



COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OF RHODE ISLAND

Essays

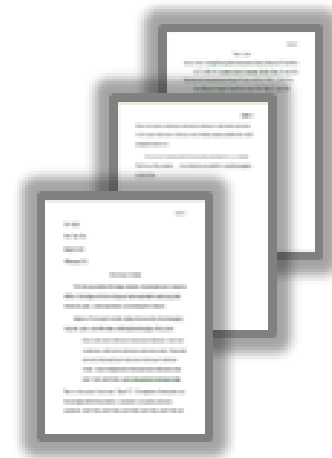
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COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND



Essay Components

1. An introduction
2. A thesis
3. Body paragraphs
4. Supporting details
5. A conclusion
6. Organization
7. Idea connections

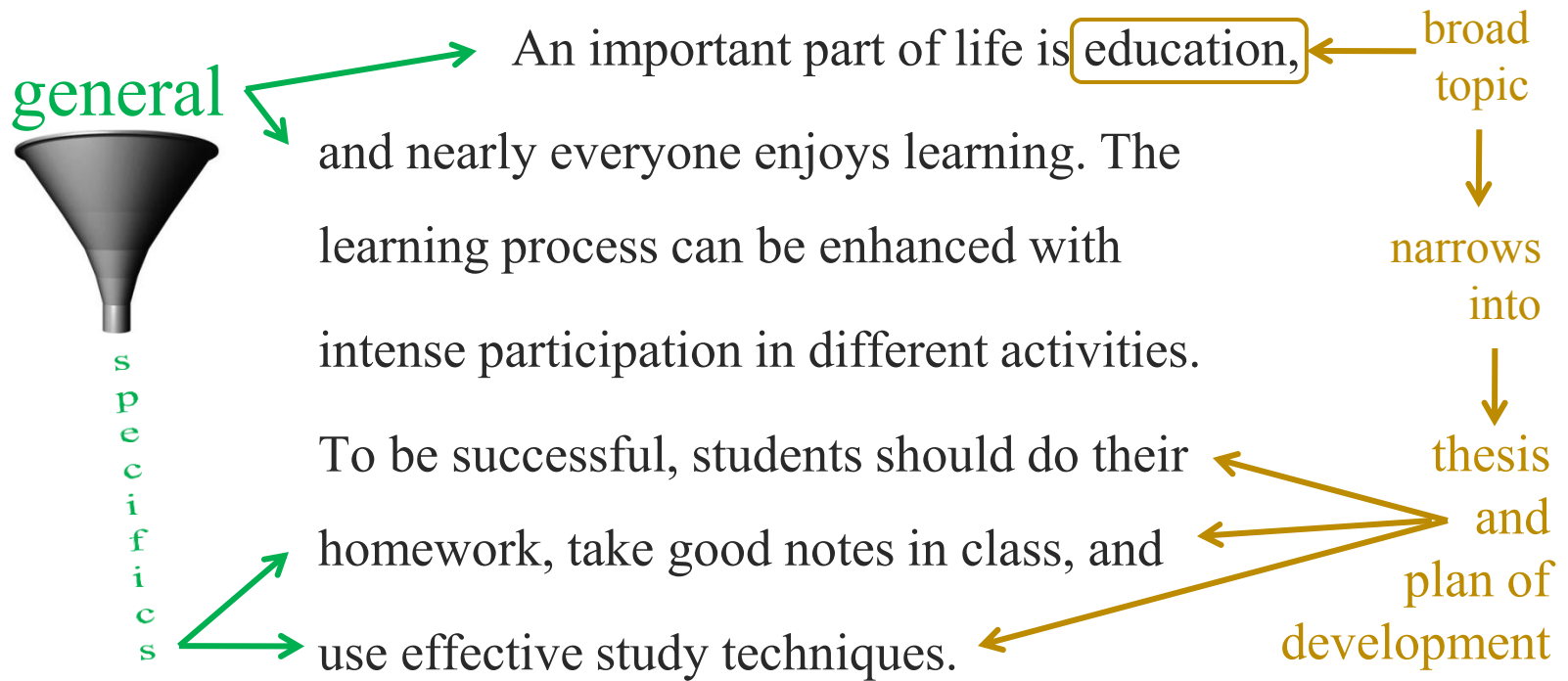


I. An Introduction

An introduction includes one or more of these items:

