 2 of the essay?
- What information is included in the essay conclusion that is not in the concluding sentence of the paragraph?

Paragraph	Essay
<p>[My uncle Patricio is one of the most interesting people in my family.] [He is old and has a wrinkled face. On his arm, there is a tattoo. Patricio has an interesting history. He and my mother were born in a small village in the mountains. When he was seventeen, he left home to explore the world. Now he fixes air conditioners in Los Angeles, and during the winter months, he sometimes comes to visit us and play the accordion. I love spending time with my uncle Patricio because he has an interesting look and a mysterious past.] [Someday, I hope that he will tell me more about his life.]</p>	<p>[My family is full of happy, crazy, and talented people. My aunt Margareta has a yard full of orphaned pets. My brother José is an expert tailor and my mother loves experiment in the kitchen. However, I think the most interesting is my mysterious uncle Patricio.]</p> <p>[Patricio is an elderly man now, with white hair striking up all over his head. Beneath his messy hair, he has a wrinkled brown face and powerful dark eyes that many emotions. Patricio is tall and skinny, and he wears baggy pants and a plaid shirt. He has a tattoo of a heart on his arm. The heart has the word Rosa written across it in red and black letters, but he has never told me who she is.]</p> <p>[Patricio has an intriguing history. He and my mother were born in a small village in the mountains. When he was seventeen, he left home to explore the world. On one trip, he went to Siberia to look for gold. On another trip, he went to Alaska to work on a fishing boat. Now he fixed air conditioners in Los Angeles, and during the winter months, he sometimes comes to visit us and play the accordion.]</p> <p>[I love spending time with my uncle Patricio. He has an interesting look and a sad and mysterious past. He is also a talented musician. Someday, I hope that he will tell me about Rosa and how he got the tattoo with her name.]</p>

Adopted from (Savage & Mayer, 2005, p. 16)

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