

A Step-by-Step Process of How to Write a Researched Essay About Literature

Introductions: The Basics

The introduction is the broad beginning of the paper that answers three important questions:

1. What is this?
2. Why am I reading it?
3. What do you want me to do?

You should answer these questions by doing the following:

1. *Set the context* – provide general information about the main idea, explaining the situation so the reader can make sense of the topic and the claims you make and support
2. *State why the main idea is important* – tell the reader why s/he should care and keep reading. Your goal is to create a compelling, clear, and convincing essay people will want to read and act upon
3. *State your thesis/claim* – compose a sentence or two stating the position you will support with logos (sound reasoning: induction, deduction), pathos (balanced emotional appeal), and ethos (author credibility).

If your argument paper is long (3 pages or more), you should forecast how you will support your thesis by outlining the structure of your paper

1. Hook
2. Thesis
3. Three-point overview
4. Closing sentence

How to Write a Body Paragraph

1. Create a topic sentence that relates to thesis and makes a strong claim for the main point of the paragraph.
2. Write 3-5 sentences proving why the topic sentence is accurate.
3. Copy and paste both a critical quote and the text quote where they seem to logically fit in the paragraph and make sense.
4. Write a closing sentence that serves to finish off the idea of the paragraph. This sentence should mirror but not be exactly like the topic sentence.
5. In total, there should be 10-15 sentences in a completed paragraph.
6. Be sure to proofread and edit.

How to Write Conclusions for Papers About Literature

A conclusion must provide synthesis and restate the thesis statement.

Do **not** restate the thesis verbatim (that is, word for word).

Do restate the main point of what you are trying to prove in the paper.

Both the paper and the conclusion should serve a specific purpose.

You must always include a deeper observation about life, a connection to the bigger picture or worldview.

Emphasize the significance or consequence of your analysis of the primary text.

Although it is not appropriate to state a personal view in the body of the paper, you may do so in the conclusion (but do not use personal pronouns).

Try to end the essay with a unique thought or “flourish.” You want to end the essay by leaving a lasting impression. It is your last chance to make your thesis clear and valid.

Here is the basic structure of the concluding paragraph:

1. transition from the last body paragraph
2. a stronger, more emphatic and detailed version of your thesis
3. How your view of the primary text should change my mind about it or confirm a previously held view
4. final words (so what? why is this important?) that emphasizes the result of the ideas in the essay.

DO NOT repeat the main points of the essay.