

Effective Writing at the Graduate Level: Essay Organization

**Student Development Services
Writing Support Centre
UCC 210
www.sds.uwo.ca/writing**

Layers of Effective Writing



Layer 1: Appearance
Grammar, Formatting, Etc.

Layer 2: Writing Style
Sentence Flow

Layer 3: Organization
Connecting the Ideas

Layer 4: Content
The Ideas

Essay Organization

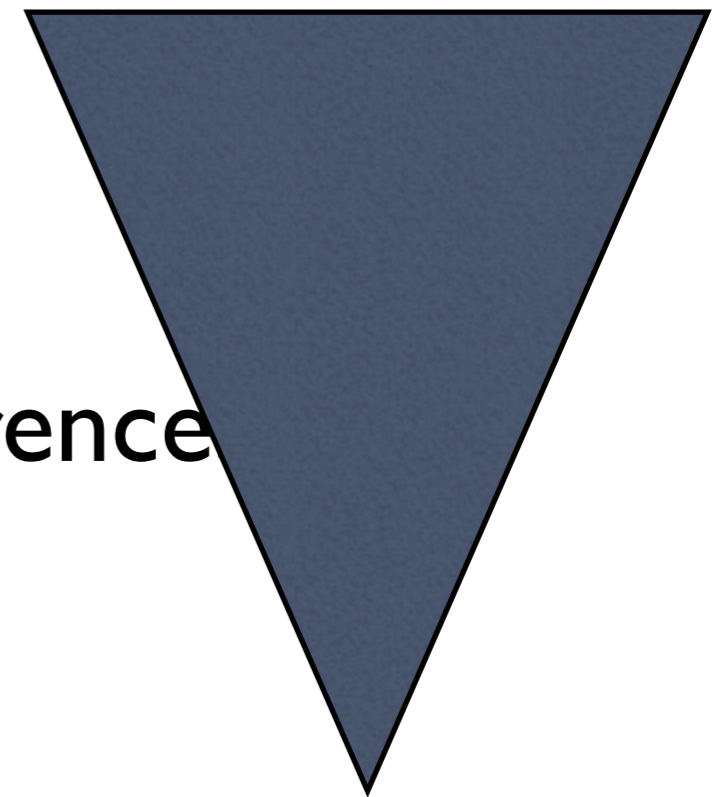
- ❖ Present your ideas in a logical (not chronological) order
- ❖ Essential at the macro (paper) and micro (paragraph) levels

Critical Essay Organization

- ❖ Intro-Body-Conclusion
- ❖ Usually, roughly 10-80-10 word distribution

Introduction

General



Specific

- ❖ Introduce the topic
- ❖ Narrow the focus using key references
- ❖ Make a clear thesis statement

Thesis Statements

- ❖ The most important part of an essay
- ❖ Thesis = Argument
- ❖ More than just the topic
- ❖ More than just your position

Thesis Example

- ❖ **WEAK:** Freud's concept of the structural model of the psyche is misguided.
- ❖ **BETTER:** Freud's concept of the structural model of the psyche is more popular with the general public than with medical professionals.

Body

- ❖ All content should come back to the thesis
- ❖ Follow a logical order (A-B, B-C, C-D)
- ❖ Many possible structures:
 - ❖ Compare-contrast
 - ❖ Chronological

Conclusion

- ❖ Revisit your thesis
- ❖ Apply to your topic
- ❖ Extend beyond your topic
- ❖ Maybe a new point

