

Writing an Essay: A Process
Turning Evidence into Arguments and a Claim

In order to write a good essay, the writer's thoughts must lead to the same point (i.e., cohesive) be organized, significant, and informative. Creating an outline helps a writer do this. In order to create a good outline, it helps to organize your thoughts in a step-by-step process. Follow this step-by-step process, in order, to create your outline. This is a 5-paragraph essay assignment and your outline must follow that format (see Essay Writing Guideline handout for the format in list format).

1. **List your evidence.** On a separate piece of paper, Identify at least 10 significant facts/concepts from everything we've studied (all the readings, film and documentary, class debate, etc.) that relate to the prompt These are your pieces of evidence.
2. **Formulate arguments.** Organize these significant facts/concepts into THREE separate topics (e.g., signs of success or areas underscoring one sign of success) such as the ones listed below (you can add your own, too).
3. **Create Outline** via Outline Format document
 - a. for **Topic Sentences:** A topic sentence provides direction for the structure and flow of the paragraph and also keeps the reader's mind focused on the direct purpose of the paragraph, and the essay as a whole. Create a topic sentence for each of the THREE separate topics that cover the main idea of all of your significant facts/concepts under each topic.
 - b. for **Warrants:** write why each piece of evidence is important AND why it supports your related argument, which supports your claim. This is your commentary on evidence AND warrants (justifies) the use of the evidence in your essay.
 - c. outline intro and conclusion paragraphs **last**
4. **Write a draft of your introduction.**
 - a. The hook pulls the reader into your essay and makes him/her want to keep learning what you have to share. It can be a question, famous quote, or provocative declaratory sentence.
 - b. Background Info is the historical context, or the back-story, of issues, events, and prominent people connected to the essay prompt. The purpose of this part is to inform the reader of what was going on in the long-term and/or short-term in order for him/her to understand and even agree with your claim and arguments. This can be more than one sentence.
 - c. **Write your claim.** A single, declaratory sentence that clearly answers the prompt without repeating the prompt's wording in a provocative way and makes the reader want to keep learning from you.
5. **Write a draft of your conclusion.** The conclusion is the last piece of an essay that the reader will see, and therefore is what remains in the readers' mind once they put the essay down. If you do not conclude effectively, the

reader's opinion of the essay may be swayed. Your conclusion synthesizes all that you have written into a coherent and persuasive essay.

- a. For the RR essay, your conclusion must address the lessons that should be learned and applied to the world today (bolded options recommended but others are feasible)
 - i. Share closing remarks according one of the following conclusion types.
 1. Extend or modify your claim
 2. Account for other evidence in disagreement with your points
 - 3. Connect your claim to the larger significance of this part of history**
 - 4. Connect your claim to other historical periods, geographical areas, contexts, or circumstances**

Final Note: Your outline is a draft of your organized thoughts. It's okay to not have a complete or perfect introduction and conclusion when you finish your outline. It's okay for you to revise your thoughts or plans as you write your essay.