

ESL TUTORS' WORKSHOP #3

THE ACADEMIC ESSAY:

- A. WHAT IS THE ACADEMIC ESSAY STRUCTURE?
 - B. ARE THERE SOME STEPS TO FOLLOW IN THE PROCESS?
 1. **Brainstorming** and the **outline**
 2. **The introduction** paragraph (**question/problem** to solve and **thesis** statement)
 3. **Body** paragraphs
 4. **Conclusion**
 - C. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE STUDENT HAS ALREADY COME TO SEE ME WITH AN **ESSAY THAT IS VERY CONFUSING, DISORGANISED**, LACKING A THESIS STATEMENT, ETC. (HOW CAN I BE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, HELP THE STUDENT UNDERSTAND HOW TO "FIX" IT THE BEST WAY?)
 - D. **GARBALDY-GOOP** OR "LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE HIT THE TRANSLATE BUTTON"!!!
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A. **ACADEMIC ESSAY STRUCTURE:**

- Remember, many **countries don't have essays** at all in many schools (ex. Russia) or the structure, content, process, rules are completely **different** (China, Japan, etc.), so start with the bones of what it is made of:

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH(S)

BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH(S)

-Questions to ask the student:

- What is a **paragraph**? (What does it look like/**shape/indent/no spaces between sentences**)
- What is the purpose/job of the **introduction** (includes...?)
- What is the purpose/job of the **body(ies)**? (includes...?)
- What is the purpose/job of the **conclusion**? (includes...?)

"OWL" -
See: Purdue Online
Writing Lab -
* Organizing
your argument
presentation
(slideshow)

- What does **double-spaced** mean? (and should it be...?)
 - What **size font** should be used? (and which style font?)
 - **How many paragraphs** total should be written?
 - How is the **title** written? (**Size, centering, which words have capital letters?**)
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B. STEPS TO FOLLOW:

1. **Brainstorming:** Do this before anything else/don't write your essay yet

QUESTION: **free-write** or brainstorm on a piece of paper **randomly** (mess)?

Free-write: **PROS**

Ideas **flow** in full **sentences**
 Use a **highlighter/main points**
 Can **relax**/no grammar, org., etc.

Random mess:

key words but **faster**
no highlighter needed
 can **relax** (etc.)

CONS

Harder to find main point **visually**
Takes longer to write and decipher

less detailed
 get "**stuck**" for ideas

2. OUTLINE

- What are the **different styles?** (circles, triangles, squares, lines ,etc.?)
see example
- Are there any **advantages or disadvantages** to one style over another?
- How do you **organize** your free-write or random mess brainstorm into the **outline?** See example
- What do the different **circles/sections represent** in an essay? See example

-Why is the **outline helpful/necessary?** (what do **you avoid?**/what does it help you see/**create?**)

-Can I **modify my outline** as I start to write my essay?

3. THE INTRODUCTION:

-**How many sentences** should it have?

-How should I **begin?** (how does the outline help me?)

-What is the **thesis statement?** (how does the outline help me find it?)

-Where should I **put the thesis** statement in the introduction?

4. BODY PARAGRAPHS:

-**How many** body paragraphs should I write? (how does the outline help me know this?)

-How do I know **when to switch** to another body paragraph? (how does the outline help?)

-What should the **first sentence** do? (how does the outline help me know this?)

-What do the **other sentences say in the body?** (how does the outline help me know this?)

-**How many sentences** should I have in the body? (how does the outline help me with this?)

-How does the **outline help me avoid repeating** my ideas again and again in the body? (very common mistake)

-Can I **add more body paragraphs** than my outline shows? (what should I be careful of?)

CONCLUSION:

See handout

C. **DO A REVERSE OUTLINE TOGETHER**

-you can either **go through their essay** first and ask them to show the topics of the bodies and examples (or lack thereof) so they can see what happened **or**...

-you can just look at their writing prompt and **ask the appropriate questions to help them make a "revised"/new mind map** based on the ideas they may have in their heads but which may not be in their essay (or in the right place/way in their essay).

D. If the essay seems to have some ideas but the grammar and **sentence structure is really wacky**, the student may have (often happens) typed the essay in their native language and then highlighted the text and pressed the **translate button**.

-**Don't even try to correct the grammar** as it is a waste of your time and the student's (they didn't create the mistakes so they won't even know what is going on)

*Explain that **it is cheating** to translate this way

* Explain that translating is the worst way to deal with studies in English as the point of taking the class is to be **able to express yourself in English**.

* If they must translate in order to pass the class and their English is not strong enough, at least they **need to translate it themselves** as participants in the process of dealing with the English language/thinking about meaning/grammar, etc. in English

*If they are **not capable** of this, they should probably be placed in the native language FYSM (Chinese, etc.) or they should **take the ESL class...someone should be alerted**