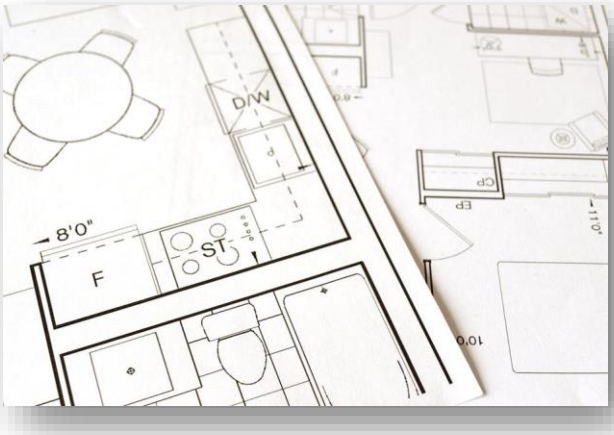
013 Composition 03 - The Writing Process: Organizing

Overview

While generating ideas is a crucial step in the Writing Process, it is only a beginning, a gathering of raw materials. For a piece of writing to be truly effective, it must be planned out carefully, and executed according to that plan.

Think about how a piece of machinery, like a car, is manufactured. Do the factory workers just slap parts onto each car according to how they think they should fit together? Of course not. Cars are complex pieces of machinery, designed very carefully to do certain things and have certain features. Factories follow *plans* to ensure that each car works as it should. Another example: have you ever tried to put together a bookcase or other piece of furniture without the instructions? It's pretty difficult. Writing is the same way: *it needs a logical plan to make sense.*



Let's take, for a moment, a more writing-related example to drive the point home. A lawyer is defending her client, a corporate CEO who is being sued for many millions of dollars by people who feel the product his company made has adversely affected their health. When the lawyer makes an opening statement to the jury, does she simply "wing it" and hope the jury understands what she is talking about? When she offers her closing statement, her impassioned summation of all the evidence in the case, does she simply speak from the top of her head, making up her statement as she goes along? Surely not: any lawyer that would do such a thing would quickly find herself sued for malpractice. People who communicate for a living—writers, lawyers, media specialists, web designers—all go about *planning, to a greater or less degree, exactly what they want to say before they say it.*

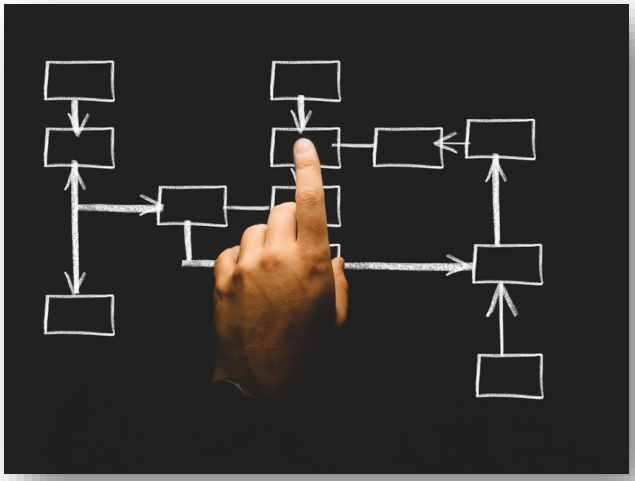
There are a number of primary ways to organize your writing. In this chapter we will discuss two: *mapping* (or "idea mapping" or "mind mapping") and *outlining*. We will also cover how to apply these methods to your own writing and the essays you will be asked to produce in English 101.

Before we begin, it is important to note that the material you generated in the generating ideas part of the Writing Process is going to be indispensable here; your planning process will make extensive use of the "raw materials" that you generated through your brainstorming, freewriting, questioning, clustering, and looping exercises.

Principles of Organization

Different modes of writing are organized in different ways. Narrative essays, for example, are in most cases organized chronologically. Expository or explanatory essays are organized according to the classifications or logical divisions within their subjects; comparison-contrast essays are organized conceptually, by the features of the subject being compared. Argument essays are perhaps the most sophisticated and difficult essays to organize: they must follow a clear logical progression and development of evidence to be effective.

Global Organization vs. Local Organization



Writing is organized both as a total entity—the "whole" piece of writing—as well as the individual parts that make up that whole. In effective writing, both the "global" or "whole" piece of writing, and the "local" or constituent parts are logically connected. More specifically, an essay should have an overall controlling idea that supplies structure, *and* be well- organized at the paragraph, and even sentence level.

The key here is to consider how *ideas* and *details* fit together logically. Seeing connections between ideas is often time-consuming, and in most cases requires considering, reconsidering, and considering again the ideas you are examining to find the most logical connections between them. The successful writer conducts many thought "experiments" before making a commitment to a particular wording. The great American novelist Ernest Hemingway reportedly revised the conclusion to *Farewell to Arms* 43 times before he was satisfied with it. And that was in the days before computers made revision easy.

Starting the Planning & Organizing Process: Listing, Grouping, and Ordering

One of the first steps writers consider when planning out their writing is examining the *similarities* and *differences* between the ideas that they have generated for the project.

Examine the following list of items, and group them into at least two distinct categories, according to criteria that seem logical to you:

Goat, lamb, lion, giraffe, pig, chicken, duck, horse, zebra, elephant, tiger, cow, baboon

Category I:	Category II:

One possible way of organizing the list above is through where the animals *live* or where they are located. There seems to be some farm animals on this list, as well as some animals that live in the jungle.

Category I: Farm Animals	*Category II: Jungle Animals*
Goat, Lamb, Pig *Chicken, Duck, Horse* *Cow*	*Lion, Giraffe, Zebra* *Elephant, Tiger, Baboon*

Now consider a slightly more complicated problem of organization:

Chicken Parmesan, Sushi, Veal Marsala, Polish Sausage, Orange Roughy, New York Strip Steak, Pork Chop, Lake Trout, Pasta Primavera, Shrimp Tempura, Fried Chicken, Grilled Leg of Lamb

What are some ways that we could organize this particular list?

