# Moving From Paragraph to Essay

Tips on Crafting the Basic College Essay

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## PARAGRAPH VS. ESSAY

A paragraph is considered a "mini" essay.

## Structurally, paragraphs and essays are similar.

#### PARAGRAPH

Topic Sentence

A. Support == B. Support == C. Support ==

**Concluding Sentence** 

Note: The body is the longest part of the essay and can contain as many paragraphs as necessary to support the controlling ideas of your thesis statement.

#### ESSAY

#### I. INTRODUCTION

General Statements Thesis Statement

#### II. BODY

A. Topic Sentence 1. Support 2. Support 3. Support (Concluding Sentence)

B. Topic Sentence

1. Support 2. Support

3. Support

(Concluding Sentence)

**C.** Topic Sentence

1. Support

2. Support 3. Support

(Concluding Sentence)

#### **III. CONCLUSION**

Restatement or summary of the main points; final comment An essay may contain the same points as a paragraph. However, those points are obviously developed in much greater depth.

## PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

#### **TOPIC SENTENCE: TOPIC PLUS THE CONTROLLING IDEA**

The topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph. A well-crafted topic sentence states or implies the direction of further elaboration of paragraph.

#### Sample topic sentence: Too much emphasis is placed on grades in society.

**Topic**: Grades

Controlling idea: Too much emphasis

**Implied Content**: Paragraph will cite two or three examples of how society places too much emphasis upon grades. Below, those examples are highlighted in yellow:

#### **For Example:**

**Too much emphasis is placed on grades in society.** First, grades are an artificial reflection of one's intelligence. [ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTES, ANECDOTES]. Second, grades reward external conformity and not necessarily internal growth. [ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTES, ANECDOTES]. Finally, grades do not measure other important aspects of learning. [ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTE

# ESSAY STRUCTURE

### THESIS STATEMENT THE TOPIC PLUS THE CONTROLLING IDEA

The thesis statement is typically the last sentence in the introductory paragraph of a basic essay, and usually follows a brief but effective introductory discussion of the topic in general. Sometimes, the thesis statement can suggest ("forecast") the direction of subsequent ideas in the essay.

Sample thesis sentence: Too much emphasis is placed on grades in society.

Topic: GradesControlling idea: Too much emphasisImplied direction: Essay will probably give examples of how society places too much emphasis upon grades.

In the example on the next screen, those examples are highlighted in yellow.

# SAMPLE ESSAY

The classroom was silent as the instructor began passing out the final exam. One by one the students received their packets and glanced at the test. A few of them sighed. Others hunched over their papers and began writing. One or two slouched down in their seats and groaned. It was the end of the first semester, and final exams had begun. At the end of the day, the instructor will read the exams, place a letter on the top of the page, and then prepare her semester grades. Most of her students will pass her class. Some, in fact, will do very well. A few will fail. But the one question that has yet to be answered, the question that wasn't included on this particular test, is: how important are grades to students learning? The way I see it, *too much emphasis is placed on grades in our society for several reasons.* 

[ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTES, ANECDOTES]. Second, grades reward external conformity and not necessarily interna growth. [ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTES, ANECDOTES].

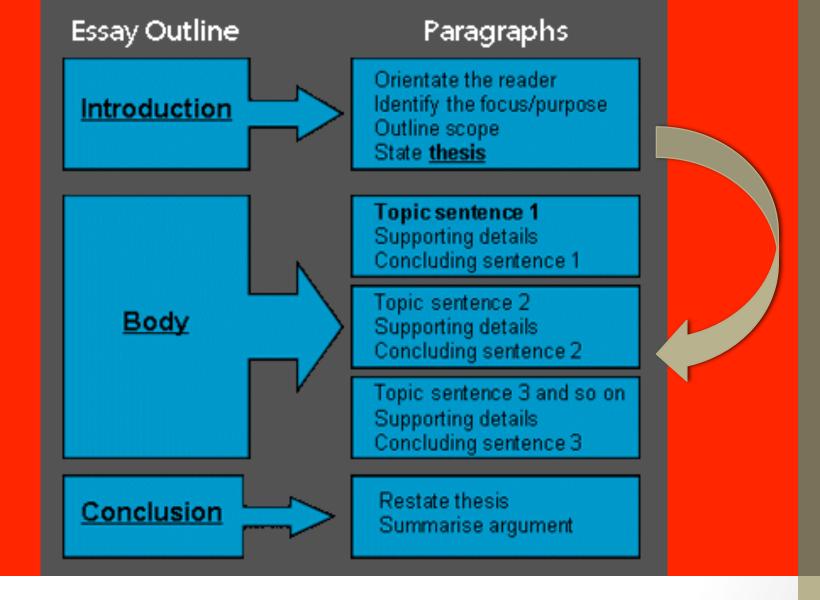
Finally, grades do not measure other important aspects of learning. [ELABORATE USING FACTS, SPECIFIC DETAILS, QUOTES, ANECDOTES]. To sum up [conclude paragraph by reiterating your thesis and tying together the above points].

