



Decatur Alumnae Chapter of
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority,
Incorporated
Scholarship Application
2019 – 2020

Essay Tips

Main Parts of an Academic Essay

The following information should be used as you write this essay. Please keep this information for future college writings as it will be beneficial in your English 101 classes. *Note: use of this format is optional and not required. The title page and bibliography do not count toward the 600 words.*

Title Page: A title page should include the essay's title (capitalized and centered 2 inches from the top of the page), your name (not capitalized, 1 inch below the title), with the date below it.

Introduction: The introduction has three goals: a) to introduce the topic of the essay; b) to present your thesis (which is to say the particular approach or argument the essay will make); and c) to tell the reader how the essay will be structured. Suggestions: a) You may choose to introduce the topic by providing some brief background information or context, a brief story, or a surprising fact or statistic that engages the reader's attention and suggests the significance of the topic. b) Once you have focused the reader's attention, present the thesis or argument of the essay. Depending on the complexity of your thesis this may consist of one or more sentences. Remember: a thesis statement is not the same as your topic (i.e. something you want to talk about). A thesis, in contrast, is an argument, generally reduced to one or more sentences. c) You should end your introduction by giving your readers a preview of the main points you will make to substantiate the claims made in your thesis.

Body: In the body of the essay you will present the evidence and analysis that will substantiate your thesis. It is essential that the body of the essay be developed in a logical and orderly fashion following the preview that you presented in the introduction. The overall goal of this section is to develop your analysis and defend your argument – it is the main part of the essay.

This logically ordered body of the essay will consist of a series of paragraphs. Each paragraph should develop one central theme that helps you further your argument. Introduce this theme in a topic sentence; expand on the theme through the use of evidence or examples; and analyze the evidence to show how it contributes to the specific point you are making in the paragraph and to the thesis as a whole. Paragraphs should consist of several sentences rather than one, long run-on sentence.

Conclusion: The conclusion is designed to bring together your essay's main points and to reassert or emphasize the strength of the thesis or argument. A conclusion is more than a summary, in that it is important to indicate why there is merit to your thesis or argument – what has been shown as a result of your investigation or exploration of the topic.

Bibliography: Academic essays require a bibliography at the end of the paper that includes all sources (written or otherwise) used in the composition of your essay. (Information about how to format the bibliography is included in the "Bibliography" section below.)

Formatting

use binders or plastic covers.

Fonts and printing: All essays must be typed with print on only one side of the page. Black is the standard color for printed ink and generally Times New Roman or Arial 12-point font should be used. A single typed page, regardless of font size, should contain approximately 250 words.

Margins, line spacing, and paragraphs: Use margins of one inch on all sides. The essay should be double-spaced (but not the bibliography which are usually single-spaced), with no extra blank lines between paragraphs. The first word of each paragraph should be indented one-half an inch.

Direct Quotations: Brief direct quotations (i.e. less than three lines) should appear in quotation marks (“ ”) but otherwise should follow the format used in all other paragraphs in the paper. Where you need to alter a direct quotation to make it fit grammatically within a given paper, you may include new or altered words (that do not alter the meaning of the quotation) in square brackets. Where you need to leave out a words from the direct quotation indicate with a series of three periods where words have been removed. Where direct quotations contain grammatical or spelling errors include the word “sic” in parentheses next to the error.

Long direct quotations (i.e. longer than three lines) should appear as “block quotes.” All text of block quotes is to be indented one inch from the left margin (with no extra indentation for the first word). Block quotes do not appear in quotation marks.

Pagination: All pages, with the exception of the title page and bibliography, should be numbered sequentially in the upper right-hand corner of the paper, flush with the right margin.

Emphasis: For emphasis and titles of books, use either italics or underlining. Choose one and be consistent.

Style and Mechanics

Spelling and grammar: You should spell-check and proofread your essay before submitting it. It is also generally a good idea to have a friend or family member read the essay as well to check for spelling and grammar mistakes and to ensure that your essay is clearly written.

Language: Writing well does not mean that you should adopt an exaggerated reverence for formality. Learning to write a college level essay means learning to write plainly and clearly. However, as a general rule you should avoid overly colloquial terms as well as overly sensational or inflammatory terms. Your essay should also be free of language that reflects gender or racial bias. Contractions should be avoided (e.g. can’t, shouldn’t) in academic writing.

Intended audience: Write the paper as if it were directed to a general, reasonably well-educated audience. Accordingly, you should be sure to define key terms. If a term has several accepted meanings (e.g. democracy, socialism), you should specify the meaning you intend.

Make a copy: Keep a copy of your essay on a thumb drive or photocopied.

Bibliography

Bibliography: The word Bibliography should be centered on the first line (subsequent pages of the bibliography do not have a title). Sources are listed alphabetically by author's name or by corporate/ government name and are single-spaced. We request that MLA format be used in this essay.