By cultural origin of cuisine?

By food origin (land v. sea)?

By method of cooking?

Now let's move on to something a bit more applicable to your writing: organizing a list of things conceptually via *sequencing* or via logical similarities.

Topic: The Process of Enrolling in College

What is the most logical sequence for the events below? Order them in the order that would be most appropriate to describe the process to someone unfamiliar with it. What would the underlying scheme be? How would your audience best make sense of all the things that one has to do to enroll in college? Think carefully about how the process of applying to and attending college works, and let the organizational scheme you choose reflect that.

Raw Materials (Brainstormed Ideas)

Reading enrollment brochures
Taking the SAT
Applying online
Registering for classes
Choosing the colleges to apply to
Meeting with an academic advisor
Putting in a deposit
Waiting for the admissions decision
Researching available majors
Attending the first class
Deciding that college is worthwhile
Moving to campus
Finding financial aid
Accepting the admission offer

Logically order the ideas above in this process , numbering them from 1-14

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____

Now, let's see if you can group some more abstract ideas into logical divisions.

Topic: Benefits of a college education

Raw Materials (Brainstormed Ideas)
Make more money
Learn more about the world around you
Develop useful job skills
Meet people
Develop positive life-long learning habits
Have fun
Increase ability to communicate
Make useful professional contacts
Learn about and practice tolerance
Appreciate diversity
Become qualified for different or better jobs
Learn how to argue and defend yourself intellectually
Expand social horizons
Develop a network of social and professional supporters
Increase relationship attractiveness or eligibility
Develop critical thinking skills
Provide a better quality of life for children or family
Set a good example for friends and family

To begin to organize this list, start with the first item, and *think* carefully about what it means in relation to your topic. Then put it in the left-most column below. Then move on to the next item in the list. Compare it to the item you've already put in the first column. What do they have in common? Do they benefit the education-seeker in the same way? Do they provide the same things? If so, put the second item in the first column. If not, put it in the next one to the right.

Here, the first item, "make more money," is pretty straightforward: having a college education enables a person to make a lot more money over the course of her life. This is a *financial* and *personal* benefit. The second item, "learn more about the world," is *not* financial, but is personal, and is a lot more abstract than the first. So we'll put it in the next column. The third item, "develop useful job skills" returns to the basic idea that an education helps you make money through work; it's personal and will lead to more personal success. The fourth, "meet people," is not really like the first three items—it's primarily a social benefit, so we'll put it in the third column. Try organizing the rest of the list yourself—and be ready to explain why you think these things are similar and different!

make more money *develop job skills*	*Learn more about the world around you*	*Meet people*	

Grouping and sequence are key organizational ideas. But how do we put them into a paper? There are several ways to do this, but they fall into two main categories: "mapping" and "outlining." Both serve similar functions in slightly different ways.

Mapping: Idea Mapping or "Mind Mapping"

Mapping is a way that writers use, not unlike "branching" or "clustering," to visualize a plan for their writing. If you have ever seen a simple flow chart, a paper's idea map is not that dissimilar. To build an idea map, you'll first have to do a bit of drawing. Draw a shape (usually a rectangle, but any oblong shape will do), and put it at the top of your page. Write your topic in this shape:

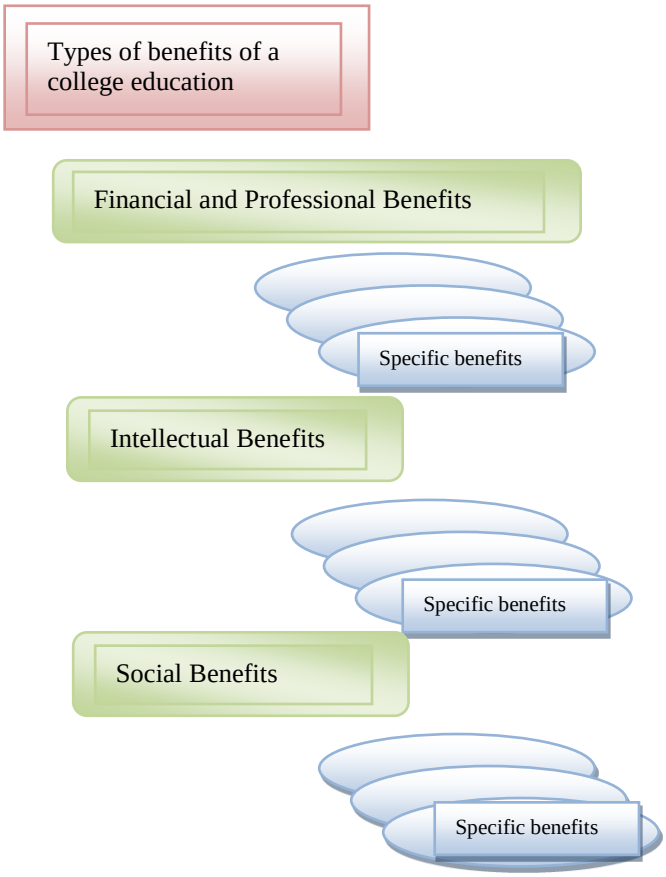
Underneath your topic, put a statement that describes the types of categories or organizational groups that you came up with while organizing your ideas. This could be "types of X, causes of Y, effects of Z," or even "steps related to doing X task" :

Underneath each category in your idea map, list, in specifics, the ideas in your list that fall under that heading.

