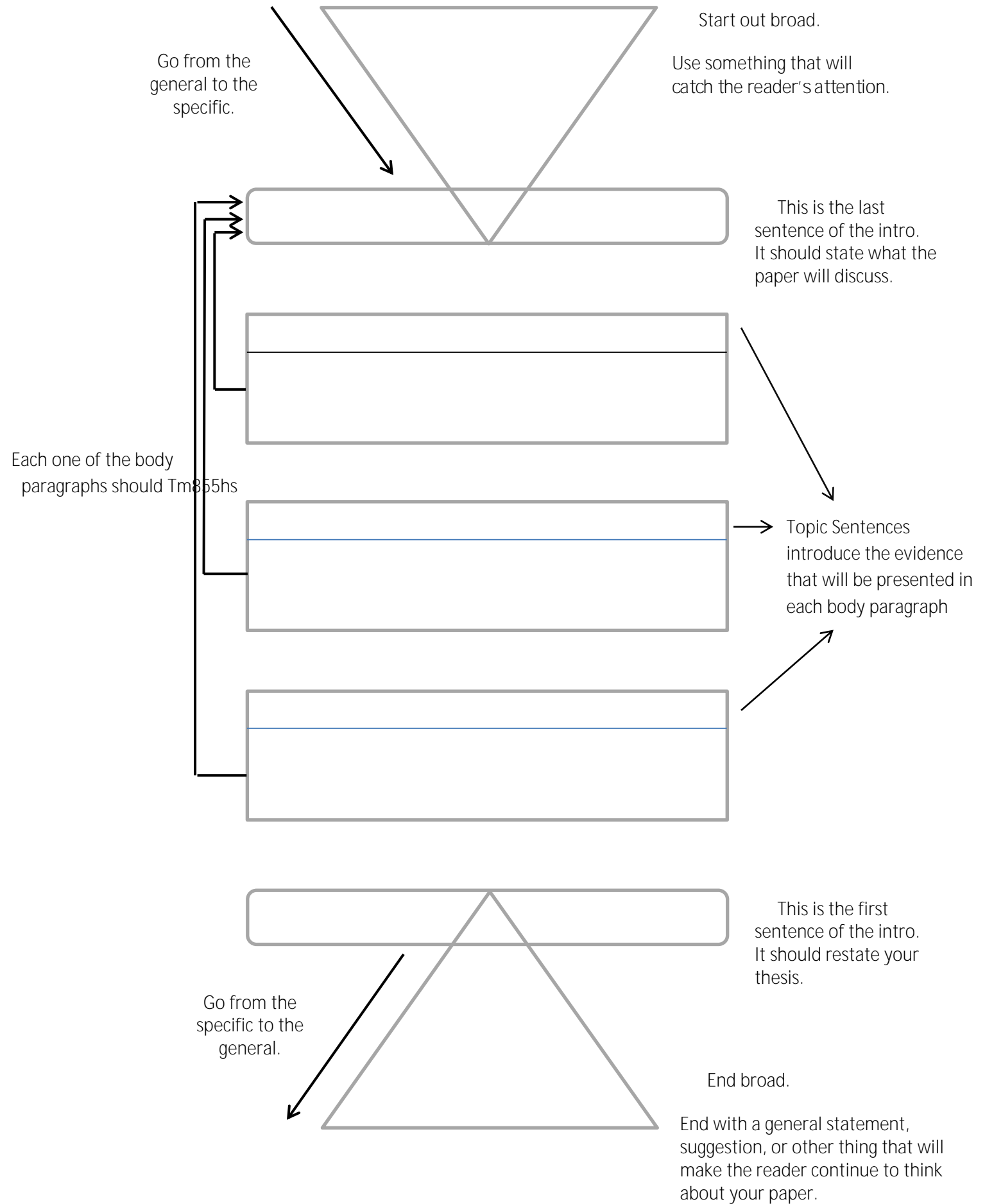


| | |
|---|-----|
| Organizing an essay – the basics | 2 |
| Cause and effect essay (longer version) | 3-4 |
| Compare/contrast essay (longer version) | 5-6 |
| Exemplification (one version) | 7 |
| Argumentation (longer version) | 8-9 |



Cause and Effect

The following are things to keep in mind when writing a cause-and-effect essay

Cause and effect analyzes why something happens. Cause-and-effect essays examine causes, describe effects, or do both.

Causes precede effects, but causality involves more than sequence: cause-and-effect analysis explains why something happened – or is happening – and predicts what probably will happen.

Do not assume that because event A precedes event B, event A has event B.

Many causes can be responsible for one effect

Arranging causes and effects

There are several options when deciding on the sequence in which you will present causes or effects:

- Present causes or effects in chronologically order;
- Introduce main cause first and then contributory causes;
- Introduce contributory causes first and then the main cause;
- Stress positive consequences by beginning with a brief introduction of negative ones;
- Emphasize negative results by summarizing the less important positive effects first;
- Begin by dismissing any events that were not causes and then explain what the real causes were; or
- Begin with most obvious causes or effect and move on to more subtle factors – and then to your analysis and conclusion.

