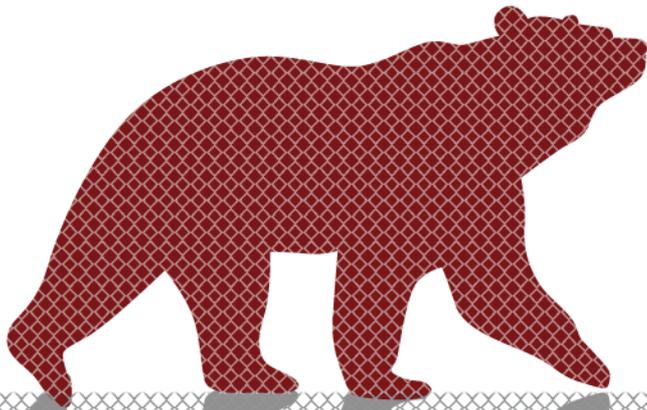


Academic Writing

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Missouri State
UNIVERSITY



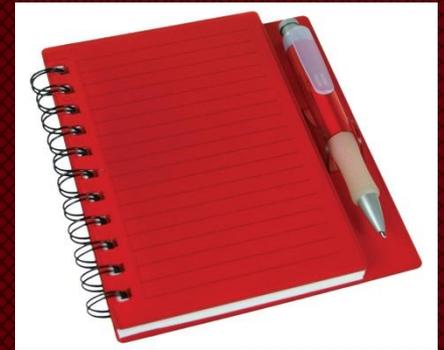
Structure: The Bare Bones

- Introduction
 - Engages the reader
 - Provides context for the paper's main argument
 - Introduces an arguable thesis
- Body
 - Provides supporting evidence for the thesis
 - Addresses opposing arguments
- Conclusion
 - Restates the thesis
 - Summarizes and connects the paper's main points
 - Provides questions for further research



Introduction

- Engaging the reader
 - Make the topic relevant to the reader
 - Explain the overall significance of your topic
 - Pique the reader's interest
 - Offer a surprising statistic
 - Begin with a gripping or unusual statement
 - Tell a brief story or provide a narrative
- Providing context
 - Introduce discourse surrounding the issue
 - Introduce the key terms of the issue





Introduction: Thesis Statement

- Must be a statement—not a question
- Must be contestable (others are able to disagree with it) OR promise new information about a topic
- Must take a clear, strong, and objective position
 - Avoids subjunctives: *might, maybe, probably, etc.*
 - Avoids subjectives: *I think, I feel, I believe, in my opinion, etc.*
- May include a brief summary of the paper's main points
- Should not be too broad or overly specific
- Governs the direction of the paper
 - All points presented in the paper should support the thesis statement
- Usually falls at the end of the introductory paragraph



Thesis Statement?

- I think Brother Jed should be banned from MSU, because I find his political views offensive.
- Given the number of students who continue to smoke in undesignated areas, is the recent campus-wide smoking ban effective?
- Because of the growing number of campus assaults, MSU needs to provide stronger security.
- The University Recreation Center has cost millions to construct—and it is still unfinished.
- It is important for students to eat healthy foods.



Setting the Tone

- Be objective
 - Avoid personal pronouns (depending on the discipline): “I/me/my” statements
 - *In my study, I proved...*
 - Avoid use of the second person: “you” statements
 - *As you can see from the results of the study...*
- Use appropriate vocabulary and language
 - Consider your audience: formal vs. conversational
- Use specific rather than vague terms
 - *Ninety percent vs. a lot*
 - *Items, ideas, elements vs. things or stuff*
- Vary sentence structure



Setting the Tone

- Avoid contractions
 - *Can't, won't, don't, we're, etc.*
- Avoid idiomatic expressions and slang terms
 - *On the ball, piece of cake, beat around the bush, etc.*
- Avoid meta-discourse: drawing attention to the writing process or the paper
 - *While doing research, I found some studies about...*
 - *As mentioned previously in my paper...*