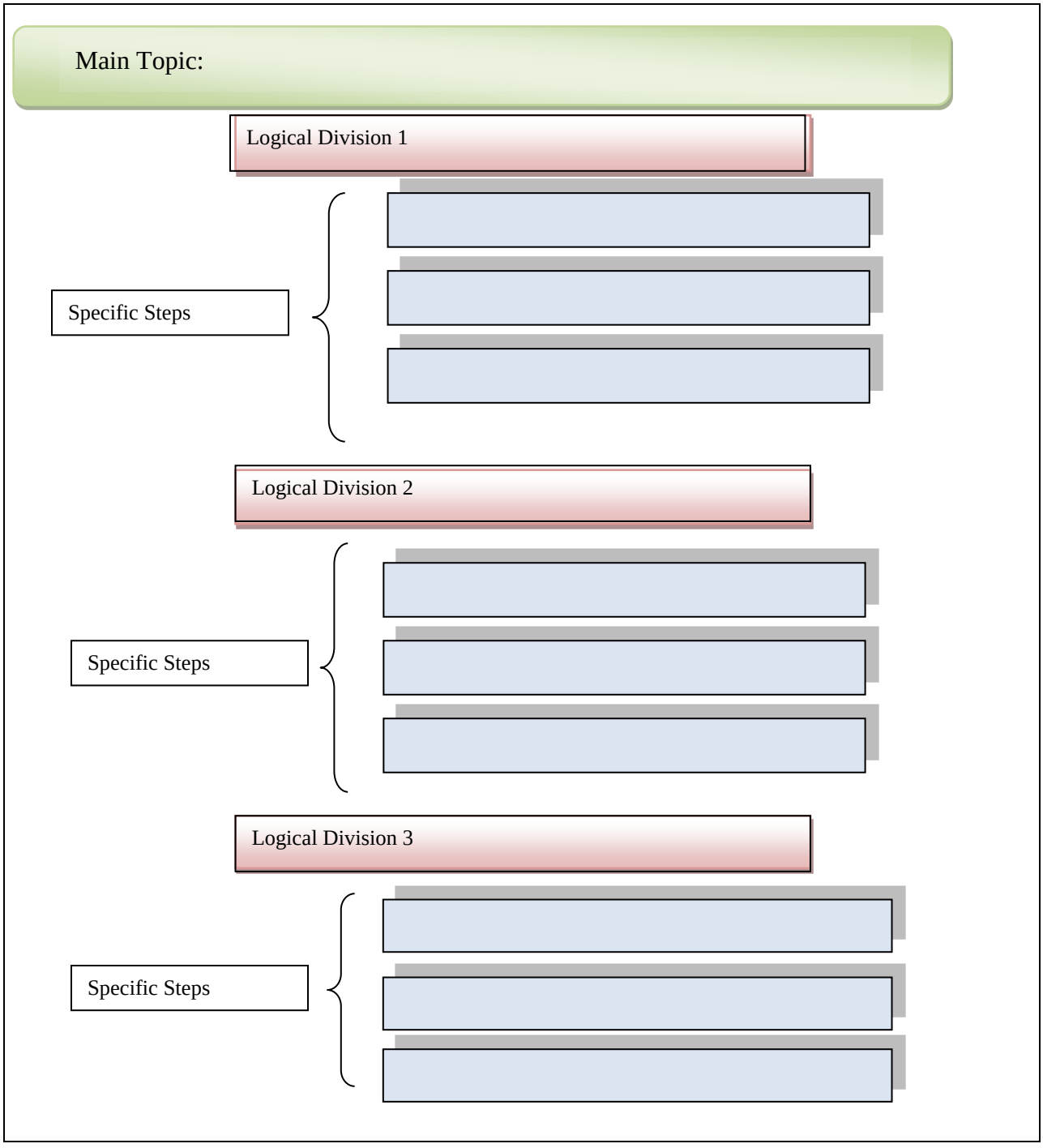
In "Financial and Professional Benefits," for example, it would be important to list *specific* financial and professional benefits of a college education.

Remember: it is important here to *visualize* the organization of the ideas as they relate to each other. As you look more closely at the idea map, you can make changes: which of the types of benefits, for example, is most important? Should that be discussed first or last? Should you lead your paper with it, or build up to it?

Think carefully about the order in which you place things in your idea map: this will serve as the plan or roadmap for your paper.



In the space below, see if you can create an idea map on the "Enrolling in College" materials above. The *sequence* of ideas that you came up with will be important, but you will also have to *group* elements of that sequence together—are there steps in the process that are similar to one another, that are the same type of activity? Think of some possible sub-divisions of this process, like "Reviewing Your College Options," or "Filling Out Paperwork."



Outlining

An *outline* is another way of organizing your ideas.

Outlines are built on the same underlying principles as idea maps, but present the ideas as parts of a hierarchical list rather than as a visual diagram. Outlines also tend to be more specific than idea maps: they often include a thesis statement (see Chapter 05.3.1) and very specific supporting details in addition to mapping out the larger logical divisions in an essay. You may find it helpful to create an outline after you have completed your initial idea map—this will assist you in refining your ideas further and getting more specific details into your paper.

There are two main types of outlines we will discuss here: the numbered outline and the topic-sentence outline. The main difference between the two types is that the "topic sentence outline" requires you to actually *draft* a sample sentence introducing each topic; numbered outlines are a bit more general in what they cover (but much more specific than an idea map).

Both methods, however, depend on your having an understanding of the logical grouping of the material that you generated during the generating ideas phase of the writing process. Just as with the idea map, you will still have to look for similarities and logical relationships between the ideas that you generated.

