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# ESSAY STRUCTURE BOOTCAMP

SLS WEBINAR PROGRAM

Student Learning Support

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# WEBINAR GOALS

During this webinar you will learn how to...

1. structure an academic essay.
2. write an introduction.
3. write body paragraphs.
4. write a conclusion.

# ACADEMIC WRITING

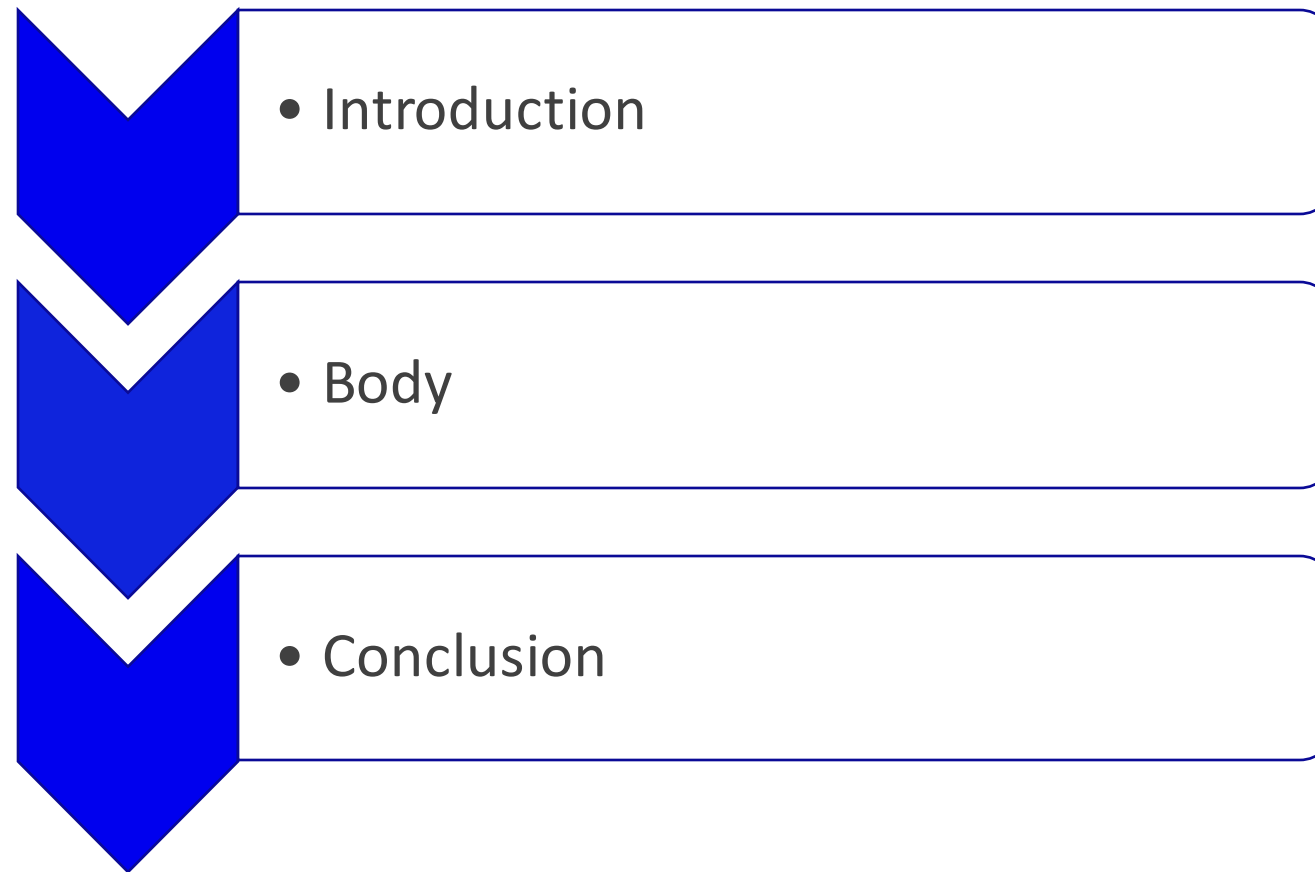
Where am I at?