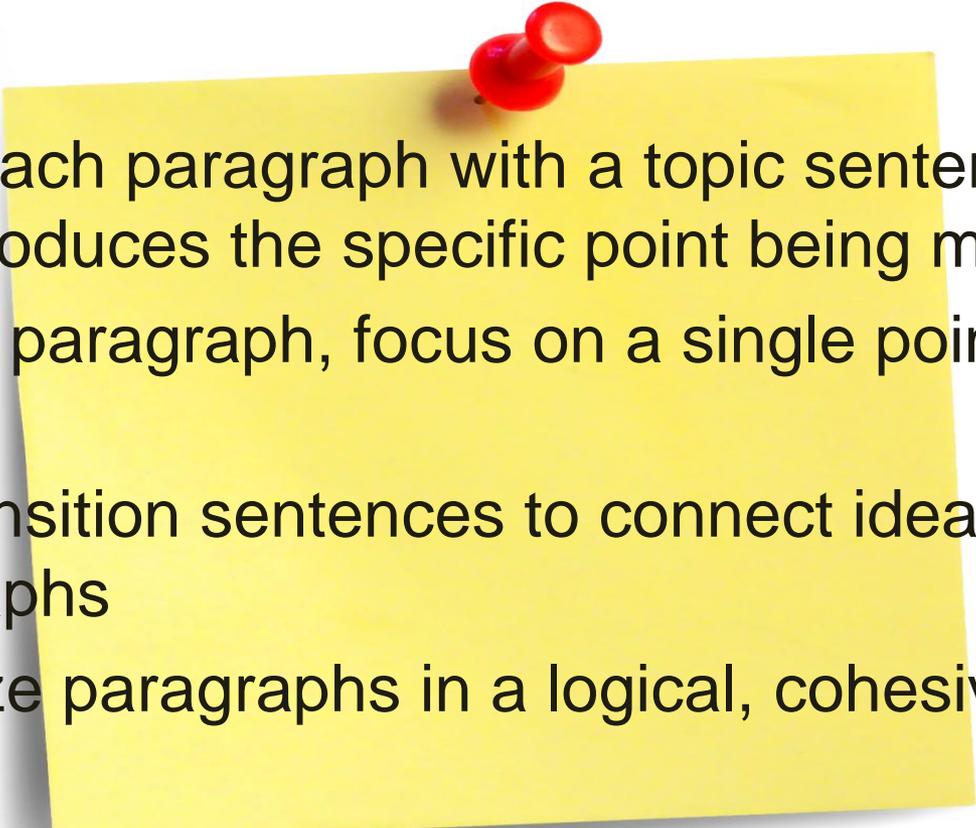


Setting the Tone

- Write in active rather than passive voice
 - Active voice: lets the reader know who is responsible for the action
 - *Heather and Toni baked the cake for thirty minutes.*
 - Passive voice: hides who is responsible for the action
 - *The cake was baked for thirty minutes.*
- To change from passive to active voice, ask yourself who or what did the action, then add this information to the beginning of the sentence
 - Passive: *The cake is being eaten by Heather and Toni.*
 - Active: *Heather and Toni are eating the cake.*



Body

- 
- Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that introduces the specific point being made
 - In each paragraph, focus on a single point or idea
 - Use transition sentences to connect ideas and paragraphs
 - Organize paragraphs in a logical, cohesive order
 - Points should build on one another



Conclusion

- Restating the thesis
 - Remind your reader of the thesis statement
 - If your points have supported the thesis, this should happen naturally
- Summarizing and connecting the paper's main points
 - Offer a brief overview of your main points
 - Explain how these points work together to support your thesis
- Providing questions for further research
 - Note the limitations of your own research
 - Offer direction for future study on the topic
 - This can take the form of a question



The Three Elements of Academic Writing: The Meat

- **Assertions:** arguments within academic writing
 - Thesis statement and supporting points
- **Context:** the conversation that already exists about your topic
 - History of the topic
 - Discourse: what experts have already said
 - Literature about the topic (articles, essays, etc.)
- **Evidence:** facts that support your argument
 - Sources must be credible and academic in nature
 - Peer-reviewed articles
 - Studies conducted by reliable outside parties
 - Unbiased statistics, interviews, reporting, etc.



Academic Writing

- If you follow these guidelines in terms of structure and content, your writing will be academic and your arguments sound. In turn, you will be more successful as a student and a professional.





THANK YOU!

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<http://AbsentProf.MissouriState.edu>

Group-Led Educational Experience (GLEE)

Formerly:

The Supplemental Instruction Program (SI)

<http://SI.MissouriState.edu>

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For questions about...

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