The Numbered Outline

You may have encountered this type of outline in high school or in another writing class. The numbered outline provides a detailed roadmap for a paper, and is organized according to the logical divisions of both the essay itself and the topic being discussed. Generally, numbered outlines use Roman numerals, capital and lower-case letters, and numbers to indicate the relationship between the items in the outline. Also, most numbered outlines begin with sketching out the essay's introduction (see Chapter 05.3.3) and thesis statement (see Chapter 05.3.1).

Here is the basic organizational scheme of most numbered outlines. The number of body paragraphs will vary with the writing project, as will the number of supporting details (and any subsequent clarifications of them). Information can be added to the outline in phrases or complete sentences—your choice—but you have to be consistent throughout.

I. Introduction
   a. Background on Topic
   b. Establish Importance & Relevance of Topic
   c. Thesis Statement

II. Body Paragraph 1: (First Logical Division)
   a. Supporting Detail (1)Supporting Detail (2)

If needed, any number of additional details can be added under any heading (or sub-heading). You can have as many relevant supporting details or clarifications of details as your topics require.

b. Supporting Detail (3)
    i. Clarification of Supporting Detail (3)
    ii. Further Clarification of Supporting Detail (3)

III. Body Paragraph 2 (Second Logical Division)
    a. Supporting Detail (1)
    b. Supporting Detail (2)

IV. Body Paragraph 3 (Third Logical Division)
    a. Supporting Detail (1)
    b. Supporting Detail (2)

V. Conclusion
    a. Restate Main Points
    b. Re-Establish Importance of Topic

A numbered outline can help you take your roughly organized ideas and begin *drafting* them into a paper. In the space below, create a numbered outline based on the "Benefits of a College Education" material above. Feel free to adapt your idea map as needed.

I. Introduction

a. Background on the topic: What does the audience need to know about a college education and its importance?

_____

_____

_____

b. Thesis Statement: What is the main idea of your paper? What are you telling your audience to do, or what overall fact are you stating?

_____

_____

_____

II. Body Paragraph 1: The first category of benefits of a college education (remember your logical divisions from your organizing exercise):

a. Supporting Detail 1 (Specific Benefit 1 under type noted above)

_____

b. Supporting Detail 2 (Specific Benefit 2 under type noted above)

_____

c. Supporting Detail 3 (Specific Benefit 3 under type noted above)

_____

d. Supporting Detail 4 (Specific Benefit 4 under type noted above)

_____

III. Body Paragraph 2: The second category of benefits of a college education (remember your logical divisions from your organizing exercise):

a. Supporting Detail 1 (Specific Benefit 1 under type noted above)

_____

b. Supporting Detail 2 (Specific Benefit 2 under type noted above)

_____

c. Supporting Detail 3 (Specific Benefit 3 under type noted above)

_____

d. Supporting Detail 4 (Specific Benefit 4 under type noted above)

_____

IV. Body Paragraph 3: The third category of benefits of a college education (remember your logical divisions from your organizing exercise):

a. Supporting Detail 1 (Specific Benefit 1 under type noted above)

_____

b. Supporting Detail 2 (Specific Benefit 2 under type noted above)

_____

c. Supporting Detail 3 (Specific Benefit 3 under type noted above)

_____

d. Supporting Detail 4 (Specific Benefit 4 under type noted above)

_____

V. Conclusion

a. Restatement of the thesis of the paper (use different words)

_____

b. Looking forward. What are the implications? What remains to be said? What might happen next?

The Topic Sentence Outline

Topic sentence outlines are often used to transition between the "planning" stage of the writing process and the "drafting" stage. The organizing principle behind the topic sentence outline is very similar to the numbered outline: you must select appropriate material and establish logical distinctions between sections. In the topic sentence outline, however, you go a step further, and try to craft good, well-constructed sentences that establish and describe these divisions: these sentences will form the "ledes," (pronounced "leeds") or first sentences, of each of your paper's paragraphs—your topic sentences.

To complete a topic sentence outline, you will need to first come up with your essay's thesis or main idea, as well as the main logical sub-divisions or supporting parts of your essay. It is often helpful to use labels and boxes to clearly delineate your various areas of discussion.

Basic Organization of a Topic Sentence Outline

Thesis Statement: *Write here a single sentence stating the main idea of your paper—what you want your audience to get from reading your essay.*

Paragraph 1: *Begin your discussion of your supporting details in this paragraph.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that describes your first logical division—the first scene in your narrative, the first area of comparison in a compare-contrast, the first sub-claim in your argument, or the first step (or stage) in a process analysis. Description and support details relating to your topic sentence: clarification, explanation, relevant definitions, descriptive details, evidence, facts. Transition sentence to next logical division:

Paragraph 2: *Continue your discussion of your supporting details in this paragraph.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that describes your second logical division—the second scene in your narrative, the second area of comparison in a compare-contrast, the second sub-claim in your argument, or the second step (or stage) in a process analysis.

Description and support details relating to your topic sentence: clarification, explanation, relevant definitions, descriptive details, evidence, facts.

Transition sentence to next logical division:

Paragraph 3: *Continue your discussion of your supporting details in this paragraph.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that describes your third logical division—the third scene in your narrative, the third area of comparison in a compare-contrast, the third sub-claim in your argument, or the third step (or stage) in a process analysis.

Description and support details relating to your topic sentence: clarification, explanation, relevant definitions, descriptive details, evidence, facts.

Transition sentence to next logical division:

Paragraphs 4+ (Insert boxes as needed, repeating basic structure as shown above)

Conclusion: *Conclude your discussion of your supporting details in this paragraph.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that sums up the overall point or thesis of your paper. Restating the thesis in different words here is often an effective means of summing up.

Remind your audience of the importance of your topic:

In the space below and on the next page, complete a topic sentence outline using the "Applying to College" ideas above. Imagine that you are being asked to describe the process of applying to college to a high school senior unfamiliar with the process.

