

How I Write.

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Topic is assigned.
Choose theme.
Select thesis.
Systematic appreciation of proof.
Find / select sources.
1st reading of sources.
Modify strategy of proof.
Re-muster.



Recursive process designed to generate the most concise thesis statement possible.



Rarely more than a cursory glance.

Done together, to produce a systematic outline and introduction.

Write introduction.

Problem
 Thesis
 Method
 Definitions / Terms / Overhead
 Modules
 Conclusion

2nd reading of sources.

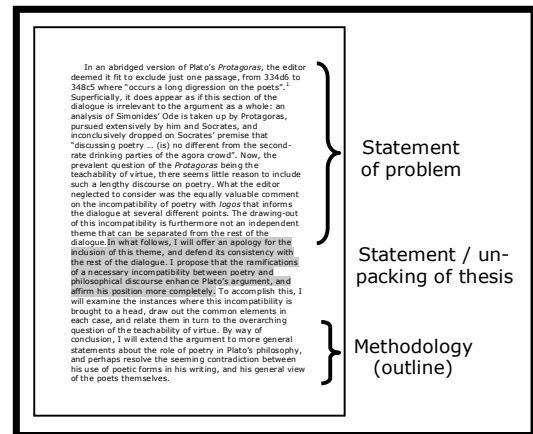
Attempt to use research flag system.

Write body of argument, following outline.

Bibliography written in tandem with citations.

Write conclusion.

Essentially a restatement of introduction;
 however, problem is resolved and
 significance of resolution is underscored.



Typical structure of an introduction

Definitions:

Problem: the initial reason, often stated via metaphor, why the thesis is important and the argument is worth writing.

Overhead: the conceptual caveats / analytical tools / discursive idioms upon which the argument is predicated.

Module: any discrete, self-contained phase of the argument.

Research flags: bookmarks that link passages in sources to a central annotated list describing how the information is relevant to the argument.

Reflections:

The strength of this approach lies in the linearity of the argumentative process: every module is listed sequentially in the introduction, and itself contains an outline for its own content to which the writer can always refer.

While this method is tried and true for essays where a quasi-formal proof is necessary, 'curveballs' like article reviews or summaries where no real argumentation takes place require massive, frustrating methodological changes.

There is a *lot* of waiting involved, while ideas ferment and the structure becomes clear. The preparation stage easily takes twice as long as the composition itself.

This method evolved over 1.5 years from freshman year until it reached the point where it could be formally articulated in its above state: it is a product of 3 semesters' practice. This makes teaching it somewhat difficult; I suggest using my personal experience as an example to highlight the versatility and variety of writing practices, and NOT an absolute answer.