Transitions

Transitions are very important to cause-and-effect essays

Use but to distinguish causes from effects and help readers.

Use because to distinguish main from contributory causes.

Use as a result to distinguish immediate from remote causes.

Use the transitions and in causal chains to help the reader sort out the sequence.

Use so in causal chains to help the reader understand causal relationships.

NOTE:

Words such as because and so indicate a cause (WHY something happened).

Words such as

Structuring a compare/contrast essay

There are two basic compare/contrast strategies: subject by subject or point by point.

Subject-by-subject: you essentially write a separate essay for each subject, but you discuss the same points for both subjects. After selecting your points, arrange them in a logical order – such as by their increasing significance. This strategy is most appropriate for short, uncomplicated papers.

Point-by-point: you make a point about one subject and then follow it with a comparable point about the other. This alternating pattern continues throughout the body of your essay until all your points have been made. This strategy is useful for longer, more complicated essays in which you discuss many different points. NOTE: in order to avoid falling into a monotonous, back-and-forth movement between points, vary your sentence structure as you move from point to point and use clear transitions.

Transitions

Transitions are important in compare/contrast essays because they supply readers with clear signals and identify individual similarities and differences. Without these, readers will have a hard time following your discussion and may lose track of the significance of the points you are making.

Use

Exemplification

The following are things to keep in mind when writing an exemplification essay

Exemplification uses one or more particular cases, or examples, to illustrate or explain a general point or an abstract concept.

Sweeping generalizations and vague statements are not nearly as effective as specific observations, anecdotes, details, and opinions.

Use examples to explain, clarify, add interest, and persuade. How many examples is enough to support your thesis will depend on your thesis and your purpose.

Choose a sufficient range of examples.

Formulating a thesis

The thesis statement of an exemplification essay makes a point that the rest of the essay will support with examples. This statement usually identifies your topic as well as the main point you want to make about it. NOTE: before formulating a thesis, think of the examples you will present in support for it; that way, you will be able to test your ideas and their validity as well as understand the opposing viewpoints.

Structuring an argumentative essay

Exemplification essays usually begin with an introduction that includes the thesis statement, which is supported by examples in the body of the essay. Each body paragraph may develop a separate example,

Argumentation

The following are things to keep in mind when writing an argumentative essay

Argumentation is a process of reasoning that asserts the soundness of a debatable position, belief, or conclusion. Argumentation takes a stand – supported by evidence – and urges people to share the writer's perspective and insights.

Although an argumentation is generally based on appeals to logic, a writer may also use appeals based on emotion and/or the reputation of the writer in order to persuade readers. NOTE: Whatever appeal you decide to use, make sure it is a fair one. Lies, threats, misleading statements, and appeals to greed and prejudice – although they may be effective at times – are unacceptable ways of reaching an audience. Such appeals will undercut your audience's belief in your trustworthiness and weaken your argument.

When choosing a topic, choose a topic in which you are emotionally or intellectually invested. Make sure you are open minded about such topic though, and that you are also able and willing to consider other people's viewpoints on the topic. Being able to anticipate the viewpoints of the opposition can help you formulate a stronger argument.

Thoroughly inform yourself about the topic.

Make sure you chose an issue narrow enough to discuss in the space available to you. If the issue involves too many aspects, be willing to confine your discussion to one aspect of a broader issue.

Consider your _____ – what do you expect your argument to accomplish? How do you wish your audience to respond?

opposite position. If at least some people would support such statement, then your thesis is indeed debatable.

Structuring an argumentative essay

There are multiple ways of structuring an argumentative essay. Generally speaking, make sure that you have a clear thesis statement; make sure that throughout your body paragraphs you support your thesis by presenting evidence; and make sure you address possible counter arguments (at least the more important ones).

Transitions

Transitional words and phrases in an argumentative essay help readers keep track of the argument.

Argumentative essays use transitions to signal a shift in focus. Use *and* to present specific points in support of your argument. Use *and* to refute opposing arguments. Use *and* when presenting your argument's conclusion.

Here are some useful transitions for argumentation: all in all, as a result, finally, first, second, third, for example, for instance, for these reasons, however, in addition, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in short, in summary, nevertheless, on the one hand...on the other hand, still, therefore, thus, yet.

Recognizing and avoiding fallacies

Fallacies are illogical statements that may sound reasonable or true, but are actually deceptive and dishonest. The following fallacies are some of the most common ones. Not all common fallacies are included in this list.

Bandwagon: This fallacy occurs when a conclusion is reached on the basis of too little evidence.

Appeal to Authority: This fallacy occurs when people attempt to strengthen an argument with references to experts or famous people who have no expertise on the issue.