

Essay writing workshop

Design theory Seminar, 2021

What is important when writing an essay

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It depends on your individual approach

How are certain fields of interest, subject areas linked logically and comprehensibly?

It is important to create a structure that is appropriate to the topic and to the individual arguments.

What are the approaches?

It is always helpful to create a plan at the beginning as a possible outline based on your own experience.

However, there are different methods of constructing an essay

There are different types of writing:

- Writing blocks of text on relevant topics and then putting them in relation to each other
- relating topics from the beginning and then filling them with content
- writing on relevant topics, building on each other

What are the approaches?

Diver Writer:

- you dive straight into the topic and read and write on various relevant texts- beginning without a precise objective and developing structure and building up in the writing process by shifting and rotating content and this leads to a structure as a whole
- it is a practical approach in that you find a structure as you write

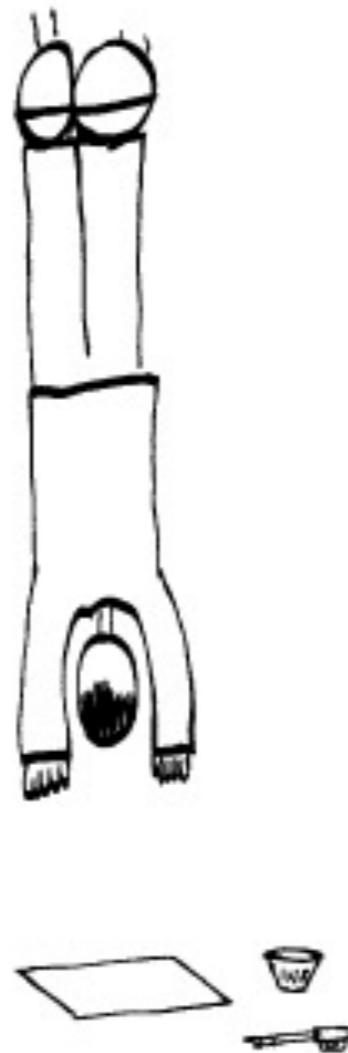


Figure 6.1 The diver writer

What are the approaches?

Patchwork Writer:

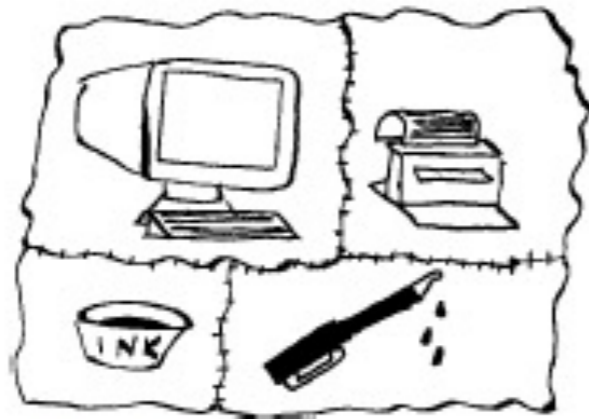


Figure 6.2 The patchwork writer

for those who already have precise ideas of their sub-topics and chapters, can create them and then put them into a logical context. Collect basic ideas through headings and keywords early in the writing process.

- Write content to headings
- Link individual topics together
- By linking content, argument becomes clearer and some subject areas may be irrelevant or not purposefully significant

What are the approaches?

Grand Plan Writer:



Figure 6.3 The grand plan writer

- for those who have just absorbed a lot of material and already have a fairly precise plan of what their structure will look like, formulate it- this approach requires a broad, extensive literature search with keywords and marginal notes
- Thoroughly reflect on the topic and let what you have read sink in.
- Do not draw up a plan, but write it down in one piece, possibly adding an introduction later.

What are the approaches?

