

# Chapter 4: Parts of the Essay

## Project Assignment

### Project Goal

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In Chapter 4, you studied the six basic structural elements of an academic essay. The goal of this project is to demonstrate your understanding of these structural elements by recognizing and annotating them in a full-length essay.

### Directions

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#### Part 1

Locate the essay using the link in the “Project Materials” section.

In groups of three to five, read the essay several times with these key elements of Chapter 4 in mind:

- Rhetorical essay structures
- Introductions
- Body paragraphs
- Transitions
- Conclusions

Discuss with your group members the structural elements that make each paragraph successful (such as a clear topic sentence, intriguing supporting evidence, or a comprehensive concluding sentence). Remember, no paragraph stands in isolation. As discussed in Chapter 4, authors always seek to make connections between paragraphs using transitional words and phrases. Once you and your group have discussed the structures at work in these paragraphs, it is time to identify the other important structural elements of the essay.

#### Part 2

Copy and paste the essay text, in its entirety, into a blank Word document.

First, in the introduction, use the highlighting tool to highlight the “hook” sentence(s) in **yellow** and the thesis statement in **green**.

In each remaining body paragraph, apply **bold** font to the transitional clauses or sentences. Next, *italicize* the supporting evidence (facts, statistics, research data, quotes) in each body paragraph.

Finally, in the conclusion paragraph, underline each element of the main argument that the author repeats or summarizes in order to leave the audience with a lasting impression of the main ideas.

#### Part 3

Once your group has identified the key structural elements in this essay, present your findings to your classmates. If your classroom has a projection device, consider displaying your Word document for the class. For online classes, utilize screen sharing on a video conference platform, such as Zoom.

After everyone presents, discuss the choices that each group made in identifying key essay elements. Did everyone highlight the same thesis statement? Transitional phrases? “Hook” sentences? Compare and contrast each group’s choices.

**Part 4**

Individually, write a reflection paragraph discussing your experience throughout this project. Your paragraph should include a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence. Use standard academic English rules and respond to the following questions.

- What essay structure elements were the most challenging to identify? Why?
- What essay structure elements were the easiest to identify? Why?
- In your opinion, what is the most important element of essay structure? Why?
- How could you apply what you've learned in this project to your own essay writing?

**Project Materials**

Essay: ([hawkes.biz/CauseAndEffectEssay](http://hawkes.biz/CauseAndEffectEssay))

Microsoft Word or other word-processing program

Projector/presentation method

**Student Checklist****Part 1**

Group

- Read sample essay.
- Discuss structural elements in each paragraph.

**Part 2**

Group

- Copy and paste the text of the sample essay into Microsoft Word.
- Introductory paragraph: highlight the “hook” sentence(s) in **yellow**.
- Introductory paragraph: highlight the thesis statement in **green**.
- Body paragraphs: **bold** each transitional clause or sentence.
- Body paragraphs: *italicize* the supporting evidence.
- Conclusion: underline restatements or summaries of the main argument.

**Part 3**

Group

- Present your group's key structural elements to the class.
- With the class, compare/contrast the key elements that each group identified.

**Part 4**

Individual

- Write a reflection paragraph.
  - Include a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence.
  - Address the provided reflection questions.
  - Use standard academic English rules.
- Revise/proofread work.

 **Writing Assignment**
**Writing Assignment Goal**

In Chapter 4, you studied the six basic structural elements of an academic essay. The goal of this writing assignment is to demonstrate your ability to compose a structural outline, including a clear introduction, effective body paragraphs, and a dynamic conclusion; this assignment should also illustrate your understanding of essay patterns and subject matter.

## Directions

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For this writing assignment, you will create the structural outline of a research essay on a topic of your choice. You will draft each part:

- An introductory paragraph with a clear thesis statement
- A topic sentence and support sentence for each body paragraph
- An effective conclusion paragraph

### Part 1

Choose one of the suggested topics listed under the “Writing Assignment Materials” section or select a different topic with your instructor’s approval. Then, spend time researching and gathering important background information on your topic. Take notes on the sources you find during this initial research.

**\*NOTE: You must have a clear enough understanding of your topic to know which key elements to include in your thesis, and further, how you can support that thesis through topic sentences for each body paragraph.**

### Part 2

Once you have researched your topic thoroughly, draft a clear introductory paragraph. Make sure to include a hook, relevant background information, and a thesis statement that introduces the main points you will discuss in your body paragraphs. Underline your thesis statement and **highlight** your hook sentence(s).

### Part 3

Next, draft a topic sentence for each body paragraph. Each topic sentence should focus on one of the points you briefly introduced in your thesis. Consider this example:

Thesis: Though there is still room for improved representation, mainstream media messages in children’s movies, music, and toys have shifted into a more inclusive narrative over the last decade.

Topic Sentence 1: Today’s children’s movies generally steer away from the “damsel in distress” narrative and instead emphasize positive character traits like courage, confidence, and compassion.

Topic Sentence 2: While not all mainstream music is family-friendly, pop superstars sing messages of empowerment, equality, and self-confidence for all.

Topic Sentence 3: Children’s toys and clothes have long emphasized gender roles and expectations through colors (blue vs. pink) and themes (trucks vs. kitchen sets), but in recent years, gender-neutral designs have become more common.

### Part 4

Once you have a topic sentence for each body paragraph, write one corresponding support sentence. This sentence should elaborate on your topic sentence with specific details. Consider researching relevant statistics, data, or evidence. Be sure to appropriately cite any outside source information.

### Part 5

Last, draft your concluding paragraph. Make sure your conclusion restates the thesis and reviews the key arguments, ideas, and/or concepts you expressed in each topic sentence/body paragraph.

## Writing Assignment Materials

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Microsoft Word or other word-processing program

Suggested topics:

- Climate change
- The opioid epidemic
- Dating apps and safety
- Student loan crisis
- Virtual reality
- Technology and privacy
- GMOs
- Stem cell treatment
- The #MeToo movement
- Popularity of professional sports in the U.S.
- Stress impacts on health
- The #BlackLivesMatter movement

## Student Checklist

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### Part 1

Individual

- Choose a topic from the provided list OR one that your instructor approves.
- Thoroughly research background information about the topic.

### Part 2

Individual

- Draft introductory paragraph:
  - Hook sentence(s)
  - Introductory information about topic
  - Thesis statement
- Highlight** hook sentence(s).
- Underline thesis statement.

### Part 3

Individual

- Write one topic sentence for each supporting body paragraph.
  - Each topic sentence should focus on one of the points you introduced in your thesis.

### Part 4

Individual

- Write one supporting sentence that expands/explains your topic sentence in more detail.
  - Consider incorporating evidence (statistics, research data, facts).

### Part 5

Individual

- Write a concluding paragraph.
  - Restate the thesis and review key ideas you expressed in each topic sentence/body paragraph.