



Organization Strategies

Almost all academic papers begin with an **introduction** and end with a **conclusion**. But what goes in between? The **body** of your essay is where you will explain, develop, and argue for the idea you put forth in your **thesis statement**.

There are several models for essay organization. The two described below are tried-and-true classics.

The Classical Argument

1. **Introduction.** See handout on Introductions and Conclusions.
2. **Statement of fact.** Give the history of your topic and any other foundational material your reader will need to know to understand your arguments.
3. **Confirmation.** Present your arguments for your thesis, point by point. It's called confirmation because you "confirm," or prove, your thesis.
4. **Refutation.** Present ideas that conflict with your thesis and then show how those ideas are wrong. It's called refutation because you "refute," or prove wrong, ideas that oppose your thesis.
5. **Conclusion.** See handout on Introductions and Conclusions.

Two important points:

- One section of this model does not necessarily equal one paragraph in your essay! The confirmation section will probably require several paragraphs, for example.
- You do not have to present all your confirming arguments together and all your refutations together. A good strategy is to pair them up, so that you present one confirming argument, then present an opposing argument, then refute the opposing argument. And so on.

The Toulmin Model

1. **Introduction**, including **Claim**. See handout on Introductions and Conclusions. In the Toulmin model, "Claim" = thesis statement.
2. **Data.** Present facts and evidence that back up your claim.
3. **Warrant.** This is the most important part of the Toulmin argument, where you explain *how* the data supports the claim. How are the two sections connected?
4. **Backing.** Provide any other logic your reader needs to see the connection between your claim and your data.
5. **Counterclaim.** Present ideas that conflict with your claim.
6. **Rebuttal.** Explain how those counterclaims are wrong.
7. **Conclusion.** See handout on Introduction and Conclusion.

You will need to move smoothly from section to section in your paper no matter which organizational model you choose. For more information, see handouts on **transitions** and **topic sentences**.