

## Parts of a Paper

Before you even begin a paper you have to imagine who your audience will be: your nurse peers? The general public? a sixth grade class? The graduate school admission committee? Then when you are writing you have to keep in mind who you are speaking to so the paper fits their level of interest and comprehension.

Remember what I said in the beginning: 80% of writing is the creator, only the last 20% is the critic. I think this is so important I am going to repeat my message. Many of us get the creator and critic bound together so as we are trying to create, we start to criticize, "no that's not the right word," no that's not how you spell that word." And we stop, and think or look the word up. DO NOT write like that. You'll stop all creative juices. Start with the creator, which will do in mind mapping, in the end bring in the critic. The last 20 % or your time is the critic. After the paper is written, review carefully.

Back to the creator:

Once you picture your audience, and have an idea about a topic:

1. Go and search the nursing literature for what has been written.
2. Read the articles carefully. Make notes.
3. Create an annotated bib so you have what the experts are saying in your own words.
4. Now that you know what the evidence from the literature says, pre-write by creating a mind map or just free write. This is your creative part.

Finally it is time for the first draft. Here I'll describe parts of a paper followed by evidence, interpretation and analysis. Now that I have you sitting on the edge of your seat with wild anticipation let's dive in!

I know, you know this stuff from school but just to review, let's start with parts of a paper. Basically there are three parts to a paper, Introduction, Body and Conclusion.

## Introduction

Your introduction is like a sign post...it tells the readers where you are taking them and what they will see along the way. Exactly! That is just what we, as readers, want to know as we start to read. So you must make sure this information is in your intro. But guess what? The intro is often written last. That's right: last, after your paper is written. After you have said everything you go back and write the intro. Think about it. How can you write the intro first if you do not know where you are going yet? Plus, you can get writer's block by writing the intro first 'cause you don't know where your paper is headed AND if you do write it first it usually does not reflect what you are going to write. OK, now that we have that settled, let's talk about the "hook."

## HOOK

The first sentence of the introduction draws the reader in, whether the paper be a letter to the editor, a creative piece or a scholarly paper the first sentence makes you want to read on, which is why it is called a hook. You know what I mean, every good book we've read starts with a knock your socks off hook. In fact each chapter ends with one too which is why we cannot put that book down. But now we are talking about sentence number 1. The first sentence wants to grab the reader. It needs to be worked on and usually does not happen until the paper is finished, then you go back and hook the reader.

OK, so we have the reader ready to jump in, now you've got to tell them in one sentence what the paper is about, the purpose of the paper. That sentence is called the thesis statement.

## THESIS statement

The thesis statement is in the introduction and is your statement of purpose and position. You can write the thesis statement up front. In fact this it is the hardest sentence to write because it succinctly says

what the paper is about. That is the thesis statement is "what is the purpose of the paper and what stand are you taking?" The thesis is the main point of the paper. As you gather your information look for the main point of the findings. From topic to thesis statement example:

Specific topic: Mentoring in nursing.

A thesis that is too broad: "Mentoring is used in many areas of nursing practice." ( & too boring)

A too limited statement: "Mentoring at MGH gets positive evaluations."

Just right statement: "Mentoring programs for new nurses increase retention and job satisfaction."

A thesis statement is a position, not just a fact. It is your position you are taking and going to support this position in the rest of your paper. It does not have to be a radical position but one that is yours. A thesis statement I might write from looking at the research on 'at risk teens.' may be:

"It is believed adolescents that are abusing drugs are more likely to drop out of school, however, in a recent study it was demonstrated that when school disengages from adolescents they are more vulnerable to drug use."

The thesis statement gets the reader interested in reading on. Thesis statements must be written and rewritten to try them on for size. The thesis statement is the most important sentence in the paper. Here's how to write one:

Write a "working" thesis statement before you begin so you have some idea what you are writing about. So just say, "this paper is about..."

Set your paper aside and ask yourself "what is this paper about?"

Your answer is the thesis statement. TA DA!

There are tips for writing a thesis statement on <http://owl.english.purdue>,

Go to the first section, "The OWL at Purdue"

Go to Writing Process

Go to "creating a thesis statement."

#### PLAN FOR THE PAPER

Once you have hooked the reader and told them what the paper is about you write a sentence about the plan for your paper which means what your paper will cover. TRY TO PUT WHAT YOU WILL COVER INTO 3, JUST 3, MAIN POINTS. For example, "The purpose of this paper is to address the history of mentoring (then that is the first paragraph after the intro), mentoring in nursing (second paragraph) and successful mentoring programs in hospitals (third paragraph). Now that is you plan so the reader knows where you are going.

Another example, "in this paper I will address the history of mentoring, mentoring in nursing, followed by successful hospital mentoring programs."

I think the plan is very important. Once you state the plan it helps the writer stay on target and tells the reader where this paper is going. Are we having fun yet?

Next, the last sentence of the intro should be a transition sentence, transitioning to the first topic. So, for example if the first topic is the history of mentoring a transition sentence might be, "before we consider mentoring it is important to know how the concept of mentoring has evolved." You need transition sentences every time you move to another paragraph. So since I am now moving to another topic in this lecture I need a transition sentence. Here goes, "After you introduce the paper you move into the main part of the writing, the body of the paper."

## BODY

Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence. So, for example, a topic sentence could be:

Mentoring began a long way back with the Greek gods and has evolved into a critical component of modern corporate life.

Then this topic sentence is followed by evidence to support the topics mentioned: the history of mentoring and mentoring in corporate life.

Once you've given the evidence in the middle of the paragraph write a concluding sentence for each paragraph:

Similar to the history of mentoring where Mentor provided guidance to Zeus's son, in modern corporate life a mentor provides guidance for a novice colleague.

And finally write a transition sentence at the end of the paragraph to introduce the next topic, ie:

Both the mentor and the novice bring something to the table.

and the next paragraph will be about the role of the mentor and the role of the protégé. Writing an introductory sentence, citing evidence, writing a concluding sentence followed by a transition sentence sounds so formulaic but actually it works! Then you are done so write a conclusion.

## CONCLUSION

Summarize your ideas presented in the body of the paper.

Wrap up by looking back at your first paragraph. Use some of what you say in the introduction in the conclusion so it feels like the paper is coming to a close by reflecting back on where you started.

The paper should begin with

1. This is what I am going to do. (intro, thesis statement, plan for paper) Then
2. Do it, (the body of the paper)
3. The ending is: this is what I have done. (summary, wrap up from intro and finally the last, a "call to action" or one last dynamic point). Same as the components of a presentation.

Do not put new information in the conclusion. Just a summary and one or two last fantastic statements!

One last look from the critic position:

1. Make sure you have all you need in the introduction: a hook, a thesis statement and a plan for the paper (see below).
2. Make sure you have used APA correctly to cite in the body of the paper and to cite sources in the reference list.
3. Review grammar and spelling.
4. Make sure there are transition sentences between paragraphs.

Good work, now onto a great paper!