**Steps for paragraph writing**

**Step1 — write an outline**

When writing a paragraph, first write an outline of the paragraph and include:

* the topic
* supporting information.

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**Step 2 — write the topic sentence**

Write a topic sentence.



**Step 3 — write supporting sentences**

Next write a supporting sentence for each point. Use facts or examples to support your points.



**Step 4 — concluding sentence**

Then write a concluding sentence to sum up.



**Step 5 — final paragraph**

Write the final paragraph.



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# Steps to Writing an Essay

For some, writing an essay is as simple as sitting down at their computer and beginning to type. But a lot more planning goes into writing an essay successfully. If you have never written an essay before, or if you struggle with writing and want to improve your skills, it is a good idea to follow a number of important steps in the essay writing process.

For example, to write an essay, you should generally:

decide what kind of essay to write

brainstorm your topic

research the topic

choose a writing style

develop a thesis

outline your essay

write your essay

edit your writing to check spelling and grammar

While this sounds like a lot of steps to write a simple essay, if you follow them you will be able to write more successful, clear and cohesive essays.

1. Choose the Type of Essay

The first step to writing an essay is to define what type of essay you are writing. There are four main categories into which essays can be grouped:

***Narrative essay - Tell a story or impart information about your subject in a straightforward, orderly manner, like in a story.***

***Persuasive essay - Convince the reader about some point of view.***

***Expository essay - Explain to the reader how to perform a given process. You could, for example, write an expository essay with step-by-step instructions on how to make a peanut butter sandwich.***

***Descriptive essay - Focus on the details of what is going on. For example, if you want to write a descriptive essay about your trip to the park, you would give great detail about what you experienced: how the grass felt beneath your feet, what the park benches looked like, and anything else the reader would need to feel as if he were there.***

Knowing what kind of essay you are trying to write can help you decide on a topic and structure your essay in the best way possible. Here are a few other types of essays:

Argumentative essay - Take a position on a controversial issue and present evidence in favor of your position. If you’ve been assigned an argumentative essay, check out these top 10 argumentative essay topics.

Compare and contrast essay - Identify similarities and differences between two subjects that are, typically, under the same umbrella.

Problem solution essay - Describe a problem, convince the reader to care about the problem, propose a solution, and be prepared to dismantle objections.

Informative essay - Educate the reader on a particular topic with facts.

2. Brainstorm Your Topic

You cannot write an essay unless you have an idea of what to write about. Brainstorming is the process in which you come up with the essay topic. You need to simply sit and think of ideas during this phase.

Write down everything that comes to mind as you can always narrow those topics down later.

Use clustering or mind mapping to brainstorm and come up with an essay idea. This involves writing your topic or idea in the center of the paper and creating bubbles (clouds or clusters) of related ideas around it.

Brainstorming can be a great way to develop a topic more deeply and to recognize connections between various facets of your topic.

Once you have a list of possible topics, it's time to choose the best one that will answer the question posed for your essay. You want to choose a topic that is neither too broad nor too narrow.

If you are given an assignment to write a one-page essay, it would be far too much to write about "the history of the U.S.," since that could fill entire volumes of books. Instead, you could write about a specific event within the history of the United States: perhaps signing the Declaration of Independence or when Columbus discovered the Americas.

Choose the best topic idea from among your list and begin moving forward on writing your essay. But, before you move forward, take heed of these topics to avoid.

3. Research the Topic

Once you have done your brainstorming and chosen your topic, you may need to do some research to write a good essay. Go to the library or search online for information about your topic. Interview people who might be experts in the subject.

Keep your research organized so it will be easy for you to refer back to. This also makes it easier to cite your sources when writing your final essay.

4. Choose a Writing Style

The writing style that you choose for your essay is dictated by your teacher or the topic of your paper. In general, there are three writing styles you might come across in high school and college.

MLA (Modern Language Association) is designed for humanities and language arts essays. It uses the author-page number citation style. This is the most common writing style used by high school and college students.

