

Essay Formats

Essays at university generally follow the standard format or structure, but variations are possible. If you are in doubt, ask your lecturer, tutor or teacher for their recommendation.

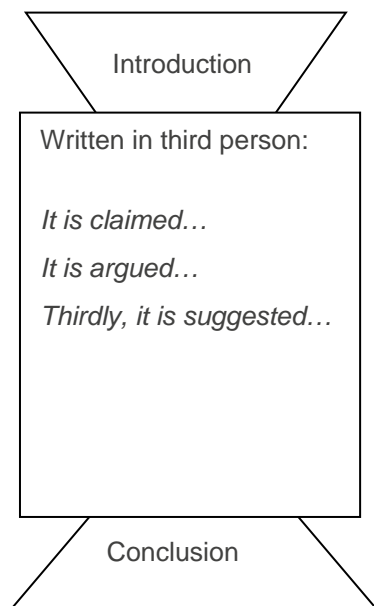
It is customary to introduce an essay as follows:

- a) outline the general topic
- b) narrow down to a specific issue (delimiting the topic range)
- c) provide an outline of the essay, and
- d) provide a thesis statement (overall argument) arising from the research.

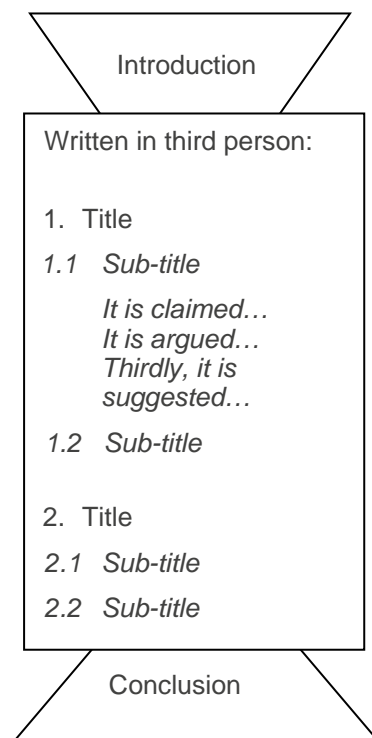
The conclusion will typically remind the reader of the thesis, and end with a general statement, e.g., about the need further work on the topic. Conclusions generally do not contain any new information. Section weighting is 10% introduction, 80% body, 10% conclusion.

Three formats are provided below. Note the similarities across the sections. Other permutations are possible – be consistent in your use of the active voice (first person) or passive voice (third person).

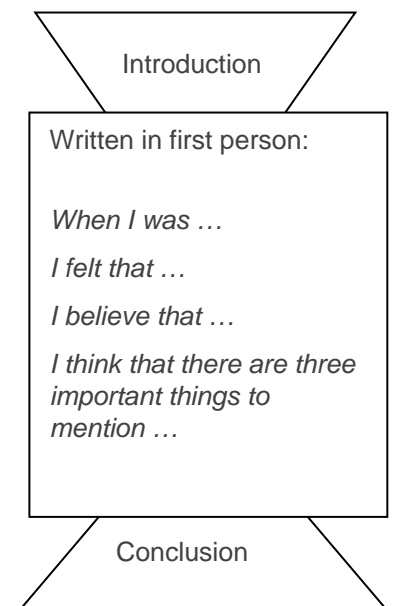
Standard style essay



Generic essay with numbered sections



Reflective essay



Other helpsheets

- Structuring your Essay
- Writing in an Academic Style