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Writing Fundamentals

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Terminal Learning Objective

Action: Write an essay on one of the topics listed in the assignment instructions.

Conditions: As a learner and leader attending the ALC DL, using an organizational-level leadership perspective in a notional tactical and operational environment, given references, practical exercises and classroom discussions

Standards: APA 6th ed.

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ELO A: Essay Fundamentals

Action: Discuss essay fundamentals and development using the 5 paragraph approach.

Conditions: As a learner and leader attending the ALC DL, using an organizational-level leadership perspective in a notional tactical and operational environment, given references, practical exercises and classroom discussions

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Essay Fundamentals

- Short pieces of writings that provide discourse through close reading, analysis, comparison and contrast, persuasion, conciseness, clarity and exposition
- Six steps to developing an essay:
 - Step 1: Organize your thoughts (Brainstorming)
 - Step 2: Research your topic
 - Step 3: Develop a Thesis Statement
 - Step 4: Write the Introduction
 - Step 5: Write the Body of the Essay
 - Step 6: Write the Conclusion

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Step 1: Organizing your Thoughts (Brainstorming)

- Take inventory of what you know
- Not a time for evaluating your ideas, but grouping ideas
- Conducted in various forms
 - Free writing
 - Subject Tree
 - List Clustering
 - Outline

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Step 2: Research your Topic

- Research your topic through reference works, books, and scholarly articles
- Ensure that you collect reference information to avoid plagiarism
- Organization of thoughts and research of the topic are interrelated

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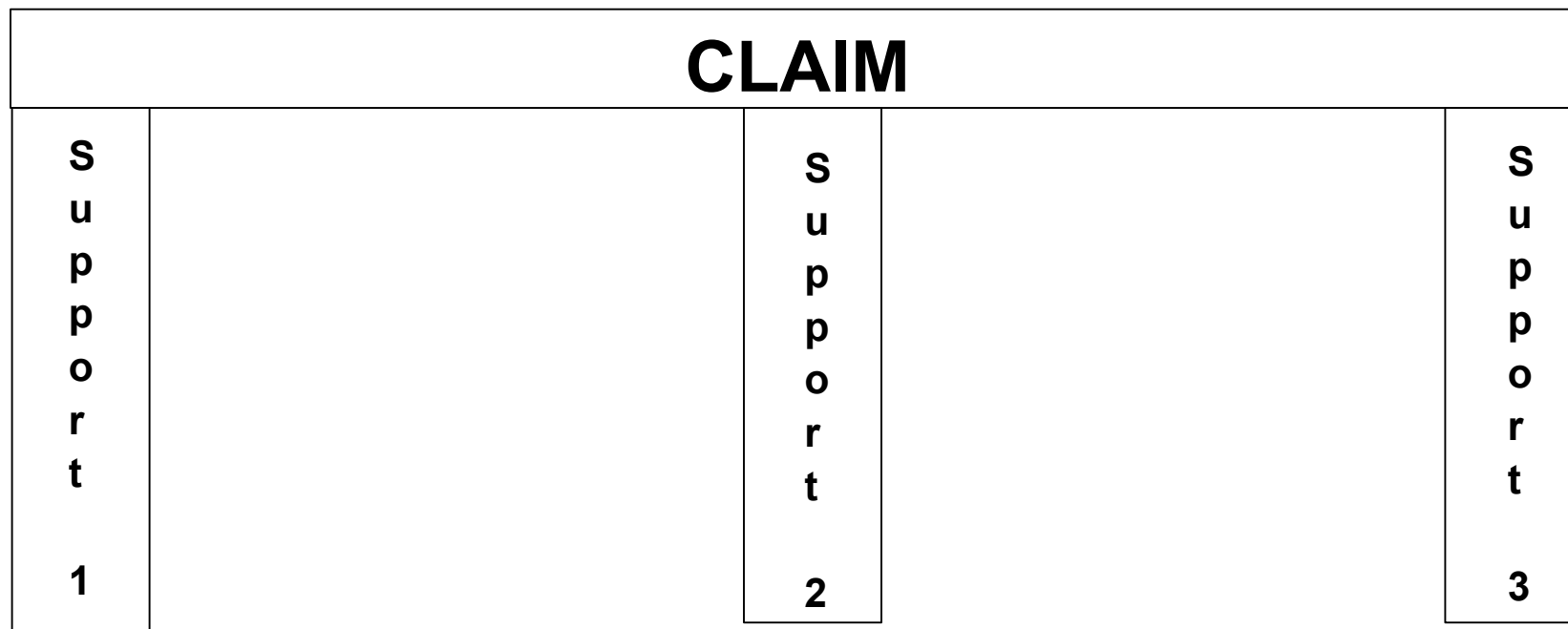
Step 3: Develop a Thesis Statement

- Two main components
 - A claim
 - Supporting details
- Claim is a one-sentence statement that makes an assertion or takes a stance, generalized (not a fact), debatable, and is presented in the introduction of the essay
 - Example: **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a complex condition.**

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- Supporting Details reinforce the claim.
- Generally, three supporting details are outlined in the thesis statement.





