

Basic Analytical/ Argumentative Essay Outline¹

The intro and conclusion are often the places students struggle with most. Keep in mind the introduction can be briefer, and to-the-point, in writer responsible culture. For example:

I. Introduction

I. Background information

I. What do readers have to know to understand your analysis?

I. Author name, title of text in proper APA, ASA, or MLA format

II. Thesis

I. What are you going to argue?

I. EX: The Flint water crisis could have been less severe if the government listened to doctors sooner.

II. Use the MEAL plan!

I. M: Main Idea – topic sentence that relates back to the THESIS (not an evaluative claim, but one which focuses on the effect the text/audio/visual has on you)

I. EX: If the government had responded to Dr. Hanna-Attisha’s emails, her faith in their responses would not have been shaken so much.

II. E: Evidence – details from the text: paraphrasing, summary, quotes, theory...

I. EX: At one point in her chapter “No Response,” Hanna-Attisha writes, “These are responsible folks, I told myself. Why would anybody go into public health if they didn’t care deeply about something this important?” (101). She is soon dismayed to discover, however, that she might be wrong. “Monday had come and gone,” she writes, “Not a word” (Hanna-Attisha 102).

III. A: Analysis – So what? Why is the evidence important?: can include structural analysis, comparing and contrasting, focusing on what has come before, looking at criticism, drawing connections between the main idea and evidence, explanations that show comprehension, and a focus on the gap.

¹ Always ask your professor for help. They may have different recommendations for introductory styles and conclusions. Office hours are a great time to bring forth your writing ideas and share with your professors what you struggle with as you compose.

- I. EX: In reading Hanna-Attisha’s dismay and her growing impatience to hear from these “responsible folks,” we see how her faith has been shaken. She is saddened to not receive a word from people she had previously trusted.
- IV. L: Link back to the main idea/ or link to the next idea (transition) – drawing back to the important, over-arching theme of paragraphs, or the main idea.
 - I. EX: This faith-shaking moment is important because it shows how the government officials in public health have started the shift from being Hanna-Attisha’s trusted peers to her biggest opponents.
- III. Conclusion
 - I. What did your paper argue?
 - I. Restate the idea of your thesis to remind readers of your argument.
 - I. EX: As shown, if the government had taken the advice of doctors, the water crisis in Flint, MI would not have reached epidemic proportions.
 - II. Why is this material important?
 - I. EX: The lack of communication between doctors and the government lead to one of the most easily-preventable disasters of this century.
 - II. What are the broader implications of this lesson?
 - I. EX: If we don’t learn from Flint, MI, our town may be next.