Clearly-stated thesis
Transition and topic sentence
Transition and topic sentence

Transition and topic sentence

Conclusion

Engaging introduction



### **BASIC ESSAY AT A GLANCE**

THE "BODY" OF THE ESSAY REPRESENTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THESIS STATEMENT AND CAN BE ANYWHERE FROM ONE TO 100 PARAGRAPHS!

### A WORD ABOUT CRAFTING INTRODUCTIONS

**INTRODUCTION:** An introduction is the first paragraph (or paragraphs) of any written work.

### What is the function of an introduction?

- Captures your audience's attention.
- Gives background on your topic.
- Develops interest in your topic.
- Informs your reader about the focus of your paper
- (i.e., states your thesis)

### A WORD ABOUT THESIS STATEMENTS

A thesis statement in an essay is a sentence that explicitly identifies the purpose of the paper or previews its main ideas.

Because the thesis reflects the type of paper a student is writing, there is no one "right" way to craft a thesis.

However, there are guidelines.

The next slides give examples of six different kinds of thesis statements.

### THESIS STATEMENT: A COMPLETE SENTENCE!

A thesis statement is an **actual sentence**, not a title.

**COMPARE**:

Title: Social Security and Old Age

**Thesis Statement:** Continuing changes in the Social Security System makes it almost impossible to plan intelligently for one's retirement.

### THESIS STATEMENT: AN ASSERTION

A thesis statement is an **assertion**, not a statement of fact or an observation.

**COMPARE**:

Fact or observation: People use many lawn chemicals.

**Assertion:** People are poisoning the environment with chemicals merely to keep their lawns clean.

### THESIS STATEMENT: TAKES A STAND

A thesis statement **takes a stand** rather than announcing a subject.

**COMPARE**:

**Announcement:** The thesis of this paper is the difficulty of solving our environmental problems.

**Takes a Stand:** Solving our environmental problems is more difficult than many environmentalists believe.

### THESIS STATEMENT: FOCUSED!

A thesis statement has a **narrow focus**, not a broad focus.

**COMPARE**:

**Broad:** The American steel industry has many problems.

**Focused:** The primary problems of the American steel industry have to do with lack of funds to renovate outdated plants and foreign imports taking steel jobs away from qualified American workers.

### THESIS STATEMENT: SPECIFIC!

A thesis statement is **specific** rather than vague or general.

**COMPARE**:

**Vague:** Hemingway's war stories are very good.

**Specific:** Hemingway's stories helped create a new prose style by employing extensive dialogue, shorter sentences, and strong, Anglo-Saxon words.

### THESIS STATEMENT: ONE MAIN POINT!

A thesis statement addresses **a single, over-arching idea** and then seeks to develop that idea in the essay.

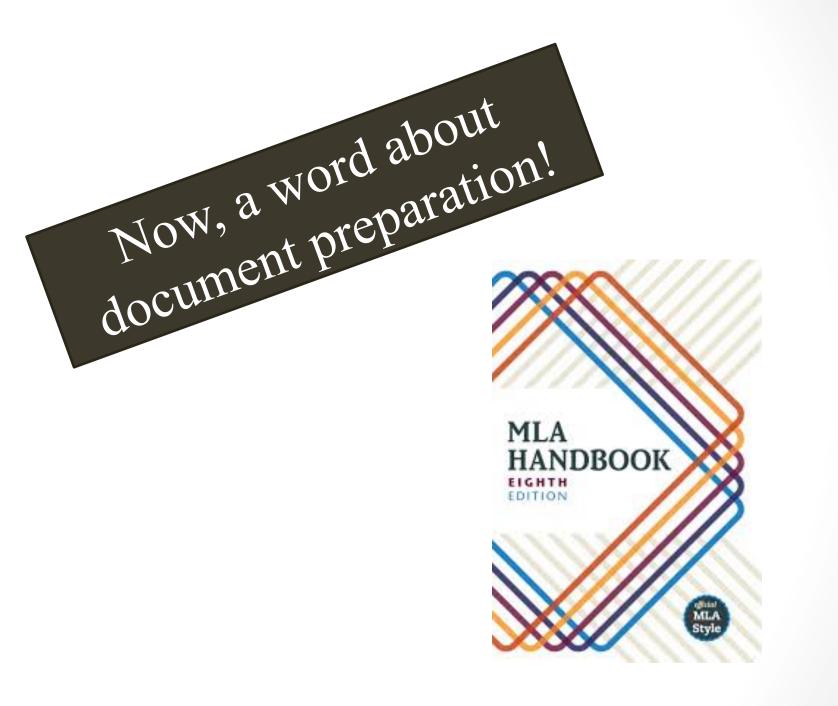
**COMPARE**:

