

# Writing a Standard Essay

## I. Introduction

- A. Use a creative, interesting opening to catch the reader's attention. You can use interesting facts, figures, quotes, anecdotes, etc. (Keep it related to your thesis).
- B. Provide brief background information of your paper's topic (just enough for the reader to have a context for your thesis / this also explains why your opening is relevant).
- C. Provide a preview of the main points in your essay (briefly touch on the subject areas that you plan on incorporating).
- D. Establish your thesis. This affirms and concisely articulates the paper's main idea/argument and topics that you will be writing about.

## II. Body Paragraphs

- A. Provide a topic sentence for each paragraph. This states the main idea of the paragraph and transitions from the paragraph before it. Topic sentences always connect back/expands on/argues for your thesis.
  - Tip: If you cannot find some connection to your thesis within your topic sentence/paragraph, it's probably arbitrary information and better left out.
- B. Use supporting details to defend or strengthen the topic sentence. Supporting details include primary or secondary sources, facts, examples, and expert opinions. Ensure that every source is introduced and properly cited with in-text citation and referenced on your reference page.
- C. Add personal commentary on the sources. Elaborate on why you included your sources and what relevance they have on your thesis.
- D. Paragraphs must be at least 5 solid sentences. Avoid paragraphs longer than half a page.
- E. Standard essays have at least 3 body paragraphs, but strong essays have more.

## III. Conclusion

- A. Restate your thesis, but reword slightly to avoid unnecessary repetition.
- B. Briefly summarize your main points proving that your thesis has been proved. This ties everything together.
- C. End strong. Articulate why this paper matters and relate it to the larger audience.
  - Tip: This answers the "So what?" question. Why does your paper matter? What relevance does it have to the larger audience?