- A hook (grabs the reader's attention) 
- A question (will be answered in the essay)
- An anecdote (a short story)
- A quotation, summary, or paraphrase (Source information must be included.)
- An interesting or surprising piece of information
- Descriptive words
- A funnel opener (a general idea leading into a thesis) 
- A thesis

I.1 One Kind of an Introduction: A Funnel Opener



2. A Thesis Statement

- States an essay's main idea
- Is often the author's opinion or viewpoint on a topic
- Might include adjectives as a part of the author's opinion
- Is **NOT** a specific fact, an announcement, or a quotation
- Might have one of these words: "should," "reasons," and "because"
- Is often placed at the end of the first paragraph
- Can include a plan of development
- Helps to connect the different parts of an essay together

2.1 Both Writers and Readers Like Thesis Statements

- Many writers use a thesis statement as an organizational aid.
- Most readers will notice a thesis statement, realize what the essay's main idea is, and better understand how the different parts of the essay are connected to each other.



2.2 Positive Reactions to Papers

Writers want their readers to have positive, rather than negative, reactions. A thesis can help readers to enjoy their reading experience.



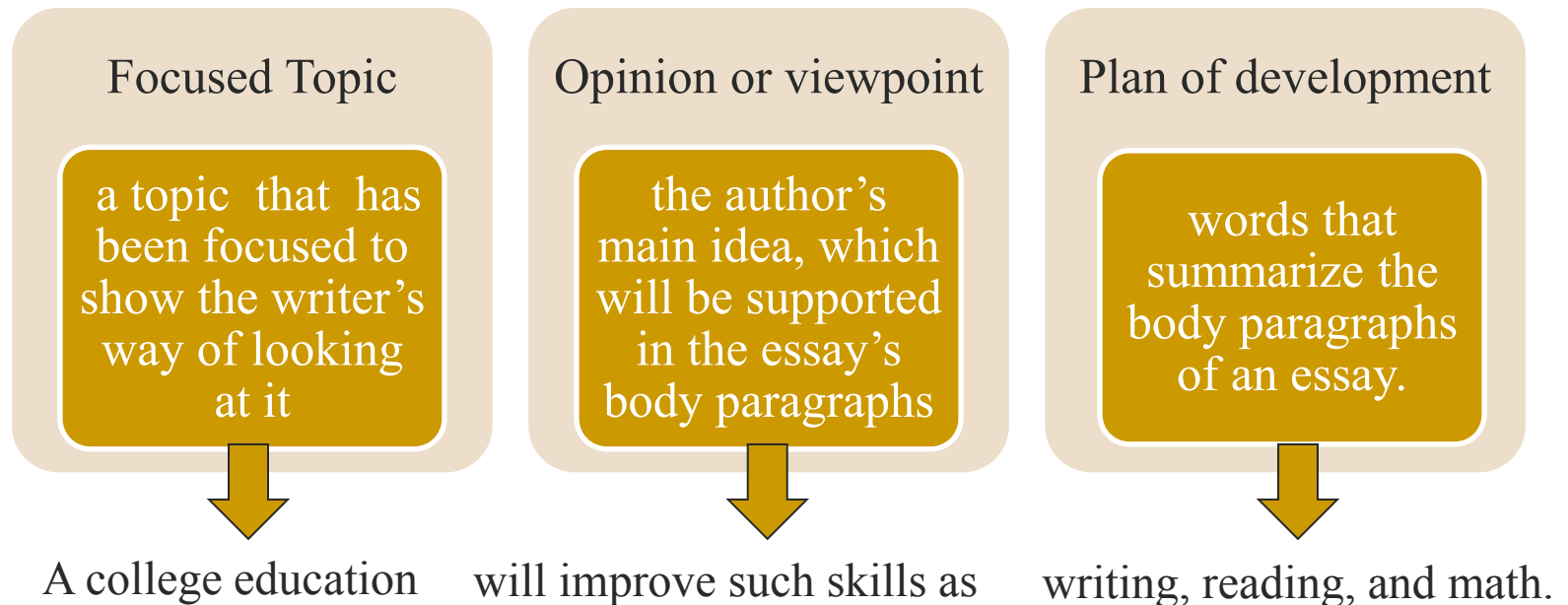
Happy:

