

## Organizing Your Essay

Your essay is an organization of your ideas. We know you are brilliant, and you have opinions about this and that, but your essay is how you present your arguments and thoughts to your audience, who may not know as much as you. The more organized your essay is, the easier it is to follow and the stronger it is.

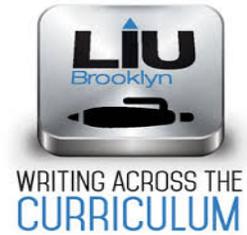
While everyone works differently, outlining an essay before one starts can save a writer a lot of head aches. By planning one can see what order is the most logical, what points can be discussed and what sources are still needed.

While everyone works differently, here are a few tips to get you started.

<http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/writing/organization.html>

### Tips for Starting Essays:

- 1) Start with blank document. This is where you can write your ideas, scraps, fragments, and anything that will help you later when you draft your essay.
- 2) Write your “working” thesis at the top. This is “working” because you should feel free to change it as your opinion and position develops.
- 3) Write out working **topic sentences**. Your *topic sentences* are like mini-theses for each paragraph. Anything in that paragraph that doesn’t relate to the topic sentence may be in the wrong place in the essay or not needed at all.

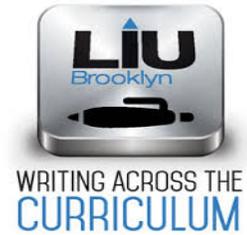


- 4) Read. Do the research and place quotes, page numbers, or notes that will help you prove your thesis under each topic sentence in your outline. This will help you synthesize your sources and also keep your points organized.
- 5) Write. Now that you have a collection of quotes, page numbers or notes you can start drafting your essay!

### **Tips for Outlining Research Essays:**

While everyone's Research Essay is going to be different, here are a few tips to get you started.

- 1) Try outlining. Your essay may have three parts to it: 1) Background information, 2) Discussion of the research question, and 3) What this means for the future. Or 1) Background information 2) Discussion of the problem 3) Discussion of possible solutions. Your essay may not fall directly in these three categories, but it is helpful to think of your essay as three sections (similar to a beginning, middle and end), and for you to decide what those three sections would be.
- 2) Gather your quotes, or passages to refer to, and place them in your outline. This helps you organize and order your thoughts in a logical way. This requires you to READ all your sources, study them, and find the most important parts you want to discuss. Once you have your quotes or passages in your outline, the task of sitting down and writing the essay comes much easier.
- 3) Write your introduction and conclusion last. While you are researching you may start to figure out what the answer to your Research Question is, and



boiled down to 1-2 sentences it becomes your thesis. Because of this, I suggest writing your introduction and conclusion last.

- 4) Provide background information on your topic. This could be how gentrification occurs, the climate of police relations with the community, etc. This allows the audience to understand the environment of the problem you are addressing throughout the rest of the essay.
- 5) Anticipate others' arguments, and rebutt them. Not only does this give you more to discuss in your essay, it makes your essay stronger.