

Organize Your Thoughts

- Freewriting
- Diagraming
- Talking with others
- Reviewing notes or data
- Think about your niche..

Come up with a Thesis

- If a thesis is well-written it will be able to direct the rest of the paper. Revise your thesis until it is able to do this.
- Example: *Because of the advent of the Internet and other electronic sources, the research process utilized by today's graduate students for papers differs greatly from that of students in the 1960s.*

Outline your argument

- An outline is your paper's "best structure". Your goal is to come up with the outline that best supports your thesis.
- Revise your thesis until your outline fits your thesis well.
 - Does my thesis control the direction of my outline?
 - Are all main points relevant to my thesis?
 - Does my argument progress logically?
 - Do I have sufficient support for each of my points?

Constructing Paragraphs

- Each paragraph should have a main idea and this main idea should develop the argument of the thesis of the paper.
- Each paragraph should have sufficient evidence to support its main idea. Yet, it should not have too much evidence that the argument becomes lost!
- No paragraph should take on more than one main idea.

Coherence- some tips

- Grammatical subjects:
 - Make sure that the grammatical subject of your sentences reflects the real subject of your paragraph.
 - Remember: the reader understands an idea's importance according to where you place it. If your main idea is hidden as an object of a preposition in a subordinate clause, do you really think that your reader is going to follow what you are trying to say?
 - Make sure that your grammatical subjects are consistent.
 - Again, look at the grammatical subjects of all your sentences. How many different subjects do you find? If you have too many different sentence subjects, your paragraph will be hard to follow.
- Make sure that your sentences look backward as well as forward.
 - In order for a paragraph to be coherent, each sentence should begin by linking itself firmly to the sentence that came before. If the link between

sentences does not seem firm, use an introductory clause or phrase to connect one idea to the other.

- Follow the principle of moving from old to new.
 - First, you ensure that your reader is on solid ground: she moves from the familiar to the unknown.
 - Second, because we tend to give emphasis to what comes at the end of a sentence, the reader rightfully perceives that the new information is more important than the old.
- Use repetition to create a sense of unity. Repeating key words and phrases at appropriate moments will give your reader a sense of coherence in your work.
 - Don't overdo it, however. You'll risk sounding redundant.
- Use transition markers wisely
 - To announce to your reader some turn in your argument.
 - Or to emphasize one of your points
 - Or to make clear some relationship in time.
 - EXAMPLES: Furthermore, Alternatively, Particularly, With regards to (this), Similarly, However, Nonetheless, Since, First, To conclude,

Introductions and Conclusions

- These paragraphs are meant to synthesize and provide context for the whole argument.
- These DON'T need to be written in order
- INTRODUCTION:
 - Get your reader interested!
 - Place your argument into a larger context
 - Present any background material important to your argument
 - Define any key terms
 - Acknowledge other points of view
- CONCLUSIONS:
 - Summarize argument
 - Return to points brought up in the introduction– e.g., the background information, others' arguments, key terms, etc.
 - Use compelling language
 - Remain precise
 - This paragraph(s) should be able to answer the question “So what?”

The Writing Center
www.writingcenter.nd.edu

Other online resources

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/658/01/>

<http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/Handouts/How%20to%20Structure%20and%20Organize%20Your%20Paper.pdf>

http://www.csun.edu/~bashforth/098_PDF/ME3_Argument/Thesis/05Sep04Bad%26BetterThesisStatements.pdf

<http://create.arizona.edu/content/weak-thesis-statements-recognizing-and-fixing-them>