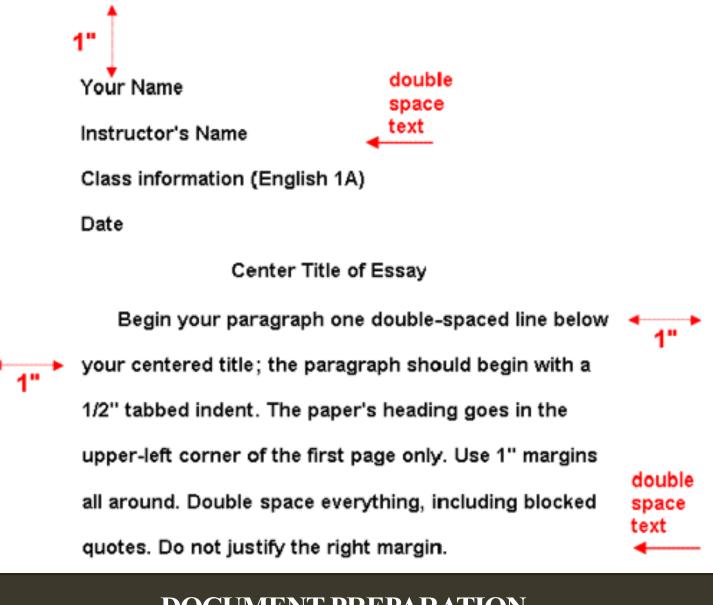
More than one point: Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world-renowned physicist, and his book is the subject of a movie.

**One main point:** Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world-renowned physicist.

### TO SUM UP: THESIS STATEMENTS

- A thesis statement explicitly identifies the purpose of the paper or previews its main ideas.
  - A thesis statement is the main idea, not the title.
  - A thesis statement is an assertion, not a statement of fact.
- A thesis statement takes a stand rather than announcing a subject.
- A thesis statement is narrow rather than broad.
  - A thesis statement is specific rather than vague or general.
- A thesis statement addresses one main point rather than several main points.





### **DOCUMENT PREPARATION**

Prepare your final draft using MLA requirements for document preparation.

### Heading

**Double-Space** 

Left-Justify

Beth Catlin

Professor Elaine Bassett

English 106

3 August 2009

Andrew Carnegie: The Father of Middle-Class America For decades Americans couldn't help but love the red-headed, fun-loving Little Or, Annie. The image of the little girl moving so quickly from poverty to wealth provided hope for the poor in the 1930s, and her story continues to be a dream of what the future just might hold. The rags-to-riches phenomenon is the heart of the American Dream. And few other people have embodied this phenomenon as much as Andrew Carnegie did in the late 1800s and early 1900s. His example and industry caused him to become the father of middle-class America.

Andrew Carnegie can be looked to as an ideal example of a poor immigrant making his way up to become leader of the capitalist world. Carnegie was born into a poor working-class family in Scotland. According to the PBS documentary "The Richest Man in the World: Andrew Carnegie," the Industrial Revolution was difficult on Carnegie's father, causing him to lose his weaving business. The Carnegie family was much opposed to the idea of a privileged class, who gained their wealth simply by inheritance ("Richest"). This type of upbringing played a large factor in Andrew Carnegie's destiny. In order to appease his mother's desire for material benefits, and perhaps in an effort to heal his father's wounds, Carnegie rejected poverty and cleaved to prosperity.

Carnegie's character was ideal for gaining wealth. His mother taught him to "look after the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves;" he later turned this proverb into "watch the costs, and the profits take care of themselves" ("Richest"). Such thrift was integral to his future success. He also believed that "all is well since all goes better" ("Richest"). His theory Title

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#### one-inch margins

Header

#### No Extra Spaces

### **DOCUMENT PREPARATION**

Here's another example that includes pagination in upper right hand header. Learn how to use your word processor tools to format your documents correctly.



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