Writing Essays

1. For the introduction, write the thesis statement and give some background information.
2. Develop each supporting paragraph and make sure to follow the correct paragraph format.
3. Write clear and simple sentences to express your meaning.
4. Focus on the main idea of your essay.
5. Use a dictionary to help you find additional words to express your meaning.

The introduction is the first paragraph of your essay. It introduces the main idea of your essay. A good opening paragraph captures the interest of your reader and tells why your topic is important.
1. Write the thesis statement. The main idea of the essay is stated in a single sentence called the thesis statement. You must limit your entire essay to the topic you have introduced in your thesis statement.
2. Provide some background information about your topic. You can use interesting facts, quotations, or definitions of important terms you will use later in the essay.

Supporting paragraphs make up the main body of your essay. They develop the main idea of your essay.
1. List the points that develop the main idea of your essay, or the questions that will be addressed.
2. Place each supporting point or question in its own paragraph.
3. Develop each supporting point with facts, details, and examples.
   Like all good paragraphs, each supporting paragraph should have a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a summary sentence.

The summary paragraph comes at the end of your essay after you have finished developing your ideas. The summary paragraph is often called a "conclusion."
It summarizes or restates the main idea of the essay. You want to leave the reader with a sense that your essay is complete.
1. Restate the strongest points of your essay that support your main idea.
2. Conclude your essay by restating the main idea in different words.

Quotations should be used to make your case. Most of these will come from the lectures, primary documents, or various non-circulating stacks. Much will depend upon the essay assigned, so the Instructor will address this for individual classes.
A number of drafts should be completed, with an eye to improving the organization of the essay. Poor organization, as well as other signs that editing has not been given sufficient time for a completed essay (grammar, spelling, and punctuation need to be attended to), will result in the paper not being accepted. Concerned students are welcome to turn in rough drafts for the Instructor’s advice; do not wait until the last days before the due date of the paper.