

Organizational Strategy for Essay III Introductions

Use the following organizational model to set up & arrange your argument strategy for your Essay III Introduction. Bring your "Introduction-in-Progress" and, if you'd like to also receive feedback on your argument-in-progress, a pre-draft Roadmap to Wednesday's class for writing workshop. You should be able to map or flowchart of your E3 INTRO.

Organizing Introductions Using "Lens Texts" & RSMs

- Begin the introduction with an interesting, *relevant*, attention-getting HOOK that gets your readers' attention, helps introduce MOTIVE, STANCE, and perhaps even any KEYTERMS for the argument. You should have a clear sense of the AUDIENCE that you are writing to and why. When you wrote Essay II, I recommend a quotation from a course reading OR a very specific example of one of the major Keyterms/Issues (Panopticism, spectacle, mechanical reproduction, etc.) to use as your hook. For Essay III, YOU must choose the KEYTERMS and/or SOURCE quotation you want to cite as a HOOK that conveys your MOTIVE and STANCE
- EXPLAIN meaning + significance of the HOOK to establish your argument's FOCUS.
- In you have introduced any KEYTERMS to establish the FOCUS of your argument, you will want to use the RSM of DEFINITION to define it and the RSM of explanation to explain to your audience why you have chosen to use it &/or how it functions in your argument.
- Use a STITCHING TRANSITIONS & RSM (connect, juxtapose, explain, oppose, contextualize, or historicize, etc.) to introduce the LENS or FRAMEWORK that you have chosen to help FOCUS and CONTEXTUALIZE your THESIS. Unlike Essay II, you have to choose which SOURCES, KEYTERMS, and QUOTATION to cite to show the audience the existing argument about your topic and how you are entering into it. In some cases, you will want to CONTEXTUALIZE by using more than one source, especially if your argument is entering a conversation that has multiple sides.
- Use a Stitching Transition &/or RSMs like connection, particularization, juxtaposition, differentiation, distinguishing, etc. to transition to, introduce, and show either the relationship of this conversation with your I SAY THESIS that shows how you have chosen to enter the conversation/argument/debate. Your THESIS should make a complex, focused, specific, particularized, and evaluative I SAY Assertion that incorporates your most important KEYTERM(s).
- Your EVOLVING THESIS ASSERTION should also convey your strong STANCE, be connected to your MOTIVE, and be written using succinct diction.
- Don't be surprised if your introductory paragraph is 1 ½-2 pages long.

**Choose succinct & concrete diction, Keyterms, sources to cite, & RSMs to consciously develop an organizational strategy for your Essay III Introduction. Every sentence should have a function & a purpose in the introduction, as well as contribute to your strategy for setting up the essay's argument. Every part of this strategy should be connected using Stitching Transitions. No sentences should be randomly written, out of place, or disconnected to the main ideas, diction, tone, Motive, Stance, THESIS claim or organizational strategy of the argument.*

“Kinds” of Essay: Getting Past 5-Paragraph Structure in Expository Writing

Your Goal: A strategically organized essay whose paragraphs follow one another based on an underlying logic, rather random, stream-of-consciousness or the reductive and limiting 5-paragraph sandwich.

What Follows: a list of possible ways to conceive an essay strategy whose paragraphs achieve this goal.

Compare & contrast: Simple, yes, but this structure can be *deceptively* simple. (No, this is not advice to deceive your reader...) Predictably alternating paragraphs—or, instead, potentially imbalanced sets of paragraphs. A bland resolution—or a strongly committed resolution, even one that challenges the initial terms of comparison. (This structure can be embedded inside a larger structure...)

***Detail/close reading-driven:** An essay that is focused around a single detail, or a small set of such details (a single word and related words; a particular syntactic structure; a particular image/image group; a figure/images or set of related figures; a particular interpretive problem in a given text). Such an essay offers the opportunity to move from micro to macro—to show how the local detail in question allows one to move to a larger level of analysis (e.g., the text / the author’s body of work) with a renewed understanding. (The opposite of this essay would be the “big-picture” essay, one that *begins* with a small moment and then builds up to the level of world-historical significance—a tough structure for beginning writers, but one that it’s worth learning to recognize and evaluate skeptically.)

***Theme/theory-driven:** An essay that uses a particular theme or theoretical perspective as a lens through which to view the question, and consistently develops that angle throughout. “Writing as an expert in feminist theory” is one thing; “writing as a woman” is another—but there is a real and meaningful connection between the two strategies! In a sense, this is a *stance*-driven essay...

***Problem-driven:** A subcategory of the previous strategy. Here the writer locates and identifies an existing problem or debate, a problem given a context by a particular body of knowledge, and seeks to intervene. (Again, you do not need to write this one as an “expert”; again, the question of stance will be critical....)

Narrative/chronological/historical: An essay that “tells a story,” of course, but how will you give the story analytical force? Ideally, the story would by its very existence be argumentative—whether by being opposed to some other story, or by being opposed to some non-narrative way of understanding what’s at stake. At other times, the argumentative implications of your story may need to be more explicitly developed. ******(Warning: when you write an essay that follows the narrative of a text, you are likely to find that you have fallen into summarizing other arguments, rather than citing them to support YOUR argument strategy; the organization or your argument strategy should not mimic the organizational strategy of another text! ****** It is also possible to compose strategically placed “historical background” or “definition” paragraphs that serve the purpose of proving necessary history or background or definitions or interlocutor positions prior to proceeding with YOUR argument. This type of paragraph typically occurs right after the introduction.

***Bait and switch:** A two-part, unbalanced structure. A strategic “set-up.” The writer sets up a hypothetical, while knowing all along that the assumption or argument in question is limited—and then suddenly moves, in the second part of the essay, to convincingly demolish the initial position by replacing it with her real claim.

***Contrarian:** An essay that, *without ranting and raving, or being perverse for the sake of perversity*, challenges the assumptions of the given framework, the materials available, the assigned question, the prevailing viewpoint. Such an essay, when effective, will locate an underlying assumption shared by an “agreed-upon” context, and challenge that assumption, even if only in a hypothetical way: “But what if X *wasn’t* the case?” A contrarian stance doesn’t have to be *overtly* contrarian: it can be subtle (consider, for example, challenging a binary opposition offered by a source text, or redefining a Keyterm, thereby implicitly exposing a source’s definition as inadequate). (To take a contrarian stance on an issue is one thing; to *identify* oneself as contrarian is far more problematic.)

These are not the only possible organization models; you may have come up with one of your own (you may even have a label for it!) If so, ask me about it....