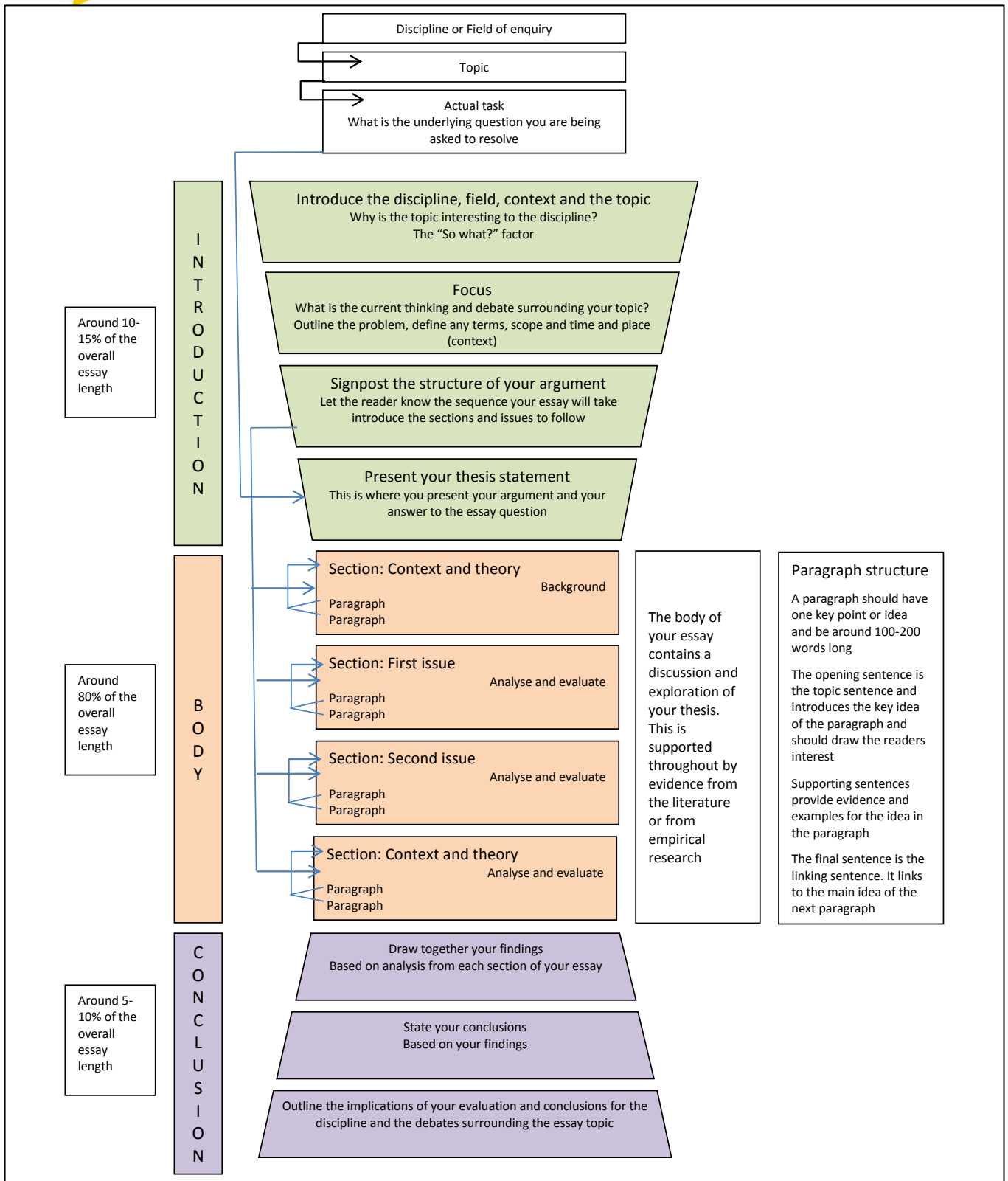


Academic Essay Structure



Essay Structure

Introduction

This section is important as it is what the reader reads first. It should explain to the reader what your essay is about. See the Quicktip on paragraph writing.

Body

The body of an essay is where your argument is developed. It should be written in correctly formed paragraphs. See the Quicktip on paragraph writing.

Conclusion

The conclusion draws your argument together. It is generally a shorter paragraph than the Introduction. It should restate the thesis statement, to leave the reader with your argued position in their minds.

Topic

The topic is the task or question that has been set for you by your lecturer. It is always essential that you address exactly what is asked of you. Marks will not be given for a response that is not on the set topic regardless of how well written the assignment is.

Underlying question

In an essay-style task, the lecturer usually wants more than an appropriate response to the task. The lecturer would usually expect you to take a position on the topic. Based on your research, you are expected to support your position through evidence and discussion. The position is often called the thesis statement and its development in the body of the essay is called the argument.

Important Tip

The diagram above (adapted from Rao, Channock, & Krishnan, 2007) is an overview of a conventional academic essay written without headings. Different disciplines (e.g., engineering, psychology, education) and courses may have varying interpretations on the structure of the essay. Always consult carefully with the assignment tasks and exemplars provided by lecturers before you start to write your essay. When in doubt about the essay requirements you should ask your lecturer.

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The Library can help you to develop your academic learning language and maths skills for success at university. Consultations are available face-to-face, phone, email and Zoom video chat.

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Source

Rao, V., Channock, K., & Krishnan, L. (2000). *A Visual Guide to Essay Writing*, Association for Academic Language and Learning (ALL): Sydney.