

To shape an essay or article

Make sure:

- The title, introduction, and conclusion or ending all work together—all should point in the same direction
- The introduction accurately forecasts what the essay or article is about, by either stating a thesis or posing a question (the question may be implicit, in the form of a clearly focused problem)
- Transitions/topic sentences link back to the main focus as set out in the intro
- Topic sentences clearly shape paragraphs
- Examples clearly link to the thesis or question
- The balance or proportion of information, explanation, argument, and reflection is appropriate for your thesis or question
- All paragraphs and sentences aren't on the same level of detail—i.e., make sure to give some key examples more time/depth
- Readers can hear your voice in the essay/article. Another way of saying this: provide sufficient reflection and comment beyond just providing information and argument from sources.

In addition:

- Identify a core reader for the essay/article (this reader may be directly mentioned or may remain implicit, but must be clear in your mind)
- Address concerns of those readers in transitions, with examples, and with counterarguments

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