

**Basic Components of a Composition**  
**Field 96**  
**Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois**

The Basic Components of a Composition include

- an introduction
- several body paragraphs
- a conclusion

The Introduction contains

- a **thesis statement** that is usually written at the end of the introduction and states the paper's subject and how that subject will be developed
- several other sentences that employ one of these techniques
  - tell an anecdote
  - present interesting facts
  - explain a history
  - offer a definition
  - utilize a quote
  - explain a significance
  - pose a question

The Introduction's purpose is to

- capture the audience's attention
- give necessary background regarding the paper's subject
- develop interest in the paper's subject
- state the paper's subject and the writer's plan of development

The Body Paragraphs should

- contain a collection of related sentences dealing with one topic. This single focus is called **unity**.
- contain verbal and logical "bridges" that make the paragraphs easily understood by the audience. This logical flow is called **coherence**. **Coherence** may be achieved by
  - spatially, chronologically, or logically arranging the sentences within the paragraph.
  - using transitional words or phrases
  - parallelism (use of similar grammatical structures).
  - repetition of key words and phrases.
- contain a topic sentence that is located at the beginning of each body paragraph and reflects its content.

- contain an adequate discussion of the paragraph's topic. This development may be achieved in a number of different ways
  - narration (to tell a story)
  - description (to describe)
  - exemplification (to offer examples)
  - process analysis (to explain how something is done or how something is made)
  - comparison/contrast (to highlight similarities or differences)
  - division/classification (to divide a larger group into smaller parts)
  - definition (to define objects, concepts, ideas, terms, political movements, etc.)
  - causal analysis (to explain why something happened or to report on the results of an event)

**\*REMEMBER** – A new paragraph is created when the writer begins a new idea, changes location or time, wishes to contrast information or ideas, ends an introduction, or begins a conclusion. On certain occasions a new paragraph is created simply to give the reader a pause.

#### **The Conclusion should**

- restate the thesis
- contain additional sentences that emphasize the main ideas of the paper and
  - draw conclusions
  - evaluate what has been done or determine the significance of what has been said
  - echo the introduction
  - offer a solution
  - offer encouragement

#### **\*REMEMBER-**

- Do not depend on the conclusion to sum up the body paragraphs.
- Do not simply regurgitate your introduction.
- Do not end with a quote, introduce a new subject, or apologize of any belatedly discovered shortcomings.

**For More Help** see...

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