

Research Essay Components and Structure

Introduction

- 1) One might give an illustrative anecdote (a brief story), to get the reader involved on the human level (on emotional, philosophical, and aesthetic levels).
- 2) Introduce the topic, problem, and/or issue.
- 3) State the research question (or questions). This research question could be supplied by the Instructor. However, for maximum educational value and effectiveness, it is recommended that the student thinks about what he/she is fascinated by and curious about regarding the subject, and under the guidance of the Instructor, formulates the research question him/herself accordingly.
- 4) State one's possible answer (one's hypothetical answer, one's hypothesis) to the research question -- if one does have a possible answer in mind.
- 5) Discuss the history (past), contexts (present), and implications (future) of the research question and possible answers.
- 6) Explain why one's research question(s), and answer(s) (hypotheses), are important.
- 7) Discuss what individuals and communities, and what disciplines of scholarship, have considered these matters.
- 8) State some limitations of the project (state some matters one's essay will not discuss).
- 9) State what one are going to do in the balance of the essay. For example: state what kinds of evidence to support one's hypotheses one would be giving.

Main Body

- 1) Present the data that one has gathered:
Cite any evidence that one has found.
- 2) Support one's hypothesis, build one's argument for that hypothesis:
 - a) Use logic, reason.
 - b) Cite common sense.
 - c) Cite personal reflections.
 - d) Cite authorities (famous scholars and other people, and their sayings and writings).
 - e) Cite public opinion, backed up by "opinion polls," and "surveys" (including original ones you may have conducted).
 - f) Cite tradition.
- 3) Discuss other possible answers to the research question. That is: raise and reply to points of view that may be oppositional to one's own.

Conclusion

- 1) Summarize and review any of the above.
- 2) State what one has done up to this point in the essay), and briefly once again present one's hypotheses (one's answers to the research questions).
- 3) Express solidarity with readers, and appeal to the common good: that is, explain why one's hypotheses, one's answers, are correct and useful, and why it might be beneficial for the reader to agree with these hypotheses and adopt them.
- 4) Suggest future scholarship projects, to follow up on the present one.