

Preparing your draft essay

Brainstorm

Before you begin with an outline you may like to brainstorm your ideas. Go ahead and list them here and then when you've exhausted all your ideas, gone back into your readings and research to identify all your main points, see if you can then group similar ideas together. These can then form the basis of your paragraphs below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

Thesis statement

Write your thesis statement in the space below. It should be concise and convey the main point of your paper. A simple formula for you to consider using if you are a new writer might be along the lines of this:

Although at first glance....a closer observation will show that.....

Simply complete this sentence and then develop your essay by building upon it below.

The Outline

Completing an outline is a great way of organizing your information. .

Introduction – incorporate your thesis statement into your introduction. You don't want to lead off immediately with your thesis however in the first sentence. Build up to it. Get your reader's attention by starting off with the unexpected. For example:

Small, cheap, and commonly available in most households, the lowly battery would not likely be seen by most people as a lifesaver. However, time and again, we read about precious lives being lost for want of batteries in residential smoke alarms. What can we in the fire service do about it, particularly at a time when money is so tight? **Although at first glance** it might appear we can hardly afford to invest our diminished time and resources in conducting home fire safety surveys, **a closer observation** of the research shows that these can have a powerful impact on reducing risk in our communities at a very affordable cost.

2) Transition sentence – keep your essay flowing by using linking words like “also,” “however” or “additionally.” An even stronger transition will incorporate the word “While...” which can help reemphasize the preceding paragraph and can then introduce the next major point in a seamless manner. You can organize your paragraphs any way you like but here is one example. Introduce points that relate to the main idea of this paragraph, include a quote from your research and any facts or data that support your position.

- a) Point 1
- b) Point 2
- c) Quote
- d) Example or supporting fact

3) Next transition sentence introducing this paragraph's main point:

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

4)

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

5)

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

6) Conclusion – wrap up all your ideas in a concise way that reminds your reader of your main points. Don't rehash everything. Just keep it simple and reemphasize the main points. Most importantly introduce a final, significant thought to leave with your reader. It could be a prediction for the future, a recommendation for further lines of research on a topic, or perhaps direct them to additional essential reading.

Lastly, rewrite. Ask yourself if you've added enough examples. Have you checked your spelling and grammar. What about punctuation? Have you included any quotes from outside sources like journal articles or reports and have you credited the author in your paper? Go back and rework your draft multiple times over a period of several days if you have time. How something appears to you with fresh eyes one day may be different from how it appears to you late at night.