

Kajsa Rain Forden's Ultimate Essay Cheat Sheet

Thesis: an ***Opinion*** that you are trying to prove with ***Facts***. Must include:

1. *your opinion* - this can be a theory, an interpretation, a perspective, etc
2. 1-2 supporting factors summarized each into 2-3 words
3. Some teachers have certain unique requirements; make sure you reach them.

Simple Example: *Essay writing is a difficult task* due to its time-consuming nature and the pressure to earn a good grade.

Some theses and essay requirements may be more complicated, but the general gist of a thesis is above. While most teachers prefer one sentence theses, many college professors accept or even encourage two sentence theses.

*Paragraph Development - Start with body paragraphs **before your other paragraphs**. Inevitably, your final essay might not match what you initially intended to write, and that could mean completely rewriting your introduction or conclusion if you wrote them first.*

Step 1: Paragraph 1 (P1) Topic Sentence - focus on Supporting Factor #1, a hook based on information you have researched/discovered, and its effect on your opinion.

Example: *With writing time ranging from two to ten hours, many students agree that essays are the longest assignments.*

Step 2: Paragraph 2, with Supporting Factor #2 - repeat process from Step 1.

Step 2 ½ - repeat this as necessary depending on number of factors, or intent of essay (such as compare & contrast, etc)

Note: *Make sure the order of the factors in your thesis reflects the order of factor-based paragraphs and vice-versa.*

Step 3: Develop your body paragraphs (Topic Sentence, Transitions, Quote Sandwiches, Conclusion Sentences)

- a) After Topic Sentence, write a **transition sentence** to segue into **Supporting Evidence 1** (quotes, statistics, etc)
- b) **Supporting Evidence 1** should be properly “**Quote Sandwich**”-ed.

- i) Introduction (including author or original source) -> quote/statistic/evidence -> “In other words” (or similar transition phrase) -> analysis of quote (how the quote supports your thesis)
- c) After Quote Sandwich #1, **Transition Sentence connecting #1 with #2.**
- d) **Quote Sandwich #2.**
 - i) *This continues until you have all evidence addressed.*
- e) After all evidence, **Transition Sentence that doubles as a Conclusion sentence**
 - i) Based on which paragraph you’re in, this sentence will act to transition or connect from one paragraph to another
 - ii) **If between body paragraphs**, this sentence should connect the first Paragraph to the topic in the second Paragraph.
 - iii) **If between a body paragraph and your Conclusion Paragraph**, use this sentence primarily as a summarizing Conclusion Sentence for that body paragraph.

Step 4: Develop your Introduction Paragraph

- a) You already have a thesis; make sure to review it and check that it still reflects your essay.
- b) Start the Intro Paragraph with **a hook**: an interesting factoid, a story that relates to your overall essay topic, or even a quote (properly cited).
- c) **Transition Sentence** from your opening to a general summary of Supporting Factor #1
- d) **General Summary 1** - example: *Many homework assignments, especially when compounded, spend even more of the student’s time; but the top spender is often essay assignments, requiring research, wordsmithing, and peer reviews before the final draft.*
 - i) **Note: this is NOT the place for supporting evidence, facts, or statistics.**
- e) **Transition Sentence #2** - from Supporting Factor #1 to #2
- f) **General Summary #2.**
 - i) *Continue this pattern as necessary.*
- g) **Transition Sentence** to Thesis

Step 5: Develop your Conclusion Paragraph

- a) Start with a **Summary Statement** based on the **Transition Sentence from your last body paragraph**
 - i) Example: (If last body paragraph concerned grade pressure) *With the pressure for higher grade point averages and the amount of time required to complete a worthwhile assignment, essay writing continues to be one of the most difficult processes. (It’s like a thesis, but backwards - a Siseth.)*
- b) Consider this paragraph similar to an **Introduction Paragraph done backwards.**

- c) **General Summary of Paragraph #1** - you can use a combination of your Topic Sentence and Conclusion/Transition Sentence to develop this one.
 - i) *Continue as needed*; make sure you use transition phrases between each sentence
- d) **Final Conclusion Sentence**: This is a combination of a hook and a final thought. Pretend like the goal of this sentence is to be the **perfect lead up to “dropping the mic”**

Step 6:

- a) If you haven't already, **go over your in-essay citations**. If they are MLA formatting (as most are), they should look like this: “My essays are super **hard**” (**Forde 72**).
 - i) The period should come after the citation
- b) Develop your **bibliography** (EasyBib is your friend!)
- c) Make sure your formatting is correct, whether **MLA or APA or Chicago**. MLA is most common in high school, but many university professors prefer APA and Chicago.
- d) **Read your essay aloud** to yourself
 - i) This always helps catch any issues in flow or tone, and might help you catch any spelling or punctuation errors.
 - ii) As an extra measure, you can put your essay through an online PaperRater, which will tell you (for free!) if or where your paper might need extra help.

Step 7: Treat yo' self! You just powered through an essay! A+++++