Thesis Statement: *Write here a single sentence describing the basics of the process of applying to college, and the main logical divisions involved in the process.*

Paragraph 1: *Begin your description of the process in this paragraph.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that describes the first part of the process of applying to college.

Description of the details of the process.

Paragraph 2: *Continue your description of the process in this paragraph.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that describes the next part of the process of applying to college.

Description of the details of the process.

Paragraph 3: *Continue your description of the process in this paragraph.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that describes the next part of the process of applying to college.

Description of the details of the process.

Paragraph 4: *Continue your description of the process in this paragraph.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that describes the next part of the process of applying to college.

Description of the details of the process.

Paragraph 5: *Continue your description of the process in this paragraph.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that describes the next part of the process of applying to college.

Description of the details of the process.

Paragraph 6: *Continue your description of the process in this paragraph.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that describes the next part of the process of applying to college.

Description of the details of the process.

Paragraph 7: *Continue your description of the process in this paragraph. Conclude if necessary.*

Topic Sentence: A single sentence that describes the next part of the process of applying to college.

Description of the details of the process.

Organizing Narrative Essays

A narrative essay is by definition the *story* of something. It could be one's own personal story (a *personal* narrative), or the story of a group of people, an event or series of events in history, or even of the development of a concept, idea, problem, or debate. Depending on the subject and purpose of the essay, the narratives produced in academic writing vary widely in content, style, and even point of view. No matter what the subject, narratives relate events as they occur over time. Given this principle, it is often helpful to structure narrative essays according to a *timeline*, a sequence of events organized in time.

Developing a timeline for your narrative can then help you then develop an idea map or outline for your essay, using the methods that we discuss in this chapter. The most difficult thing for many students to confront when organizing the narrative is how to break up a long story into more manageable chunks. It may be helpful to imagine that you are filming a movie of your narrative. Moviemakers, regardless of whether they are Hollywood directors, independent documentarians, or amateurs with video cameras, organize their stories around *scenes* or *episodes* that relate to each other over time.

As you break down your narrative, you need to consider which "scenes" are the most important to render and describe to your audience, and how they relate to each other over time. Most narratives focus on key "turning points" in the story. These are often ***experiences*** or events beyond the participants' control; ***revelations***, connections, or discoveries they make; key ***decisions*** by those involved; and specific ***actions*** the characters take. These turning points often take their narratives in a new direction, introducing a new idea or episode in the larger story. You may find it helpful to think about how these elements structure your own narrative.

These turning points, however, must be related to each other logically in time for a reader to make sense of them. A decision, for example, may lead to a subsequent action, which may lead to unforeseen events or experiences, and then further decisions. A reader must be told by the narrative *how* these things are related over time using appropriate sequencing words. A short example:

Scene / Episode 1: [**Decision**]	I decided to get a cup of coffee at the coffee shop across the street from my apartment.
Scene / Episode 2: [**Experience**]	*When I stepped off the curb* to cross the street, a bicycle messenger ran over my foot; I felt a screaming pain from my little toe.
Scene / Episode 3: [**Revelation**]	*After a few minutes*, I realized the pain in my foot wasn't going away and I would have to go to the hospital.
Scene / Episode 4: [**Action**]	*It took me nearly a half an hour* to limp back up to my apartment to get my cell phone, call my brother and ask him to drive me to the Emergency Room.

Each “scene” in the mini-narrative above leads with a turning point: the decision to get coffee leads to the narrator’s toe being run over by a bicycle, which leads him to an injury and a trip to the hospital. The red text above situates each new scene in relation to the last one, using sequencing words like “after,” “when,” and words that indicate the passage of time, like “it took me nearly a half an hour.”

In the space below, construct a rough timeline for your narrative essay, based on the turning points that you see as defining each new “scene” in the story.

Scene	Turning Point	How does it relate to the previous scene in time? What words can you use to indicate this relation?
Scene 1		
Scene 2		
Scene 3		
Scene 4		
Scene 5		
Scene 6		

Organizing Expository Essays

Most expository writing is not primarily narrative-based (though narratives are often used as evidence / examples in this mode), so a timeline / chronology as an organizing principle would not be appropriate. As expository writing seeks to inform or explain—and often draw conclusions—having a good idea of what you plan to explore is paramount. A clear thesis that articulates some specifics of what the essay will be discussing will accomplish this, and enable you to build a coherent essay that supports your overall aim in the work.

Multipart Structure: A Convenient Expository Template

One of the most popular organizational schemes for basic expository essays is Multipart Structure. This is, as one might expect, a method of organization that divides the discussion into several distinct but related parts. You might have heard of or even used this essay structure before; some high schools teach this as the "five paragraph essay" or the "five-part theme."

Nothing, however, requires that an essay have five parts. A multipart structure could be built around one or two ideas (for shorter discussions) to many linked ideas (for longer, more complicated discussions).

The key idea here is to use a good, detailed thesis statement—often with solidly articulated points laid out in the statement itself—to provide structure and a "blueprint" for your essay.

Here's a simple diagram of a multipart essay, here with three body sections.

1. Introduction
2. Body Section I
3. Body Section II
4. Body Section III
5. Conclusion

This organizational approach allows the writer to accomplish three primary tasks in the discussion: introducing the topic and the writing's objective, developing assertions and evidence, and concluding / restating the writing's purpose.