APA (American Psychological Association) uses the author-date citation style and was created for social science and psychology research papers and essays. It is the second most common writing style out there.

Chicago Manual of Style, also known as Turabian, has two writing styles: author-date and notes-bibliography. Mostly used by college students and professionals, the author-date style works for scientific papers, while notes-biblio makes arts and humanities papers a breeze.

Each different writing style has its own unique format for in-text and reference list citations.

5. Develop a Thesis

Your thesis statement is the main point of your essay. It is essentially one sentence that says what the essay is about. For example, your thesis statement might be "Dogs are descended from wolves." You can then use this as the basic premise to write your entire essay, remembering that all of the different points throughout need to lead back to this one main thesis. You should usually state your thesis in your introductory paragraph.

Additionally, the thesis statement should be broad enough that you have enough to say about it, but not so broad that you can't be thorough. To help you structure a perfectly clear thesis, check out these thesis statement examples.

6. Outline Your Essay

The next step is to outline what you are going to write about. This means you want to essentially draw the skeleton of your paper. Writing an outline can help to ensure your paper is logical, well organized and flows properly. If you’ve been tasked with an argumentative essay, here’s the best formula for an argumentative essay outline.

Start by writing the thesis statement at the top, then write a topic sentence for each paragraph below that. This means you should know exactly what each of your paragraphs is going to be about before you write them.

Don't jumble too many ideas in each paragraph or the reader may become confused.

Ensure you have transitions between paragraphs so the reader understands how the paper flows from one idea to the next.

Fill in supporting facts from your research under each paragraph. Make sure each paragraph ties back to your thesis and creates a cohesive, understandable essay.

Does your teacher follow the APA guidelines for writing papers? If so, these APA outline format examples should help you pull it all together. As you progress into the meat of the essay (following our tips below), these APA format examples should prove beneficial! Or, if MLA is your teacher’s preferred style, check out these MLA format examples.

7. Write the Essay

Once you have an outline, it’s time to start writing. Write based on the outline itself, fleshing out your basic skeleton to create a whole, cohesive and clear essay.

You’ll want to edit and re-read your essay, checking to make sure it sounds exactly the way you want it to. Here are some things to remember:

Revise for clarity, consistency and structure.

Support your thesis adequately with the information in your paragraphs. Each paragraph should have its own topic sentence. This is the most important sentence in the paragraph that tells readers what the rest of the paragraph will be about.

Make sure everything flows together. As you move through the essay, transition words will be paramount. Transition words are the glue that connects every paragraph together and prevents the essay from sounding disjointed. You can even use a list of transition words to help get you started.

Reread your introduction and conclusion. Will the reader walk away knowing exactly what your paper was about?

In your introduction, it’s important to include a hook. This is the line or line that will lure a reader in and encourage them to want to learn more. For more on this, check out how to write a hook. And, to help you formulate a killer conclusion, scan through these conclusion examples.

8. Check Spelling and Grammar

Now the essay is written, but you're not quite done. Reread what you've written, looking out for mistakes and typos.

Revise for technical errors.

Check for grammar, punctuation and spelling errors. You cannot always count on spell check to recognize every spelling error. Sometimes, you can spell a word incorrectly but your misspelling will also be a word, such as spelling "from" as "form."

Another common area of concern is quotation marks. It’s important to cite your sources with accuracy and clarity. Follow these guidelines on how to use quotes in essays and speeches.

You might also want to consider the difference between quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing. Quoting is reserved for lines of text that are identical to an original piece of writing. Paraphrasing is reserved for large sections of someone else’s writing that you want to convey in your own words. Summarizing puts the main points from someone else’s text into your own words.

Planning Pays Off

A lot goes into writing a successful essay. Fortunately, these tips for writing essays can help you along the way and get you on the path to a well-written essay. Out of all these “how-tos,” the worst thing you could do is plagiarize someone else’s writing (intentionally or unintentionally). Take a look at these tips and techniques for preventing plagiarism. Other than that, we wish you great success as you work your way to a perfect A!