- a) I know how to structure an academic essay
- b) I have some idea of how to structure an academic essay
- c) My knowledge of academic essay structure is pretty vague
- d) I've never learned how to structure an academic essay



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# BASIC ESSAY STRUCTURE



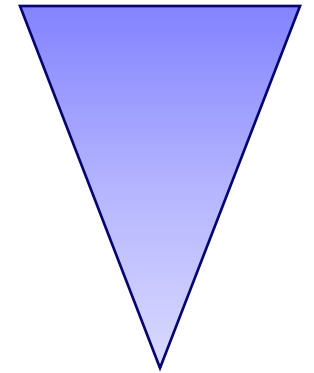
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# THE INTRODUCTION

## THE INTRODUCTION HAS THREE MAIN PARTS...

1. It introduces the context and topic of the essay and provides relevant background information
2. It clearly states what the essay will cover (signposting)
3. It provides a thesis statement– the central idea the essay will communicate (usually the answer to the assignment question)\*

**b r o a d**



**specific**

\* Deductive reasoning approach

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# THE THESIS STATEMENT

## Key components of a good thesis statement

- Sums up the central point of the paper.
- Makes a claim that can be challenged (your argument), and does not just present a summary of facts.
- Serves as a preview of the position you will take in the paper.
- The main point in each body paragraph should relate back to this statement.



**For further information on writing thesis statements see:**

<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/vef/load/c88349b418d28557f058235d5275027a?width=100%25&height=505>

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# EXAMPLE ESSAY QUESTION

In the last 20 years, rates of divorce have risen significantly in Western countries. Critically analyse some of the different explanations given for this phenomenon.

Topic: the reasons for the increased rate of divorce

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# EXAMPLE INTRODUCTION

1. Highlight the context/topic setting section in blue
2. Highlight the signposting section (what the essay will cover) in green
3. Highlight the thesis statement in red

A major change that has occurred in Western society in the last 20 years is an increased incidence of divorce. In the past, divorce was a relatively rare occurrence, whereas in recent times it has become quite commonplace. An important issue for sociologists, and indeed for all society, is why these changes in marital patterns have occurred. Two possible explanations for the divorce phenomenon are changes to divorce laws and broader socio-economic change. While legal changes in this area have facilitated divorce, the underlying explanation for rising divorce rates is actually changes to social and economic behaviour within society.



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# BODY PARAGRAPHS

Each body paragraph has only one idea/theme

## Body paragraph 1

Changes to divorce laws as an explanation for rising divorce rates

## Body paragraph 2

Socioeconomic changes as an explanation for rising divorce rates

## Body paragraph 3

...new idea/theme – must be added to the signposting



**Note:**

the order of paragraph topics matches the order of topics listed in the signposting in the introduction.

# BODY PARAGRAPHS

## Review body paragraph structure

- 1** **The topic sentence** tells the reader what the paragraph will be about and may link to the previous paragraph.
- 2** **The supporting sentences** develop the topic of the paragraph and include explanation, examples, details, research, quotations and references.
- 3** **The concluding / linking sentence** reminds the reader what the main topic of the paragraph was and may link to the next paragraph.

- Avoid using paragraphs**
- consisting of only one or two sentences
  - that are longer than one double-spaced page.

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# EXAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH 1

1. Highlight the topic setting sentence in blue
2. Highlight the supporting sentences in green
3. Highlight the concluding/linking sentence(s) in red

One explanation for rising divorce focuses on changes in laws relating to marriage. For example, Bilton (2014) argues that increased rates of divorce do not indicate that families are now more unstable. They claim that there has always been a degree of marital instability. They further suggest that changes in the law are significant because they provide unhappily married couples with “access to a legal solution to pre-existent marital problems” (p. 301). Bilton (2014), therefore, believes that rising divorce rates can be best explained in terms of changes in the legal system. The problem with this type of explanation, however, is that it does not consider why these laws have changed in the first place. It could be argued that reforms to family law are themselves the product of more fundamental socio-economic changes.

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# EXAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH 2

1. Highlight the topic setting sentence in blue
2. Highlight the supporting sentences in green
3. Highlight the concluding/linking sentence(s) in red

Another explanation for increasing divorce focuses precisely on these broad societal changes. For example, Hart (2013) argues that increases in divorce are the result of economic changes that have affected the family. One example of these changes is the raised material aspirations of families, which put pressure on both spouses to become wage earners. Women as a result have been forced to become both homemakers and economic providers. According to Hart (2013), the contradiction of these two roles has led to conflict and this is the main cause of marital breakdown. It would appear that Hart's explanation cannot account for all cases of divorce, for example, marital breakdown also occurs in families where only the husband is working (Haralambos, 2010). Nevertheless, this approach, which relates changes in family relations to broader social forces, would seem to be more promising than one that looks only at legislative change.