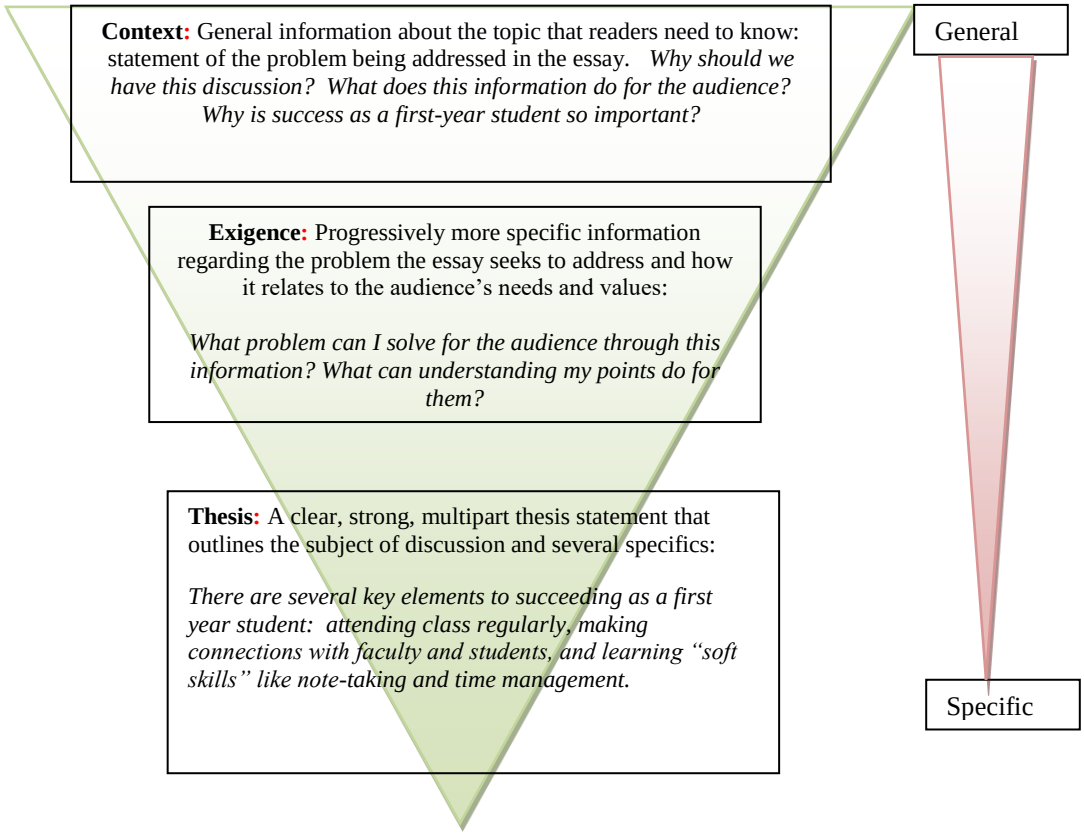
The **Introduction** in an expository essay accomplishes three main things: it introduces the topic and provides essential background for the reader, it outlines the argument's *thesis statement* or controlling idea, and it establishes a sense of the writing's exigence or urgency—a sense of importance , relevance, and timeliness—for the reader. The *thesis statement* in a multipart essay is often a *multipart thesis* (see Chapter 05.3.1, Thesis Statements, for more information on constructing a good thesis). For more information on writing introductions, see Chapter 05.3.3, Introductions and Conclusions.

Body sections are often organized in a similar general-to-specific manner as an introduction paragraph, but with the body paragraph beginning with a topic sentence that relates directly to part of the thesis statement: one of the "three parts" of the three-part thesis.

The essay's **conclusion** is a way to not only sum up or restate what was said in the body of the essay (again as it relates to the essay's thesis statement), but also a way to reinforce the sense of exigence or "so what" for the reader.
For purposes of this discussion, we'll use the following multipart thesis as an example:

There are several key elements to succeeding as a first year student: attending class regularly, making connections with faculty and students, and learning "soft skills" like note-taking and time management.

Introductions usually start with relatively general information about the problem, situation, or debate that the argument essay is addressing, and build toward more narrow and specific information, ending with the essay's thesis. So the basic organization of an argumentative introduction looks something like this:



The three **body sections** in a multipart essay each address and develop an element of the essay's overall topic, as it is introduced in the introduction's thesis statement. As this multipart thesis has three parts, each part of the thesis must be addressed in its own section of the essay's body.

We refer here to body sections rather than body “paragraphs” to allow for the possibility that an idea or part of an essay’s thesis might require more than a single paragraph to develop adequately. Body sections contain clarifications of the ideas and the evidence of the essay, and are often dependent on clear explanations, examples, and other specific details that support the essay’s thesis.

Organizing Compare-Contrast Essays

Most compare-contrast essays are structured according to one of two organizing schemes: either the **block method** of organization, where each subject is examined holistically in its own section of the paper, or the **point-to-point method**, where specific concepts or elements of the subjects are discussed alongside one another. The block method is easiest when the things under examination are relatively similar; the point-to-point method is often more effective when there are distinct differences in the subjects that are to be examined in some depth.

These two methods, just as the timeline did for the narrative, work with the planning tools that we discuss in this chapter, idea mapping and Outlining. A block or point-to-point organizational scheme for your essay should easily translate into an idea map or a well-developed outline, from which you can begin drafting your paper.

The Block Method

The block method of organization is called "block " because it discusses each of its individual subjects—the things it sets out to compare—individually, in a "block" of text. This does not mean, however, that each section of the text simply lists all the features or traits of the subject; the writer that uses the block method should carefully select the most relevant or comparable elements of each to discuss in each respective "block" of the paper.

A discussion of two different competing pieces of health-care legislation, for example, would by necessity focus on specific elements of each bill. One might choose to discuss the possible benefits or expansions in healthcare coverage that each bill would provide, the financial costs of passing each respective bill, and finally, the possibility that each piece of legislation would actually be adopted. Each "block " of text in the essay, then, would be devoted to discussing these three elements in each individual piece of legislation: benefits, costs, and probability of passage.

Likewise, if the paper's task was to examine the operational structure of two (or more) professional sports teams, one might choose to focus on how each team approaches executive decision-making, player selection and development, and marketing. Each "block " in this essay, then, would examine the operation of each of these elements in a specific team.

