Structuring your assignment: structuring paragraphs, introductions and conclusions

Student & Library Services
• Structuring paragraphs, conclusions and introductions

• This information is:
  • an introduction to planning and structuring an assignment
  • not discipline-specific
  • based on working through an example question
Use the WEED model for paragraphs

One point per paragraph, incorporating evidence

- **What** - topic sentence
- **Evidence** - references
- **Examples** – expanding on evidence
- **Do** - sum up – so what?

(Godwin, 2014)
WEED model for paragraphs

• **What**: You should begin your paragraph with the topic or point that you’re making, so that it’s clear to your lecturer. Everything in the paragraph should fit in with this opening sentence.

• **Evidence**: The middle of your paragraph should be full of evidence – this is where all your references should be incorporated.

• **Examples**: Sometimes it’s useful to expand on your evidence. If you’re talking about a case study, the example might be how your point relates to the particular scenario being discussed.

• **Do**: You should conclude your paragraph with the implications of your discussion. This gives you the opportunity to add your commentary, which is very important in assignments which require you to use critical analysis.
Putting it together

• Think about the order of your assignment.
  • Sometimes it’s possible to write the assignment in the order of the criteria.

• How well does it flow?
  • Think of your paragraphs as a flight of stairs, guiding your reader towards your conclusion. They should be able to see where you are going with your assignment.

• Paragraphs should follow a logical order for your argument
Your conclusion

• This should be about 5-10% of the final word count

• Final version should:
  • recap
  • summarise your main findings
  • highlight your general conclusions and why they are important

• The last sentence should sum it all up and link back to title.

• Your conclusion should contain NO new material (no references)
Your introduction

• This should be finalised last
• This should be about 5-10% of the final word count
• It is an introduction to your assignment, not the whole topic

It is important to:
• frame the subject. Think if there are there any boundaries? e.g. have you limited it to a specific country or time period.
• put the subject in context. You may want to provide definitions.
• say what you will argue.
• guide the reader. It signposts to what the assignment contains (the order of your signposting should be the order it’s written in).
Checking your work

• **Proof read** – for structure and content as well grammatical and spelling errors
• You may need to re-write or revise parts
• Check your references
  • Do you have all the details?
  • Are they in the correct style?
• All this takes time!
Resources