“The first time I read this paper, I understood everything. The writer is very skillful.”

Confused:

“I read this paper twice already, and I still don’t understand it. I’ll just throw it out in the trash.”

2.3 Parts of a Thesis Statement



3. Body Paragraphs

Each body paragraph needs:

- A topic sentence and/or a main idea that clearly connects to the essay's thesis
- Details supporting the paragraph's topic sentence or main idea
- A clear focus with no ideas detracting from the paragraph's unity
- A logical structure, which can be created with clear connections between the topic sentence and its support
- Different levels of general and specific ideas

3.1 General and Specific Ideas

Many paragraphs have four or more levels of **generality** and **specificity**.

very general

general

specific

very specific

general

specific

general

very general

Strong writing skills are important for academic success, career advancement, and personal communication. *Academic success is difficult to attain if a student cannot write well.* In most classes, students do a variety of writing activities, such as taking notes, answering questions on a quiz, and writing papers. Being able to write well will help with all of these academic tasks. *Strong writing skills will also be needed to do well in a career.* Many professional positions involve taking notes at meetings, writing reports, *Finally, people need to write well to communicate with friends and family members.* For example, *With classmates, professors, colleagues at work, friends, and family members,* **having strong writing skills is important.**



4. Supporting Details

- Support the general ideas in paragraphs and essays
- Add interesting specifics
- Can take the form of:
 - narrative or descriptive details
 - examples
 - facts or statistics
 - explanations
 - information from one's own experience
 - information from other sources (with correct documentation)

5. A Conclusion

A conclusion includes one or more of these items:

- Rephrasing of the thesis statement
- Summary of the essay's main ideas
- A solution to a problem
- An action that readers of the essay can take
- Suggestions for future projects, actions, or research
- A quotation
- A memorable statement
- Final commentary about the topic

6. Organization

- Organization refers to the arrangement of ideas, parts, or objects.
- Organization often includes the use of:
 - a mode of development
 - a logical order

**bad organization:
illogical arrangement**



**good organization:
logical arrangement**



6.1 Modes of Development

- Narration
- Description
- Process analysis
- Exemplification
- Definition
- Comparison/contrast
- Causes/effects
- Division/classification
- Argument

6.2 Logical Order

- The words and sentences in an essay must be placed in an order that coincides with how the words will be read.
- Written English is read from top to bottom and from left to right.
- The words in the box to the right illustrate how the word “**one**” is read before the word “**thirteen.**”
- Three ways to order ideas are time, space, and emphasis.

**One two three four five
six seven eight nine ten
eleven twelve thirteen**

7. Idea Connections

- The thesis, topic sentences, supporting points, and details need to be connected to each other.
- Idea connections are made with:
 - Repeated words
 - Repeated ideas
 - Synonyms
 - Pronouns
 - Transitional words and phrases



7.1 Examples of Connections

The following thesis and topic sentences show how word and idea repetition can connect sentences to each other:

- Thesis:
 - A college education will improve such skills as writing, reading, and math.
- Topic sentences:
 - Strong writing skills are important for academic success, career advancement, and personal communication.
 - College classes can also help with reading skills.
 - In addition to English skills, college courses can help with math skills.

More Information

The Writing Center
at the Community
College of Rhode
Island has more
online resources.



Contact Information

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