

## How to Write an Essay in Science Class

Writing is a wonderful skill which, when well done, gives pride to the writer and pleasure to the reader. One specific form of writing is the essay. An essay is a short, written work which summarizes information and/or opinions about a specific topic. Part of the art of the essay is to communicate significant information concisely. This concise writing requires organization so essays usually follow a common structure (<http://www.sciencemag.org/feature/data/150essay.shl>).

Essays are usually sequence of paragraphs: the first paragraph is the introduction, followed by body paragraphs and ending with a concluding paragraph. The introduction and conclusion should never be more than one paragraph in length. The body may be more than one paragraph; your essay should have at least two body paragraphs (to earn up to a B+) and at least three body paragraphs (to earn up to an A+).

The introduction is designed to attract the readers interest and identify the goal of the writer by using a thesis statement. Begin your introduction with a broad, general statements and end your introduction with your thesis. Your thesis is a one sentence explanation of your opinion or perspective. Your thesis should be the last sentence in your introduction.

The introduction is followed by the guts of the essay which are called the body paragraphs. Research information and personal thoughts are communicated in these paragraphs. Usually the body paragraphs are each about a separate subtopic which supports or describes the overall goal of the essay. The essay you are reading is a about how to organize an essay, so each of the body paragraphs describe a different section of essay organization. Begin each new paragraph with a topic sentence, which introduces the subject of the paragraph, and try to link paragraphs in a chain with common terms or ideas (can you see how this was done in these paragraphs?)

Every paragraph in the essay should communicate your own thoughts; not copy from others. At the same time, your work should be well done and supported, when possible. “Supported” means including related information that agrees with your perspective, or providing details, gleaned

from others, that buttresses your arguments. When you include ideas or information from others, be sure to reference it. In this essay you can simply include references as URLs. Place the URL at the end of the sentence in which the information was referred to (<http://www.jayreimer.com/essay>.)

All your correctly referenced and nicely organized writing should end with a concluding paragraph. In the concluding paragraph be sure to summarize what your essay explained. Do not introduce any new ideas in the conclusion. Organize your conclusion like an inverted introduction: begin with specific information and end with a general closure.

The closure of your essay is like a good bye to your reader. You attracted their interest with your opening introduction. Then the organized body paragraphs convinced the audience, by skillful rhetoric and carefully chosen evidence, of the significance of your thesis. Now, at the end, you are distilling your perspective. When you're finished, gently say goodbye with a kiss on the lips or be unforgettable like smashing fist to a startled, unsuspecting nose.