



**The Catholic University of America**  
**Writing Center Handout**

## Organization Strategies

Almost all academic papers begin with an **introduction** and end with a **conclusion**. But what goes in between? The **body** of your essay is where you will explain, develop, and argue for the idea you put forth in your **thesis statement**.

There are several models for essay organization. The two described below are tried-and-true classics.

### The Classical Argument

1. **Introduction.** *Please see the Handout on Introductions and Conclusions. Please also see the Handout on Thesis Statements.*
2. **Statement of fact.** Give the history of your topic and any other foundational material your reader will need to know to understand your arguments.
3. **Confirmation.** Present your arguments for your thesis- point by point. It's called confirmation because you "confirm," or prove, your thesis.
4. **Refutation.** Present ideas that conflict with your thesis and then show how those ideas are wrong. It's called refutation because you "refute," or prove wrong, ideas that oppose your thesis.
5. **Conclusion.** See handout on Introductions and Conclusions.

#### Two important points:

- **One section of this model does not necessarily equal one paragraph** in your essay! The confirmation section will probably require several paragraphs, for example.
- **You do not have to present all your confirming arguments together and all your refutations together.** A good strategy is to pair them up, so that you present one confirming argument, then present an opposing argument, then refute the opposing argument, and so on.

### The Toulmin Model

1. **Introduction-** including **Claim.** *Please see the Handout on Introductions and Conclusions. In the Toulmin model, "Claim" = Thesis Statement.*

2. **Data.** Present facts and evidence that back up your claim.
3. **Warrant.** This is the most important part of the Toulmin argument, where you explain *how* the data supports the claim. How are the two sections connected?
4. **Backing.** Provide any other logic your reader needs to see the connection between your claim and your data.
5. **Counterclaim.** Present ideas that conflict with your claim.
6. **Rebuttal.** Explain how those counterclaims are wrong.
7. **Conclusion.** *Please see the Handout on Introductions and Conclusions.*

You will need to move smoothly from section to section in your paper no matter which organizational model you choose. For more information, please see the Handouts on **Transitions** and **Topic Sentences**.

**For further information, please use the following links via Purdue OWL:**

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/academic\\_writing/essay\\_writing/argumentative\\_essays.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/essay_writing/argumentative_essays.html)

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/academic\\_writing/historical\\_perspectives\\_on\\_argumentation/classical\\_argument.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/historical_perspectives_on_argumentation/classical_argument.html)

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/academic\\_writing/establishing\\_arguments/organizing\\_your\\_argument.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/establishing_arguments/organizing_your_argument.html)