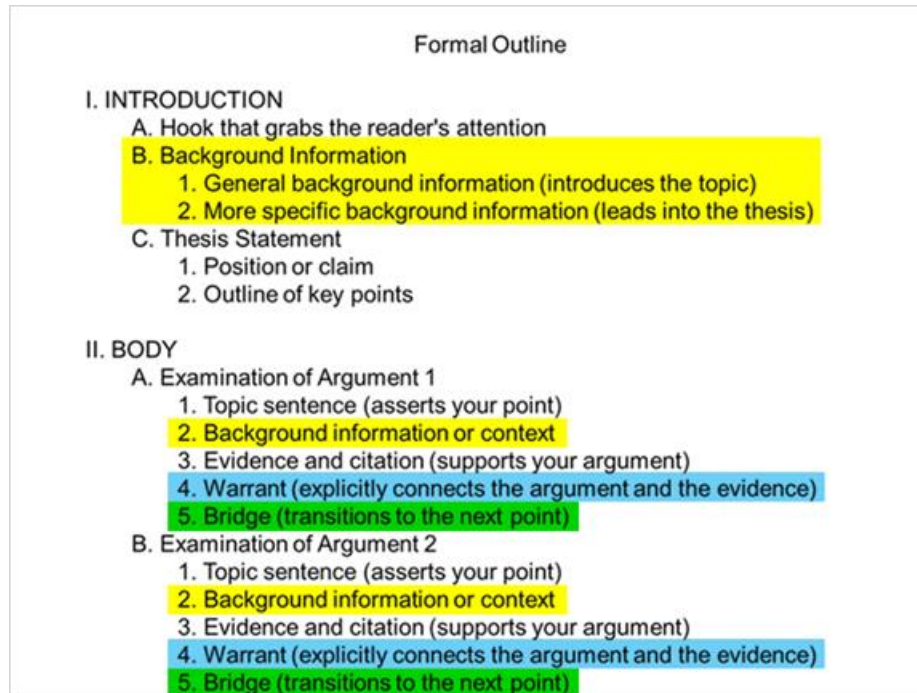


Module 5: The Literary Response to the Changing World

Topic 4 Content: Elements of a First Draft

Introduction



Take a look at this formal outline for a persuasive research paper. You should already have most of this outline developed for your own paper, but notice that the highlighted sections indicate areas where you can create a smoother flow from one idea to the next.

Click on the highlighted sections of the formal outline to learn more about elements to incorporate in your rough draft.

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Background Information



You have already planned an engaging hook and finalized your formal thesis statement in your outline. However, after you draft your hook in the introductory paragraph, it is a good idea to offer some general background information on your topic before going straight into your thesis statement. Depending on how narrow your topic is and how much your audience will already know about your topic, you may need to add even more specific information in order to transition into your thesis.

The same holds true for your body paragraphs. As you write your first draft, it may be unwise to write a topic sentence and then immediately present your supporting evidence. Most often, you will need to provide some background information or context in order to transition smoothly to your supporting evidence.

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The Warrant



After you have presented your key point in the topic sentence and supported your argument using evidence from your research, a very important piece must come next to make your persuasion effective. This piece that completes your argument is called the warrant, which clearly explains how your evidence supports your claim.

Sometimes it may feel obvious to you that your evidence supports your argument, but remember that your reader may not be as knowledgeable as you are about the topic that you researched. You should not assume that your reader will make the connection between your claim and your argument, so be sure to thoroughly explain how the two are related and why.

Observe the hypothetical example of a warrant below.

Claim: Humans are not meant to eat meat.

Evidence: Researchers have found that human teeth do not resemble those of carnivorous animals.

Warrant: If humans were carnivores in their early history, then their bodies would still be equipped to handle a natural meat diet. However, comparisons between the teeth of humans and those of true carnivores indicate that humans were never predominantly meat-eaters, and they should not be today.

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The Bridge



Because your paper is one continuous piece and not visually divided into sections, you want each paragraph to smoothly flow into the next paragraph. If beginning a new body paragraph feels abrupt in the sense that it interrupts the flow of ideas, end the prior paragraph with a bridge, or a sentence that provides a smooth transition by connecting the main idea of one paragraph to the main idea of the next. This bridge, as its name suggests, leads the reader mentally from one idea to the next.

Consider the hypothetical example of a bridge below.

Claim from Body Paragraph 1: Teens are no more at risk of dangerous cell phone use while driving than any other age group.

Bridge: Not only do cell phones pose little threat to teen safety and driving, but they likely contribute to the overall safety of teens.

Claim from Body Paragraph 2: Recent studies have demonstrated that teens who have cell phones are more likely to communicate their whereabouts with parents.

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The Restated Thesis



The closing paragraph, or conclusion, of your paper should tie all of the important points together and remind the reader of the claim. Your conclusion is the last impression your readers will get, and it is also your last chance to convince your reader to accept your viewpoint.

As you write the first draft, begin your concluding paragraph with a restatement of the thesis and a summary of your main points before you draft your personal commentary and call to action. However, you do not want to simply repeat your thesis statement from the introduction word for word or change the order of your phrases. Come up with a different way to express your thesis using different words.

Below is a hypothetical example of a restated thesis.

Thesis: Climbing Mount Everest should be forbidden due to accumulated human pollution, excessive economic waste, and the high risk of human fatality.

Restated Thesis: Saving precious economic resources, saving beautiful natural landscapes, and saving the lives of climbers and their guides are all compelling reasons why climbing Mount Everest must no longer be allowed.

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The Clincher



Finally, you should end your paper with a clincher, or concluding sentence that restates a point, summarizes, adds a persuasive punch, or ends on an interesting or memorable note. Below is an example of a clincher that complements a thesis arguing against climbing Mount Everest.

Clincher: By taking measures now to prevent further climbing expeditions, Mount Everest will carry on a legacy of breathtaking nature and avoid standing as a landmark of death and tragedy.