

## Research Essay Components and Structure

### Introduction

- 1) One might give an illustrative anecdote (a brief story), to get the reader involved on the human level (on emotional, philosophical, and aesthetic levels).
- 2) Introduce the topic, problem, issue.
- 3) State the **research question(s)**.
- 4) State one's possible answer (one's hypothetical answer, one's hypothesis) to the research question -- if one has a possible answer in mind.
- 5) Discuss the history (past), contexts (present), and implications (future) of the question and answer.
- 6) Explain why one's research question(s), and answer(s) (hypotheses), are important.
- 7) Discuss what individuals and communities, and what disciplines of scholarship, have considered these questions.
- 8) State some limitations of the project (state some matters one's essay *will not* discuss).
- 9) State what one are going to do in the balance of the essay. For example: state what kinds of evidence to support one's hypotheses one will be giving

### Main Body

- 1) Present the data that one has gathered:  
Cite any evidence that one has found.
- 2) Support one's hypothesis, build one's argument for that hypothesis:
  - a) Use logic, reason.
  - b) Cite common sense.
  - c) Cite personal reflections.
  - d) Cite authorities (famous scholars and other people, and their sayings and writings).
  - e) Cite public opinion, backed up by "opinion polls," and "surveys" (including original ones you may have conducted).
  - f) Cite tradition.
- 3) Discuss other possible answers to the research question. That is: raise and reply to points of view that may be oppositional to one's own.

### Conclusion

- 1) Summarize and review any of the above
- 2) State what you have done up to this point in the essay), and briefly once again present one's hypotheses (one's answers to the research questions)
- 3) Express solidarity with readers, and appeal to the *common good*: that is, explain why one's hypotheses, one's answers, are correct and useful, and why it might be beneficial for the reader to agree with these hypotheses and adopt them.
- 4) Suggest future scholarship projects, to follow up on the present one.