

WRITING AN ESSAY: PARAGRAPHS

PART 1: Introduction and conclusion

- 1 Look at the following essay question. How would you answer it? Discuss with your partner.

Discuss the importance of writing competence in students' success at university.

- 2 Read the following example **introduction**.

More students are attending university in Australia today than ever before and it is important to investigate the factors that contribute to their success. In evaluating several significant studies in this area, it is clear that key factors relate to student motivation, the perceived relevance of a course of study and less clearly defined social and cultural factors. If success is to be defined as students' completion of their degree course in the minimum time without failed subjects, it is important to analyse the factors that enable them to pass exams and assignments. This then emphasises the need to ensure competence in writing as a key component of success.

Label the different parts of the introduction, using the labels in the box below.

A	The scope of the essay (if necessary)	B	A preview to the main structure of the essay
C	The thesis statement explicitly states the specific focus of the essay	D	Introduces the topic with some background information

- 3 Read the following example **conclusion**.

The main focus for researchers in several significant studies into the factors affecting student success at university has so far been on such areas as student motivation and how relevant a course of study is seen to be. There has also been some research into social and cultural factors which has shown the complexity of the issues, needing more research for clarification. A principal factor that emerges from recent research examining students' ability to pass exams and assignments has been shown to be their writing competence, and it is to this area that more research should be directed.

Label the different parts of the conclusion, using the labels in the box below.

A	Sums up arguments of the essay	B	Suggests recommendations or indicate significance or implications that follow if necessary
C	Confirms main thesis	D	Makes reference to the question

PART 2: Paragraph planning

1 Work with a partner.

Look at the following paragraph topic. How would you order these ideas according to importance?

Example : Good Universities

Topic sentence: *Choosing a university can be difficult for high school graduates.*

Or *Choosing a good university needs careful consideration in relation to quality, affordability and location.*

Supporting ideas:

1. Good location
2. Affordability
3. Good preparation for subject major

2 Look at the following blank plan/outline. Discuss what ideas you could use to support your topic sentence.

Topic sentence: _____

A. Supporting idea 1.

* _____

* _____

B. Supporting idea 2.

* _____

* _____

C. Supporting idea 3.

* _____

Concluding sentence:

- 4 Look at the following example paragraph and compare with your paragraph.

How are the supporting sentences in the paragraph used to support the topic sentence? How are the ideas linked together?

Choosing a university can be difficult for high school graduates. Research indicates that the most difficult part is finding a university that prepares them well for their future career. In order to get a good job, the curriculum that is taught must be thorough and up-to-date. In addition, the professors must be highly qualified and respected in their fields (Anatlus 2015). Another difficulty in choosing a university or college is affordability. Students need to be able to pay not only the tuition fees but also the living expenses. Fortunately, some institutions might be able to offer scholarships if students cannot afford the fees. Of course, a good location is also very important when choosing a school. Stra (2014) points out that the environment should be safe and quiet to facilitate studying. Moreover, there should be possibilities near the school for part time or summer jobs related to their major to provide some practical work experience. High school graduates should consider all of these points carefully so they can choose the most appropriate college or university for them.

ANSWERS PART 1

Example Introduction

More students are attending university in Australia today than ever before and it is important to investigate the factors that contribute to their success. In evaluating several significant studies in this area, it is clear that key factors relate to student motivation, the perceived relevance of a course of study and less clearly defined social and cultural factors. If success is taken to be students' completion of their degree course in the minimum time without failed subjects, it is important to analyse the factors that enable them to pass exams and assignments. This then emphasises the need to ensure competence in writing as a key component of success.

Introduces the topic with some background information.

You may mention the scope of the essay

A preview to the main structure of the essay.

The thesis statement explicitly states the specific focus of the essay.

Example conclusion

The main focus for researchers in several significant studies into the factors affecting student success at university has so far been on such areas as student motivation and how relevant a course of study is seen to be. There has also been some research into social and cultural factors which has shown the complexity of the issues, needing more research for clarification. A principal factor that emerges from recent research examining students' ability to pass exams and assignments has been shown to be their writing competence, and it is to this area that more research should be directed.

Make reference to the question

Sum up arguments of the essay

Confirm main thesis

May suggest recommendations or indicate significance or implications that follow