

## CHECKING YOUR PAPER'S STRUCTURE

To “gloss” your paper means to write a short summary phrase of each of your body paragraphs that explains the main topic of each paragraph. Glossing helps writers check that topic sentences are accurate, paragraphs are in a logical order, and the thesis statement reflects what is written in the body of the paper. These elements help guide your reader through your thought process. Follow the steps below to check that your organization and topic sentences support the claim in your thesis.

### **STEP ONE: LOOK AT YOUR BODY PARAGRAPHS.**


- Read each of your body paragraphs.
- Write a short phrase that accurately and concisely states the main topic and/or purpose of the paragraph, either in the margins of your paper, or on the back of this handout.

### **STEP TWO: REVIEW YOUR TOPIC SENTENCES AND REVISE IF NECESSARY.**

- Check that the topic sentence of each of your paragraphs contains phrases or key terms from the short summaries of the paragraphs that you wrote in Step One.
- Revise topic sentences that are not accurate, to reflect the main topic of each paragraph.

### **STEP THREE: IF NECESSARY, CREATE NEW PARAGRAPHS.**

- Divide any paragraphs that contain more than one main topic, creating a paragraph for each topic. Write topic sentences and transition sentences for any paragraphs you add.
- Combine any paragraphs that are too closely related to justify separate paragraphs and topic sentences. A standard essay paragraph contains 4-5 sentences.

*( Your paper may contain several paragraphs about one topic, as long as each paragraph introduces separate issues about that one topic. In this case, use clear topic sentences to demonstrate how each paragraph addresses a different aspect of that topic.)*

### **STEP FOUR: CHECK THE ORDER OF YOUR PARAGRAPHS.**

- Review the order of your paragraphs and ask yourself the following questions:
  - Do your transitions clearly lead the reader from one topic to the next?*
    - If not, add transition sentences, as necessary, or revise your existing transitions.
  - Do each of your paragraphs support the one that follows?*
    - If not, rearrange your paragraphs into a logical, persuasive order, as necessary.

### **STEP FIVE: REVIEW YOUR THESIS.**

- Review your thesis and confirm that it reflects the topics of your body paragraphs. Ask yourself the following questions:
  - Do your topic sentences support the claim made in your thesis?
  - Does your thesis contain elements of each main idea from the body of your paper?
- Revise your thesis statement to reflect the topics of your body paragraphs, if necessary.

## A Guide for Glossing Your Essay

Use the following form to gloss your paper:

- Identify the main topic of each of your body paragraphs.
- Confirm that each topic sentence reflects the main topic, as well the claim in your thesis.
- Revise your topic sentences and/or thesis as necessary.
- Confirm that your conclusion supports your thesis and doesn't introduce any new topics.

Thesis statement before glossing:

*Revised thesis statement:*

### **Body paragraph #1**

Summary phrase or sentence:

*Topic sentence:*

### **Body paragraph #2**

Summary phrase or sentence:

*Topic sentence:*

### **Body paragraph #3**

Summary phrase or sentence:

*Topic sentence:*

### **Body paragraph #4**

Summary phrase or sentence:

*Topic sentence:*

### **Body paragraph #5**

Summary phrase or sentence:

*Topic sentence:*

### **Body paragraph #6**

Summary phrase or sentence:

*Topic sentence:*

Concluding statement: