



Common Essay Terminology

The Writer's Block
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- **Introduction:** The opening paragraph that sets up the topic of the paper. This is also where you'll state the central claim, or thesis.
- **Thesis:** Your central claim or main argument. Simplify this as best as you can, but don't worry if it takes a few sentences. A thesis is often followed by a few sub-claims which preview your body paragraphs.
- **Body paragraphs:** The paragraphs between the Introduction and Conclusion that contain the evidence, explanation, analysis, research, etc. Each body paragraph should focus on one central idea that communicates an aspect of the thesis. When you are done discussing that point, move on to the next idea in a new body paragraph.
- **Topic sentence:** The first sentence of the body paragraph that makes a claim as to what is being discussed in that paragraph.
- **Claims & Sub-claims:** Statements that are arguable; i.e. claims require evidence to support them. Multiple sub-claims should work together to support or to lay out and explain the thesis. Claims can be built on evidence from sources.
- **Evidence:** Information and details that support your claims, usually drawn from sources.
- **Conclusion:** The final paragraph reminds the reader of your overall argument. Drive home your point and leave the reader with an important final thought.
- **Citation:** The author's name and the page number that identifies the source for a claim or evidence. Cite when quoting directly or simply borrowing and paraphrasing an idea.
- **Bibliography:** An alphabetical list of the sources you used, organized by authors' last names. In MLA this is called a Works Cited page while in APA this is known as a Reference page.