

WRITING THE ESSAY

First, ask yourself these questions:

1. What am I writing about?
2. Why am I writing about this topic?
3. What do I know about this topic, and what do I still have to find out?
4. What are my personal feelings on the matter?
5. What effect do I want my writing to have on the reader?
6. What is my reader's understanding of the issue?
7. What biases or objections should I take into account?

Organizing the essay

The answers to these questions will help you determine what information should be included in your essay. The essay itself has three distinct parts: introduction, body, and conclusion.

Introduction: gets the reader's attention, establishes common ground between the writer and the reader, defines the problem and perhaps the process undertaken to solve the problem, includes the thesis statement, which states the writer's focus or position on the problem.

Body: defines terms, reviews literature, presents evidence in favor or support of the thesis, analyzes the evidence, and accommodates and/or refutes opposing views.

Conclusion: reasserts the writer's position, reminds the reader of the importance of the problem, poses questions on the issue that could be addressed by other writers.