

How The OWL Checks For Paper Structure

When we review a paper for structure or citations, we check these areas and ask these questions to help develop content.

1. the 1st paragraph:

- What's the topic of this paper? Can you add a sentence stating that?
- What main point (thesis) did you want to make? What position are you taking?
 - *Remember* – a thesis may not be a strong argument, but it should be a position, not a statement of fact.
- Does the point you're making answer the question raised in the assignment?
- Not every paper will, but can you hint at the supports for your point that you'll explore further in the paper?

2. the body paragraphs:

- Do you have examples? How can you illustrate this point? What evidence do you have to support this?
- Can you explain this further? Who or what was involved? How was who or what involved? What was the result? What was the lesson learned?
- Is there a contradictory example or counter-argument? What does that involve? How does it compare to your example? Which is stronger and why?
- How does this information support your main point?

3. When we come across a **fact, figure or idea**:

- Where did you get this information? What is your source?
- Do you have both an in-text citation and an end reference for this fact, figure, or idea?
- Are you working in MLA, APA, or Chicago – footnote or endnote?
 - Need an end references for every citation in alpha order with hanging indent
- Have you seen the AARC Formatting & Reference Guide? - <http://libguides.sfasu.edu/aarc/formref>

4. **Flow and transition** between body paragraphs:

- How does this next support relate to the one before it?
- Is there another support or contrasting support for further explanation?
- Where are the words that indicate what is coming next? For example, 'by contrast', 'in addition'?
- You mentioned X earlier. Does this information belong here or there?

5. the conclusion:

- What is the main point you were trying to make in this paper?
- OR – the main point you make in the conclusion is X. Is that idea also in your introduction?
- Can you summarize your supports briefly?
- Have you answered all the questions in the assignment?