

## **How to Write a 3 Paragraph Essay**

Adapted from Pauline Gill's article ([Pen and the Pad](#))

The three-paragraph essay is an essay that can help students learn format and structure. It is not an essay you will see in professional writing, nor is it an essay that students will usually write once they become proficient writers. It teaches students to visualize the three parts of an essay, to organize their thoughts and apply their knowledge in a written format. Once students understand the structure, they can move on to a five-paragraph essay and eventually to a less stringent form of writing.

Visualize the structure. Think of the essay as three parts. The first part is the introduction, which contains the statement of purpose. The body is the largest section that will elaborate on the statement of purpose. The conclusion is similar in size to the introduction. It reminds the reader of the statement of purpose and leaves the reader with something to think about. If it helps, draw a chart with three sections, and fill in the information that each part represents.

Decide on a topic and a thesis statement. If your topic is dogs, then decide what it is you want to say about dogs. It may be that you want to talk about the benefits of rescuing a dog from a shelter, or perhaps you want to talk about how to choose a dog that is right for you. Once you know your thesis, then you can come up with at least three points to discuss in the body of the paper. For the conclusion, you will reiterate your main points, remind the reader of the statement of purpose, and leave the reader with an idea to think about. You may want to wait on the conclusion until you have written the paper.

Create an outline. Use Roman numerals for clarity: Roman numeral I for the introduction, II for the body and III for the conclusion. Beginning with the introduction, write down what you want for background information. Include your statement of purpose. For the body of the paragraph, list at least three points that you want to discuss. For the conclusion, think of a statement you want to say to finalise the paper.

Begin writing. Following the outline, write the introduction. It will be about five to seven sentences in length and include an introductory statement, some background, and the statement of purpose. The statement of purpose works best as the last statement in the introduction. Then, begin the body of the paper. Discuss each point and use transitional devices (words or phrases that help carry a thought from one sentence to another or from one idea to another) to move from one point to the next. Finally, write the conclusion. The conclusion should remind the reader of the statement of purpose and the main points. End with a statement that takes the reader beyond the content of the essay to the next step or an idea to think about.

Redraft and edit your work. Always read your work aloud to pick up on confusing sentences, ambiguous words and the natural cadence of the writing. Look for spelling errors, mechanical errors and grammatical errors. Create a checklist of items to remind you what to look for such as subject/verb agreement, use of commas and run-on sentences. Ask yourself if the statement of purpose is clear and whether it is clearly discussed in the body of the paper. Finally, ask someone else to read your paper. Most writers will miss something that others will naturally see.

### **Warnings**

Avoid starting your concluding paragraph with "In conclusion", it is not necessary.

### **Tips**

Make sure the point of view is consistent. If you write in first person, stay with first person. Don't shift to second person (you) or third person (he or she).