Most block compare-contrast essays use their discussion of their first subject as a baseline from which to discuss their second (and subsequent), using language in their second and subsequent "blocks" that recalls the first subject and signals comparison.

Often, in these essays, authors use language such as "In a striking contrast to [subject X], [subject Y] uses . . ." or "Bearing significant similarity to [subject X], [subject Y] features . . . ." to force their readers to remember that the purpose of the writing is to *compare* elements of each subject.

A typical “block ” compare-contrast paper might be organized in a manner similar to the following:

Topic: Compare-Contrast Two Subjects

Introduction

- Background on Subject 1 and Subject 2
- Explain the benefit or necessity of comparing Subject 1 and Subject 2

Block I: Discussion of Subject 1 (multiple paragraphs may be needed)

- Element 1 of Subject 1
  - Description & Explanation
- Element 2 of Subject 1
  - Description & Explanation
- Element 3 of Subject 1
  - Description & Explanation

Block II: Discussion of Subject 2 (multiple paragraphs may be needed)

- Element 1 of Subject 2 (Refers to Element 1 of Subject 1)
  - Description & Explanation
- Element 2 of Subject 2 (Refers to Element 2 of Subject 1)
  - Description & Explanation
- Element 3 of Subject 2 (Refers to Element 3 of Subject 1)
  - Description & Explanation

Analysis & Conclusion

- Summarizes overall similarities and differences between Subject 1 and Subject 2
- Offers assessment (if required by assignment) of merits or benefits of either subject over the other.
- Reminds audience of benefits of comparing Subject 1 and 2.

The Point-to-Point Method

This organizational scheme is a bit more sophisticated than the block method, and is *far more effective for showing differences between two subjects*. Whereas in the block method, each subject was discussed in its own section of the paper, with specific elements of comparison within each subject's "block," the point-to-point method addresses each specific element itself in its own section of the paper. This element-by-element structure allows the writer to make far more specific comparisons between the subjects being discussed, which is usually helpful in highlighting differences between them.

The basic point-to-point organizational scheme looks like this:

Topic: Compare and Contrast Subjects 1 and 2

Introduction
- Establishes importance of comparing Subjects 1 and 2
- Introduces key elements (A, B, C, etc.) of Subjects 1 and 2 that will be discussed.

Element A Discussion (Multiple Paragraphs)
- Statement of overall similarities and differences with respect to Element A in Subjects 1 and 2
- Discussion and description of Element A in Subject 1
- Discussion and description of Element A in Subject 2

Element B Discussion (Multiple Paragraphs)
- Statement of overall similarities and differences with respect to Element B in Subjects 1 and 2
- Discussion and description of Element B in Subject 1
- Discussion and description of Element B in Subject 2

Element C Discussion (Multiple Paragraphs)
- Statement of overall similarities and differences with respect to Element C in Subjects 1 and 2
- Discussion and description of Element C in Subject 1
- Discussion and description of Element C in Subject 2

Conclusion
- Reminds the audience of the importance of understanding the similarities and differences between Subjects 1 and 2

Organizing Argument Essays

Perhaps more than any other form of writing, argumentation depends on organization for its effectiveness. If an argument is disorganized, the audience will fail to grasp the logic of the piece and the writing will be unsuccessful—the audience will be unconvinced. Your essay *must* have an introduction that lays out background and establishes the *exigence* (or importance) of the subject. That introduction must also contain a clear and coherent thesis statement (see Chapter 05.3.1) that makes a strong and direct claim about your subject, along with providing warrants (reasons) for that claim. Subsequent paragraphs—several body paragraphs—in your argument *must* address, develop, and expand the claim made in your thesis statement. The essay should also conclude with a paragraph that reminds the audience of the importance of the subject to their lives, their values, and their interests.

Multipart Structure: A Convenient Argument Template

One of the most popular organizational schemes for basic arguments is multipart structure. This is, as one might expect, a method of organization that divides the argument into distinct parts. You might have heard of or even used this argument structure before; some high schools teach multipart structure as the "five paragraph essay" or the "five-part theme." Nothing *requires* that a multipart-structured essay have five parts; some multipart essays have three parts (for simple arguments) or many parts (for longer, more complicated arguments).

A simple example of multipart structure (assuming a 3 part multipart thesis) is below:

1. Introduction
2. Body Section I
3. Body Section II
4. Body Section III
5. Conclusion

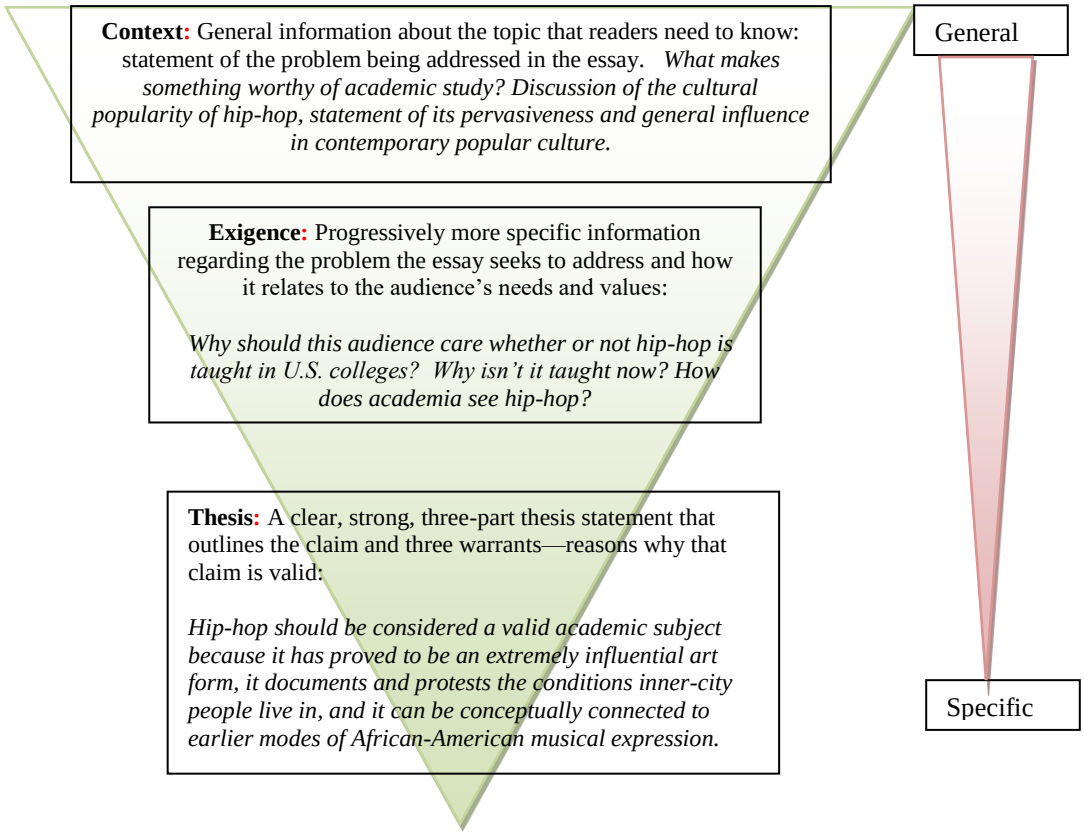
This organizational approach allows the writer to accomplish three primary tasks in the argument: introducing the topic and the writing's objective, developing claims and evidence, and concluding / restating the writing's purpose.

The **Introduction** in an argument essay accomplishes three main things: it introduces the topic and provides essential background for the reader, it outlines the argument's *thesis statement* or controlling idea, and it establishes a sense of the writing's exigence or urgency—a sense of importance , relevance, and timeliness—for the reader. The *thesis statement* in a Five-Part essay is often a multipart thesis (see Chapter 05.3.1, Thesis Statements, for more information on constructing a good thesis). For more information on writing introductions, see Chapter 05.3.3, Introductions and Conclusions.

For purposes of this discussion, we'll use the following three-part multipart thesis as an example:

Hip-hop should be considered a valid academic subject because it has proved to be an extremely influential art form, it documents and protests the conditions inner-city people live in, and it can be conceptually or aesthetically connected to earlier modes of African-American musical expression.

Introductions usually start with relatively general information about the problem, situation, or debate that the argument essay is addressing, and build toward more narrow and specific information, ending with the essay's thesis. So the basic organization of an argumentative introduction looks something like this:



The three **body sections** in a five-part essay each address and develop an element of the essay's overall claim, as it is introduced in the introduction's thesis statement. As this multipart thesis has three parts, each element of the thesis must be addressed in its own section of the essay's body. We refer here to body sections rather than body "paragraphs" to allow for the possibility that an idea or part of an essay's thesis might require more than a single paragraph to develop adequately. Body sections contain the warrants and evidence of the essay, and are often dependent on clear explanations, examples, and other specific details that support the essay's thesis.

Body sections are often organized in a similar general-to-specific manner as an introduction paragraph, but with the body paragraph beginning with a topic sentence that relates directly to part of the thesis statement: one of the “three parts” of the three-part thesis.

The essay’s **conclusion** is a way to not only sum up or restate what was said in the body of the essay (again as it relates to the essay’s thesis statement), but also a way to reinforce the sense of exigence or “so what” for the reader.

Organizing the Writing Process Analysis Essay

Use the following worksheets to organize your Writing Process Analysis Essay.

The Block Method

Section I: Introduction

In this section, discuss overall your experience in English 101. Provide a brief overview of each assignment that you were given to complete.

Section II: Narrative Essay*

*Discuss in this section how you applied the Writing Process to the Narrative Essay. Include a discussion of each of the steps of the Writing Process. If you skipped a step, explain why you did so. *This section may be longer than a single paragraph.*

Section III: Compare-Contrast Essay*

*Discuss in this section how you applied the Writing Process to the Compare-Contrast Essay. Include a discussion of each of the steps of the Writing Process. If you skipped a step, explain why you did so. *This section may be longer than a single paragraph.*

Section IV: Argument Essay*

*Discuss in this section how you applied the Writing Process to the Argument Essay. Include a discussion of each of the steps of the Writing Process. If you skipped a step, explain why you did so. *This section may be longer than a single paragraph.*

Section V: Conclusion

The conclusion of the essay should sum up your overall impressions of English 101, and what you learned over the course of the semester.

The Point-to-Point Method

Section I: Introduction

In this section, discuss overall your experience in English 101. Provide a brief overview of each assignment that you were given to complete.

Section II: Generating Ideas

*Discuss in this section how you applied the concept of Generating Ideas in each of your three writing assignments. *This section may be longer than a single paragraph.*

Section III: Planning and Organizing

*Discuss in this section which methods of Planning and Organizing you applied in each of your three writing assignments. *This section may be longer than a single paragraph.*

Section IV: Drafting

*Discuss in this section how you applied the methods of drafting your ideas into sentences and paragraphs for each of your three writing assignments. *This section may be longer than a single paragraph.*

Section V: Editing and Revision

*This section must discuss how you edited and revised each of your three writing assignments. *This section may be longer than a single paragraph.*

Section VI: Proofreading

This section must discuss how you proofread each of your three writing assignments.

Section VII: Conclusion

The conclusion of the essay should sum up your overall impressions of English 101, and what you learned over the course of the semester.