

American Organizational Structure

Parts of an academic paper

- Introduction
- Body paragraphs
- Conclusion

Introduction

- Provides background and introduction to the topic being discussed in the paper.
- Usually provides a thesis at the end of the paragraph

Example:

At some point, everyone will be bothered by a telemarketing call. They can be annoying, pointless, and just plain rude at times. But at what point do they violate a law? Mark Leyse, in the case *Leyse v. Clear Channel Broadcasting, Inc.*, sought to prove that that was the case in his situation (Hart, 2013, p.2).

Thesis

- Lets the reader know the main idea of the paper without saying “My paper is about...”

Example:

Throughout the whole of human existence, storytelling has been a crucial component of societies. As new forms of media arise, so do new forms of storytelling; these include the newspaper, the radio, television, and, with the advent of the Internet, YouTube. **In his book *Watching YouTube*, Dr. Strangelove investigates the legal and social implications of this fascinating, addicting trend in media** (Hart, 2011, p. 1).

Sample Introduction Prep: Cats

- Since the beginning of time, cats have been companions of humans. In Ancient Egypt, they were worshipped as gods, with the goddess Bast representing their patron diety (insert citation here). Today, cats continue to be companions to humans. Their small, four-legged body, aloof manner, and often child-like antics make them intriguing subjects and the favorite animal of many people.

Now you try!

- Pick a simple topic (Like dogs, trees, your favorite season, etc.) and write a three-sentence introductory paragraph about it with a thesis at the end.

Ways to organize: Essay level

- Must have a clear focus
- Can you point to your main point in your thesis?

Ways to organize: Essay level

- Expanding Code Words
- “Nutshelling” and “Teaching”
- Building an “Issue Tree”

Expanding Code Words

Look for key words that have a great deal of meaning for you, but which may not be clear to your audience.

Defining these terms will help you to consider the order in which you present ideas. Before you discuss a key concept, you must give your reader a definition to work with (Writing Center, 2013, p.1).

Expanding Code Words: Cats

- Intriguing
- Small
- Mammalian
- Child-like
- Playful

Now you try!

- Go back to your sample introduction and pick out key code words you used to describe your topic.

Nutshelling and Teaching

By putting your ideas into just a few sentences or a nutshell, you will be able to sort out the more important points from the less important supporting information. Teaching your ideas aloud to a willing listener will force you to think about how to present them so your audience will be able to follow and understand (Writing Center, 2013, p. 1).

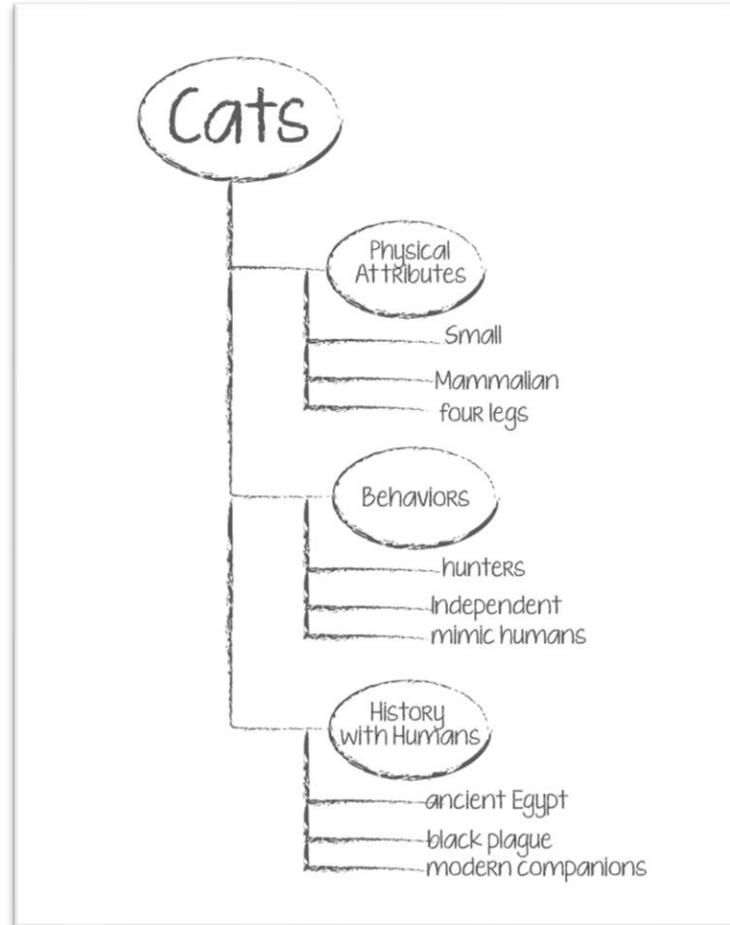
Now you try!

- Try describing your topic briefly (in a nutshell).

Issue Trees

- The issue tree can help you organize before you begin writing by giving you a structure for your argument, or you can create an issue tree for a draft to see whether its organizational pattern is clear. The issue tree is an upside down tree that allows you to arrange your ideas in a hierarchical order. The top level represents your most inclusive idea and each lower level represents a less inclusive idea.
 - Issue trees let you sketch out ideas and relationships.
 - Issue trees let you visualize the whole argument to see how the pieces fit together.
 - Issue trees help you generate new ideas when you see gaps in your argument (Writing Center, 2013, p.1).

Sample Issue Tree: Cats



Now you try!

- Create an issue tree for some ideas you have about your topic.

Body Paragraphs

- Each paragraph is a new idea that supports the thesis.
- Within body paragraphs, research is cited effectively to support the main idea and commentary on quotes/research is given.
- Usually have a topic sentence which states what the paragraph is about – similar to a thesis.

Linear Style

- Linear means staying on topic throughout the paper and naturally flowing from one thought to another.

Transitions

- Sentences, words, and/or phrases that move the reader from one thought to the next
- Include “in addition,” “furthermore,” “thereupon,” “by the same token,” “second,” “finally,” etc.
- Used within paragraphs and to connect one paragraph to the next

Paragraph Level Organization

- The TRI Pattern
 - In this familiar pattern, the author introduces a topic, refines or restricts it, and then illustrates or develops it in the rest of the paragraph. With a long or complicated paragraph, the author may come back to the topic at the end and create a TRIT pattern.
- The Problem-Solution Pattern
 - In this type of paragraph, the writer simply presents a problem and then solves it.
- The Cause and Effect Pattern
 - Here, the writer presents an action and examines its results.
- Chronological Order
 - In this pattern, the steps in a process, or a series of events are presented chronologically (Writing Center, 2013, p.2).

Now you try!

- Try outlining sentences in a paragraph using one of these methods.

Conclusion Paragraph

- Conclusions provide relevancy to the reader's daily lives; they “help them see why all your analysis and information should matter to them after they put the paper down” (The Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill, 2014).

Tips on writing conclusions

- Ask “so what?”
- Return to the themes in your introduction
- Synthesize, don’t summarize
- Include a provocative insight or quote
- Propose a course of action
- Point to broader implications (The Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill, 2014).

Now you try!

- Try writing a short conclusion on your topic.

Voila!

- You have a finished outline of a paper!

References

- Hart, K. (2013). *Clear Channel Telemarketing*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Houston-Clear Lake.
- Hart, K. (2011). *Watching Youtube: A Précis*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Houston-Clear Lake.
- University of Houston-Clear Lake Writing Center. (2013). *Tips on Organization*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Houston-Clear Lake.
- Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill. (2014). *Conclusions*. Retrieved from <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/conclusions/>