Step 4: Write the Introduction

- The introduction consists of the topic, definition, relevance and thesis statement
- One paragraph listing the three supporting examples/points that support the thesis statement
- The introduction answers three important questions:
 - What is this?
 - Why am I reading it?
 - What do you want me to do (takeaway)?



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Step 5: Write the Body of the Essay

- Most detailed part- necessary evidence
- The body is comprised of one paragraph for each point made in the introduction (3 points = 3 paragraphs)
- Supporting detailed introduced through a topic sentence
 - Example: PTSD is caused by several major factors.

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What does a good paragraph look like?

- Consists of five to six sentences (the number of sentences can vary but are generally no shorter than three sentences and no more than six)
- Keep one idea to one paragraph. If you begin to transition into a new idea, it belongs in a new paragraph.
- Use transitional words/phrases to strengthen the organization of your essay ('secondly'; 'third'; 'as I have stated'; 'In conclusion').



Step 6: Write the Conclusion

- Closure to the essay
- Reiterate and summarize the main points of essay
- Do not introduce new points or information in the conclusion
- Contains the following elements
 - Relevance: repeat importance of topic
 - Review: reiterate the points discussed
 - Summary: summarize conclusions

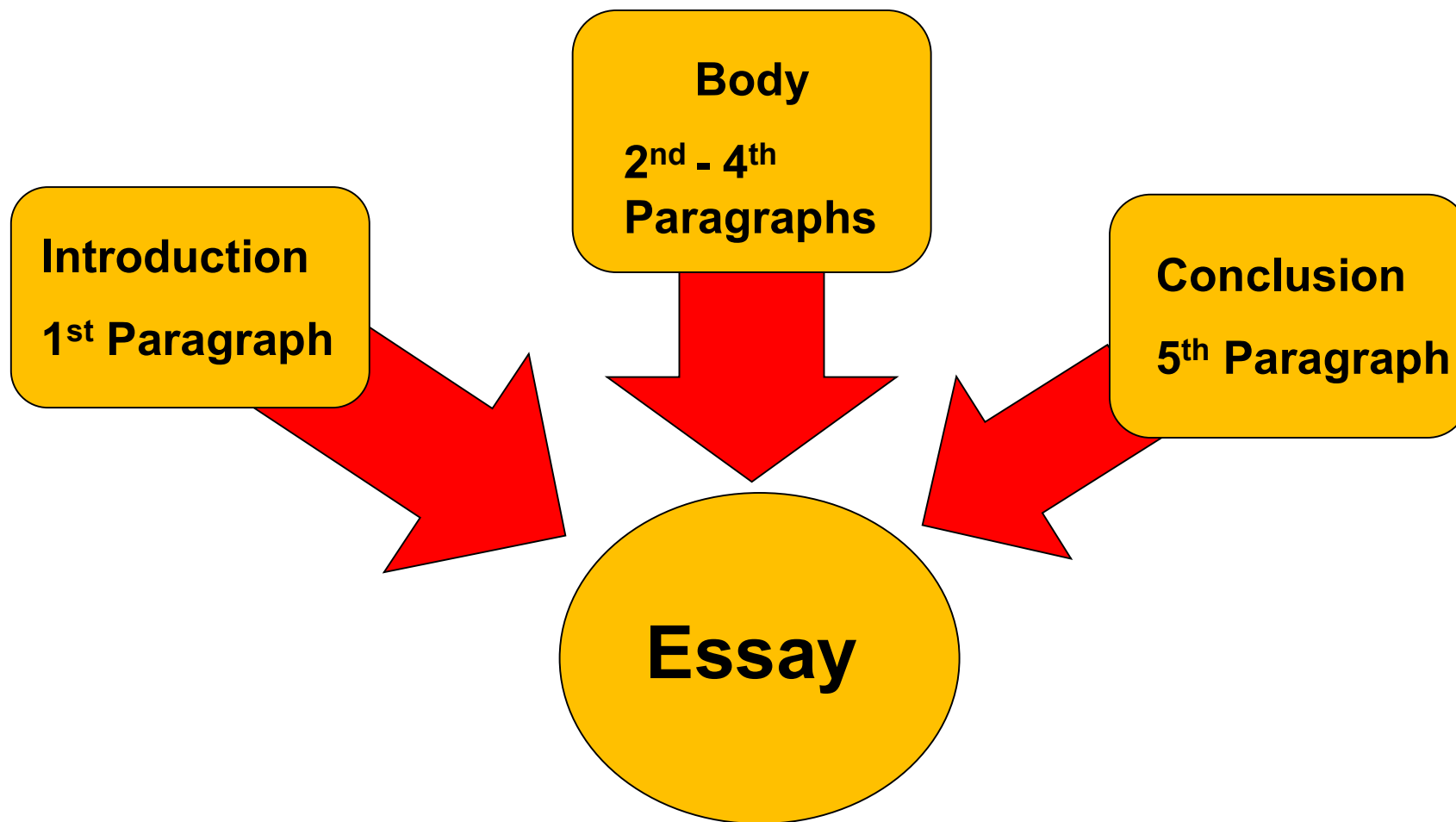


Conclusion (cont.)

