

Supporting the Thesis Statement: The Burdens of Proof

Burdens of Proof:

- The arguments or points that must be made in a paper to fully prove the thesis statement. They are the requirements that logically follow from the claim made in any thesis statement.
- If each burden of the thesis is not adequately discussed, the claim will be less credible and the paper will be unsatisfying.

Managing The Burdens of Proof:

1. Identify the context, subject, and claim of the thesis statement.
2. Identify key terms or phrases that help define the context, subject or claim.
 - a. Adjectives or adverbs
 - b. Superlatives
 - c. Specialized terms that require explanation
 - d. Terms or phrases that require background information
 - e. Introductory clauses that limit the argument's parameters
3. Examine the logical relationship within the thesis statement and identify whether there are any dependent points that must be made in advance of other points.
4. Decide on the most effective order for covering burdens of proof.

Burdens of Proof as Structure:

- Because the burdens of proof suggest the chain of reasoning the paper must take, they also work as a structuring device for the paper—a skeleton on which the supporting paragraphs of the paper are built.
- After identifying the burdens of proof in the thesis statement, students can use them to create a rough outline of the essay.

Example:

Thesis: Steroid use is acceptable for professional baseball players who are entertainers as much as athletes.

Burdens of Proof:

- Show how professional baseball players are entertainers
- Show how they are entertainers as much as they are athletes
- Show how steroid use is acceptable for baseball players when they are viewed as entertainers

Drafting and Revising the Essay: Supporting the Thesis Statement

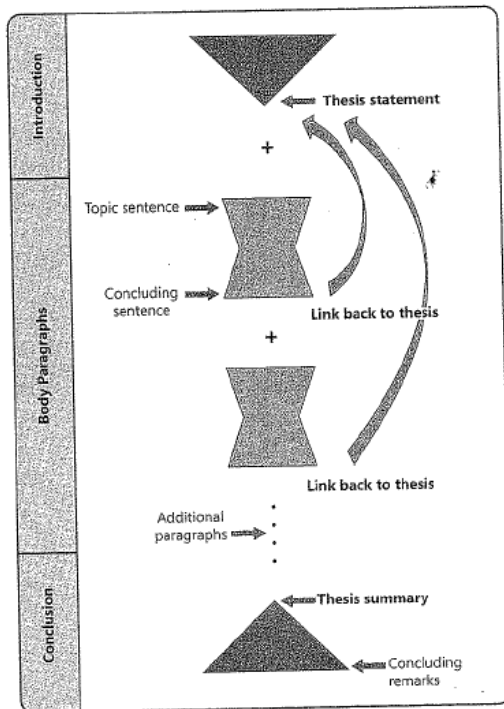


Diagram of a Thesis Driven Essay

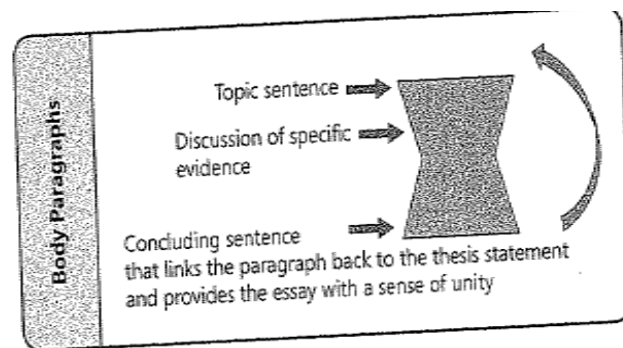


Diagram of a Body Paragraph

Writing a Well Developed Paragraph Using TAXES

Topic sentence (a sentence that states the one point the paragraph will make)

Assertion statements (statements that present your ideas)

eXample(s) (specific passages, factual material, or concrete data)

Explanation (commentary that shows how the examples support your assertions)

Significance (commentary that shows how the paragraph supports the thesis statement)

Checklist for Writing Strong Body Paragraphs

- **Flow:** Make sure each body paragraph follows the TAXES format.
- **Analysis:** Remember to analyze your subject rather than summarizing it.
- **Arrangement:** Be sure to arrange the body paragraphs according to a logical sequence.
- **Research:** This can include intense study of sources or simply including appropriate quotes from a relevant authority.