# Structured body paragraph formula

T

Topic sentence: State the main idea

E

Evidence 1: Support the main idea with academic reference 1

E

Elaborate/Explain: Connect reference 1 to the main idea

E

Evidence 2: Insert reference 2 to support or contrast with reference 1

E

Analysis: Critically analyse the main idea synthesizing reference 1 and 2

L

Concluding sentence / Link: Conclude and connect to next paragraph

Note: The arrows indicate that the order can switch.

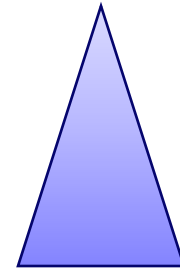
# THE CONCLUSION

A conclusion has three main objectives:

1. Draw together your findings by summarising the key points.
2. State your overall conclusion. This should lead to a paraphrased thesis statement relating to the essay question.
3. Relate your conclusion to the overall context and contain a final thought.

Aim for 5-10% of the word count.

**specific**



**b r o a d**

Avoid references in the conclusion.

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# EXAMPLE CONCLUSION

1. Highlight the sentences summarizing your findings in blue
2. Highlight the paraphrased thesis statement / overall conclusion in green
3. Highlight the sentence that provides a link to the overall context / final thought in red

It is difficult to offer a comprehensive explanation for the growing trend of marital breakdown. Legal changes have made divorce easier, and at first glance this may seem to be a convincing explanation for rising divorce rates. However, a legal explanation does not address the underlying socio-economic changes, such as the increasing financial independence of women, that have in fact caused changes in divorce laws. Clearly it is a broad socio-economic framework that provides the most useful answers to increasing divorce rates. Future marital trends will be influenced by ever-evolving frameworks as family structures continue to diversify.

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# ACADEMIC WRITING

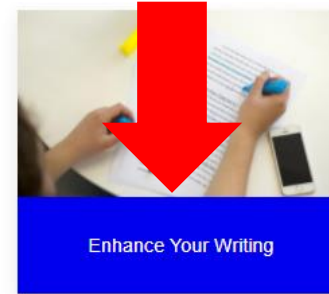
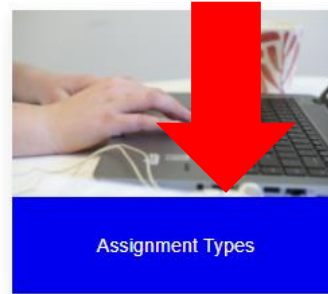
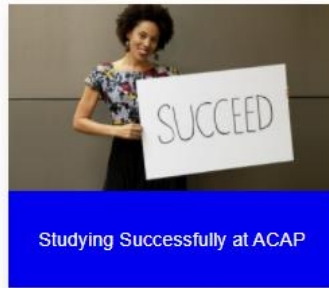
Where am I at now?

- a) I know how to structure an academic essay
- b) I have a better idea of how to structure an academic essay
- c) My knowledge of academic essay structure is still pretty vague





# STUDENT LEARNING SUPPORT WEBSITE



<http://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/>

# WHO CAN HELP ME?

Questions about my assignment and class content	Questions and advice about how to develop study skills and improve my academic writing	Timetable, Attendance, Enrolment, Course Planning, Extension, Special Consideration, Accessibility, Counsellor	Class Space, Login, Email, Office 365	Fees
Your educator	Your local SLS advisor	The Student Engagement Team	IT support	Fees & Loans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q/A Discussion forum</li> <li>• Direct message</li> <li>• In the class space</li> <li>• Email educator</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Click here to find your local SLS contact details</a>	Email: <a href="mailto:studentcentral@acap.edu.au">studentcentral@acap.edu.au</a> Virtual Reception Desk: <a href="https://acap.zoom.us/j/660235497">https://acap.zoom.us/j/660235497</a> Phone: 1800 061 199	Email: <a href="mailto:helpdesk@my.navitas-professional.edu.au">helpdesk@my.navitas-professional.edu.au</a> Phone: (02) 9964 6322.	<a href="mailto:feesandloans@acap.edu.au">feesandloans@acap.edu.au</a>

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# THANK YOU

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**ACAP** Australian  
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