

The Writing Center @ EOU

Organization

The Basics

Purpose

In order to properly arrange your paper, you first need to assess your prompt. What genre of writing is your assignment? Who is your audience? What is the purpose of your paper?

Structure

The base organization of an academic paper calls for an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Additionally, in many papers a thesis statement is expected in the introduction. The thesis can then be used to determine the organization of the body paragraphs.

Outlining

When trying to determine the order of your body paragraphs, consider creating an outline. Begin with your thesis, and then follow with the main ideas you plan to discuss. Order the main ideas so they follow a logical progression.

Organizational Strategies

Sequential Order and Chronological Order

Organize your paper sequentially by ordering your body paragraphs so that they outline your topic in a step by step manner. Similarly, you can order your paper chronologically by having the topic of each body paragraph progress following a specific timeline.

Compare/Contrast and Pros/Cons

For certain topics it may be appropriate to divide your paragraphs into sections that compare and contrast ideas. Arrange all of your paragraphs discussing similarities together and arrange all of your paragraphs discussing differences together. Likewise, you can organize your paper into pros and cons by splitting your body paragraphs to discuss the costs and benefits of your subject.

Problem/Solution and Cause/Effect

Another organizational strategy is to begin by presenting a problem. After you construct the issue, continue building your paper by proposing a solution. A cause and effect paper follows a similar format. Begin by discussing the cause of something, and then organize your paper to analyze the effects created by that cause.

Topics/Subtopics

In many cases, an effective organizational strategy is to identify your topic, and then break it into paragraphs discussing several relevant subtopics. If you follow this strategy, be sure to present each subtopic so that your ideas follow a logical progression.

References: The University of Washington, Writing@CSU

Eastern Oregon University Writing Center

Loso Hall 234 * Email: writingcenter@eou.edu * 541-962-3663

Campus Writing Tutors: <http://eou.mywconline.com>

Online Writing Tutors: <https://www.etutoring.org/login.cfm?institutionid=382&returnPage=>