

ACADEMIC SKILLS

Week 9

Project Execution II: Organization

Richard Nowell

Agenda

Structure

Introductions & Conclusions

Sections & Paragraphs

Targeted Learning Outcome

Introducing and concluding (the right way)

Argument-driven paragraphs & evidence-based sections

How do you find writing introductions?

What do you think an introduction needs to do?

How do you find writing conclusions?

What do you think a conclusion needs to do?

When do you write these parts?

Introductions and Conclusions: **Two Sides of the Same Coin (?)**

Introductions and conclusions are the most important structural components of academic work; they deserve considerable attention

They are so important because when done properly they explain to readers where we stand on all of the important components of the paper

In reality, we can usually combine the introduction and conclusion into a single passage at the start of the output – an “introlusion”, if you will

This approach may sound strange, but we often struggle to say anything in our conclusions; in reality we usually end up summarizing things

This phenomenon is a product of something quite reassuring though; if done properly, an introduction already spotlights conclusion material

What Introductions & Conclusions need to do

We need to start off by recognizing that introductions and conclusions are used to achieve certain things, irrespective of the topic of the paper

- A) **Focus**: What we are looking at in our paper
- B) **Argument**: What we have to say about this
- C) **Positioning**: How our argument differs from other perspectives
- D) **Methodology**: How we conducted our research and analysis
- E) **Organization**: How we organize our findings in the paper

- F) **Contribution**: How our paper enriches understandings of the world (this can be included at the end of the intro or used as a conclusion)

This is a prototype; we may deal with such matters in a different order

Introduction/Conclusion to My Snoop Paper

Focus: The Mediation of Snoop at the 2024 Olympics

Argument: Rebranding Aging Gangsta Rap for new markets

Positioning: Counter antisocial traits of '90s Gangsta persona

Methodology: Star Images (Dyer); Metamodern (Vermeulen)

Macro-Organization: 4 Sections (plus intro and conclusion)

Contribution: Understanding Aging black celebrity brands



What are paragraphs?

What should they do?

How do you organize them?

Argument-Driven Paragraphs

Paragraphs are self-enclosed blocks of text that make one major point by signposting content and delivering a selection of strong evidence

I propose a formula for organizing paragraphs: it involves building a four-five point paragraph supporting a single aspect of argumentation

The Stinger: The first sentence makes an assertion that represents the main point you would like to make in the paragraph as a whole

Evidencers: Then include about three or four points that you feel are likely to persuade the reader of your stinger: 1-2 sentences per point

Outro: avoid links between paragraphs – this just leads to repetition between a sentence's outro and the stinger opening the next paragraph

Or, as an example paragraph

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Do you prefer reading essays broken into sections or those that comprise one unbroken block of writing?

Do you organize your essays into smaller blocks?

Is there an ideal number of sections an essay should include?

What Are Sections?

Sections are self-enclosed blocks of related paragraphs in which we support ONE part of our case so as to persuade readers of our position

Your essays should ideally contain circa 3 sections, each containing 3-4 paragraphs, each providing evidence in support of the thesis statement

This approach can help us as writers, as it requires we organize our ideas into coherent groups, which helps us to think about argumentation

Organizing work into sections can also help readers, because it clearly spotlights to them a key piece of evidence in a larger piece of work

Sections also enable readers to take a deep breath, thus allowing them to reflect back on the previous topic before moving on to new material

A Loose Template for Sections

A prototype section might be comprised of these components:

Title

This should give a clear sense of what the section is about

Section statement: tell the reader what the section is about and why it is important to the overall argument you are making

Paragraphs (about 3)

- These paragraphs each add an example as evidence of the assertion
- Organize them in some logical way or in terms of their importance

Final Sentence – The Outro (DESIRABLE)

Gestures to the content of the next section

Organize the following into a suitable number of sections

Give each section a title.

NB: You may drop as many points as you see fit.

Arrange these points into sections with titles

1. Friends with Martha Stewart
2. Supports Female American Athletes
3. Likes Sweets
4. Likes Weed
5. Interested in Dressage
6. Fitting into European Café culture
7. Respects His Mother
8. Crosses racial divides
9. Exchanging Cooking tips
10. Promoting Love and Understanding
11. Likes Romance of Paris
12. Likes “Tang” the Cat
13. Eager to Learn from Others
14. Promotes self-respect

One Way of Organizing this Paper: Themes

Section 1. Mr. Cosmopolitan

1. Set-up: once deemed West Coast
2. Interested in Dressage
3. Fitting into European High Culture
4. Exchanging Cooking Tips
5. Likes the Romance of Paris

Section 2. Mr. Empathy

1. Set-up: once deemed hateful
2. Promotes Self-respect
3. Eager to Learn From Others
4. Promotes Love and Understanding
5. Crosses Racial Divides

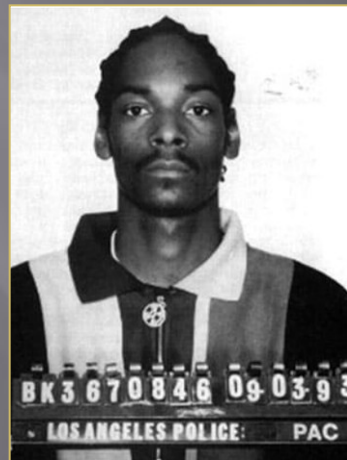
Section 3. Mr. Big Kid

1. Set-up: once deemed thug
2. Likes Sweets
3. Likes Weed
4. Likes Tang the Cat

Section 4. Mr. Female-Friendly

1. Set-up: once deemed sexist
2. Friends with Martha
3. Supports Female US Athletes
4. Respects His Mother

Cosmopolitanism vs. Regionality; Empathic vs. Antisocial; Big Kid vs. Dangerous Man; Feminism vs. Misogyny;



Takeaways

If we are to maximize the quality of our work and our grades, we need to present our argument and evidence in a reader-friendly fashion

Because such an approach is designed to help readers, it also stands to help us to organize our ideas and evidence in a coherent manner

Introductions introduce the paper not the topic, and include: focus, argument, positioning, organization, methods, and contributions

Aim for 3-4 sections, with a brief statement about a section's content, and about 3-4 paragraphs unpacking a single major piece of evidence

Paragraphs work similarly, the first sentence should encapsulate the whole paragraph, and then include 3-4 evidence sentences supporting it

Next Time

Date: 28 November (Note Next Week is Reading Week)

Instructor: Sarka

Topic: Analysis Refresher Seminar 2

Outcome: Sharpening Our Analysis Skills

Preparation: Read provided paper on SIS; summarize it in no more than 300 words; upload summary to “Homework Vault” by Midnight Wednesday 27 November.