- In a general sense,
 - Restate your topic and why it is important,
 - Restate your thesis/claim,
 - Address opposing viewpoints and explain why readers should align with your position,
 - Call for action or overview future research possibilities



5- Paragraph Approach





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ELO B: APA Style

Action: Review APA formatting for academic writings

Conditions: As a learner and leader attending the ALC DL, using an organizational-level leadership perspective in a notional tactical and operational environment, given references, practical exercises and classroom discussions

Standards: APA 6th edition

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APA Formatting Guidelines

- 1 inch margins (left, right, top and bottom)
- Double space throughout the essay
- Times New Roman, 12 pt
- ½ inch indention of each paragraphs first line
- Written in third person
- APA paper components
 - Title Page
 - Abstract (**if required by institution**)
 - Body of paper
 - References



Title Page

- This page includes
 - Paper's title, author, institutional affiliation, any other information required by the institution

- Include the page header flush left with the page number flush right at the top of the page. Only the title page will include "Running head:" prior to the title of the paper
 - Ex. **Running head: SHORT TITLE OF YOUR ESSAY**

- All subsequent pages will only have the short title
 - Ex. **SHORT TITLE OF YOUR ESSAY**



Citations

- Paraphrasing- summarizing a passage or rearranging the order of a sentence and/or changing some of the words
- Referring to another's ideas/findings but not using any of that author's ideas/findings still requires a citation but no quote marks.
- Direct quote (less than 40 words/more than 40 words)
- **Note:** Stating facts of common knowledge, such as President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, do not require citations.



In-Text Citations

- If you are directly quoting from a work, you will need to include the author, year of publication, and the page number for the reference (preceded by "p.>").
- If the quotation is introduced with a signal phrase that includes the authors name, it should look like this:

According to Jones (1998), "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (p. 199).

- If the author is not named in a signal phrase, it will look like this:

She stated, "Students often had difficulty using APA style" (Jones, 1998, p. 199), but she did not offer an explanation as to why.



In-Text Citations (cont)

- 40+ word quotations do not use quotation marks and are block-indented, one-half inch from the left margin.
 - Citation goes in parenthesis after the period ending the quote, page number required.
- Example:

Jones's (1998) study found the following:

Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help. (p. 199)

In retrospect to the student's difficulty in using APA style, the teacher provided a lesson on APA style to the students.



In-Text Citations (cont)

- In text citations that have the same author are differentiated by the letter attached to the year (see slide 25):
 - (Department of the Army, 2012a) ✓
 - (DA, 2012a) ✗
 - (DA, 2012a, p. 101) ✗
 - (ADP 6-22, 2012) ✗
 - (ADRP 6-22, 2012a) ✗

- Department of the Army is the author NOT ADP or ADRP.



Reference Page

- Placed at the end of the paper and double spaced
- Informs the reader where they can locate any sources that were cited in the paper
- Each source you cite in the paper must appear in your reference list; likewise, each entry in the reference list must be cited in your text.
- Begins on a new page with "References" centered at the top of the page (do NOT bold, underline, or use quotation marks for the title)
- Reference entries are organized alphabetically by the last name of the first author.



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Reference Page Entry Examples

- Grant, R.M. & Jordan, J.J. (2015). *Foundations of Strategy (2nd ed.)*. Wiley & Sons Ltd. Retrieved from <https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com>.
- Myers, M. (2019). *This new Army unit could help the U.S. win the next Cold War*. Retrieved from <https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/03/27/this-new-army-unit-could-help-the-us-win-the-next-cold-war/>.

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Reference Page Entry Examples

- When the author is the same, list the earliest year first.
- Department of the Army. (2006). *Leaves and Passes*. Army Regulation 600-8-10. Washington, DC: Department of the Army. Retrieved from <https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs>.
- Department of the Army. (2017). *Enlisted Promotions and Reductions*. Army Regulation 600-8-19. Washington, DC: Department of the Army. Retrieved from <https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs>.



Reference Page Entry Examples

- When the author and the year is the same, add a., b., c. after the year.
- Department of the Army. (2012a). *Army Leadership*. ADRP 6-22. Washington, DC: Department of the Army. Retrieved from <https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs>.
- Department of the Army. (2012b). *Army Leadership*. ADP 6-22. Washington, DC: Department of the Army. Retrieved from <https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs>.



Conclusion

- An essay has three main components
 - Introduction
 - Body
 - Conclusion
- Plagiarism is the adoption or incorporation of another's ideas without proper attribution to the source.
- Always cite your sources of information.
- Refer to APA 6th Edition Quick Reference Card for formatting and the components of an APA essay.