

Essay Structure:

Tips for writing Introductions, Body Paragraphs and Conclusions

- University of Southern Queensland Library Services



There are a variety of academic essay genres including argumentative, comparison and persuasive. However learning how an academic essay is structured is fundamental to:

- Developing a logical argument to answer your question
- Making your assignment clear for your reader
- Making the writing process more manageable

Introduction (10% of total word count)

Context

Thesis statement (your argument or position)

Overview of structure

Scope (if relevant)

1st Body paragraph

Topic Sentence

Explanation/Elaboration

Evidence

Concluding sentence/Link
to next paragraph

Link

2nd Body paragraph

Topic Sentence

Explanation/Elaboration

Evidence

Concluding sentence/Link
to next paragraph

Link

3rd Body paragraph

Topic Sentence

Explanation/Elaboration

Evidence

Concluding sentence/Link
to next paragraph

Conclusion (10% of total word count)

Summary of key points

Link back to thesis

Constructing Introductions

Context

- Provide a brief background or overview of the topic.

Thesis statement

- State your thesis (your position or argument).

Structure Overview

- Preview what you are going to cover in your essay making sure all aspects of the question are mentioned.

Scope

- Define any context or parameters of your discussion, e.g. are you only looking at certain aspects of a larger topic or examining research from one country

Introduction example

“Graduate registered nurses require more than clinical skills to meet the needs of patients”. Critically discuss this statement. Relate it to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) competency standards.

Context

Nursing is both a rewarding and demanding profession. In Australia the profession is governed by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) competency standards which serve as a code of practice to protect both patients and nursing practitioners. Clinical knowledge is vital however this paper will argue that registered Nurses (RNs) are required to demonstrate multiple skills in addition to clinical competency to provide a safe and supportive patient environment Four skills will be critically discussed, these are communication, teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving. Each of these will be justified by relating to the relevant sections of the ANMAC competency standards.

Structure
Overview

Thesis
Statement

Scope

Constructing body paragraphs

Topic sentence

- States the main point of your paragraph and links it with your thesis statement.

Explanation/
Sentences

- Expands your main point. Here you would explain concepts, define terms and give examples.

Evidence

- This information should be paraphrased and referenced from credible sources according to the appropriate referencing style of your course. Refer to the USQ library guide to referencing <https://www.usq.edu.au/library/referencing>

Critical thinking

- Demonstrates understanding your point and relationship of the evidence used – Introduce the Student voice. Ask yourself the “So what?” question in relation to your thinking and the evidence/ source used.

Concluding Sentence

- Concludes your paragraph and links to your next point.

Body Paragraph 1: topic communication

“Graduate registered nurses require more than clinical skills to meet the needs of patients”. Critically discuss this statement. Relate it to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) competency standards.

Topic sentence

It is important for graduate nurses to develop good communication skills to provide safe and supportive patient environments. Boyd and Dare

Further explanation with evidence source 1 (Boyd and Dare)

Transition words

(2014, p. 62) argue that empathetic communication is a vital skill if nurses are to provide quality patient care. **They add**, the ability of the

nurse to communicate is important to ensuring the patient’s overall hospital experience is positive. **This is supported by** ANMAC competency

Further explanation with evidence source 2 (ANMAC)

Critical thinking (student’s voice) & concluding sentence

standard 9.2 which states that nurses are required to communicate

“...effectively with individuals/groups to facilitate provision of care”

(ANMAC, 2010). **As nurses spend more time than doctors with patients, the ability to communicate is an essential graduate attribute.**

Asking the “So What?” question:

Sentence starters for including critical thinking to justify your argument and choice of evidence.

- This could mean therefore...
- Thus, this illustrates...
- This evidence shows that...
- This example illustrates...
- This data is relevant because...
- This is important because...
- This research indicates...

Make your paragraphs flow by creating links between your ideas

Use transitions (linking words and phrases) to connect your ideas between and within paragraphs. The order of your paragraphs should reflect the order of the ideas that you have outlined in your introduction.

"The second skill necessary for graduate nurses is the ability to work in a team"

"In addition to teamwork, graduate nurses need to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills"

Transition Words and Phrases					
For continuing an idea	For providing a contrasting view	For showing Cause and Effect	For showing sequence	For concluding	For restating a point or giving examples
Additionally... In addition... Moreover... Because Consequently... Clearly, then... Furthermore... In the same way... Continuing this idea... Also... Pursuing this further...	In contrast to these... Unlike the previous example... Different from this... Despite these findings... However... Contrary to these findings... In opposition to... Nevertheless...	Following... In response to... Therefore... As a result of... For this reason... The result... Thus... Due to this... Consequently... The reaction...	The first [concept/aspect]... The second [concept/aspect]... The third [concept/aspect]... Firstly, Secondly, Finally After...Afterwards... As soon as... In the first place... In the meantime... Later... Meanwhile... Next...	Therefore... This..... Hence... In final analysis In conclusion... In final consideration... Indeed...	In other words... Specifically... For instance... For example... One such occurrence... This is demonstrated by To illustrate... Also... To demonstrate... This is supported by...

It is also important to consider how you use language to introduce academic sources as evidence into your writing. These words can help you integrate...

paraphrase and quotes into assignments

- Argues
- Articulates
- Asserts
- Claims
- Concludes
- Comments
- Describes
- Demonstrates
- Examines
- Explains
- Hypothesises
- Indicates
- Observes
- Outlines
- Predicts
- Reasons
- Research
- Reports
- States
- Suggests

additional sources into your work to **agree** with existing evidence.

- Affirm
- Corroborate
- Support
- Substantiate
- Validates
- Verify

additional sources into your work to critically assess or challenge existing evidence.

- Argue
- Challenge
- Contradict
- Contrast
- Debate
- Dispute
- Doubt
- Oppose
- Questions
- Refute
- Reject

Use these words to give your sentences variety

According to Charles (2017)...

Chen and Singh (2012) state...

Turner (2013) observed...

McGovern (2014) asserts...

Johnson (2015) takes an opposing stance on this view and theorises instead that...

If possible demonstrate synthesis of knowledge by showing connection of multiple pieces of evidence instead of only including one source to support your idea.

Although McGovern's (2014) research demonstrated health benefits associated with surgical intervention, more recent research by Charles (2017) with a larger population sample has shown positive patient outcomes can be achieved through less invasive options such as diet and exercise.

Turner (2013) affirms Chen and Singh's (2012) theory and support his claims by...

Constructing conclusions

Summary of
key points

- State the main points covered (Past tense)

Link back to
thesis

- Overall conclusion related to your thesis outlined in the introduction

Do not add
new points

- Do not include anything you have not already discussed in your essay

Conclusion example

“Graduate registered nurses require more than clinical skills to meet the needs of patients”. Critically discuss this statement. Relate it to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) competency standards.

This paper has examined the complexity of the GRN role in the Australian Health care system and determined that while clinical expertise is paramount it should not be considered as the sole function of the GRN. A range of skills including communication, teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving is required, as recognised by ANMAC if GRNs are to provide care which is effective holistic, compassionate and patient centred.

Summary of key points covered (structure) and overall conclusion)

Thesis Statement