The Architect Writer:

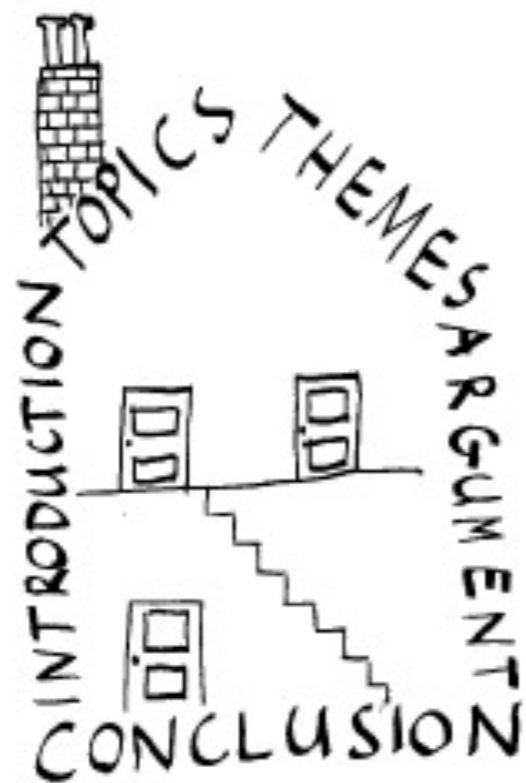


Figure 6.4 The architect writer

- for those who find it helpful to visually connect their thoughts at the beginning (e.g. as a mind map)
- formulate an overarching structure - visual structures help to plan in advance
- Collection of basic ideas by means of headings and keywords spaced out over the sheet - structured like a diagram
- In a column next to it on one side to add comments
- Add new keywords and comments during the writing process to develop the central idea/core message and outline diagrammatically the whole text.

Task: What kind of shaper are you?

- How do you plan your essay?
- Which of the types presented corresponds most closely to your approach?
- It's about how you quickly take the next step in the process.
- If you find it easy to establish a structure, then do so and fill it with appropriate content.
- If you are already busy writing out content, keep doing it and see how you can put it into a structure that makes sense to you.

What are the structures for essays?

- Structures are important, because depending on how you connect your content, this will also influence your result.

What are the structures for essays?

- Chronology Writing (What happened?)- one event follows the next- often used for historical topics or storyboards for films- often found under "Introduction/Background" in articles.
- Description Writing (What is something - or someone - like?)
- What are the different parts and characteristics that make it up?
- Describing something usually means explaining something- can be done visually via diagrams (two-, three-lined,...)

What are the structures for essays?

- Cause-effect writing (Why did something happen? What were the consequences?)
- When combining facts and topics, it is usually also about describing cause and effect - e.g.: The king dies, the people cheer > question: Why do the people cheer?- beware of oversimplified presentation, often it is not due to a direct cause-effect link, but more far-reaching or subsequent events must be taken into account.

What are the structures for essays?

- Compare/contrast writing (How are two things different from and like each other?)
- It shows differences and similarities of an issue
- It is the most used structure and usually forms the main part of the essay as it gives information about individual elements
- Often individual things are not directly tangible but can be described in social interactions, psychological reactions through comparisons
- Often you move back and forth in the structure between two points of view

What are the structures for essays?

- Summary writing (What does the writer say? What is this idea about?)
- used when, for example, summarising a person's opinion
- describing other writers' opinions on the topic- when summarising, it is best to stick to relevant points that also relate to your own articles
- question why you want to include this summary in your essay
- how does the summary help support your arguments?

What are the structures for essays?

- Analysis writing (Going deeper: what is this all about?)
- a demanding kind of writing as it goes beyond describing and comparing. It requires various questions such as:- What does it mean?
- Why is it important?
- How does it work?
- What is it made of?
- Can you explain it?
- The idea of analysis requires an intensive scientific approach to questioning things, information and ideas in certain ways.

What are the structures for essays?

- Evaluating writing (What is the value of this? How is this important?)
- here you need to make a judgement about your opinion of other writers' findings- you need to include different positions and perspectives
- Give reasons for your judgement
- how do other writers weigh up their arguments about a topic? How does this result in certain helpful congruent content?- e.g. the word family needs to be adapted in certain contexts- the age issue is about how the word family describes the issue and from which position this makes sense or not

What are the structures for essays?

- The essay is not about a concrete structure of writing, but about combining different ways of writing.
- Look at existing articles to see if you can find out the individual writing structures

Formulate the central idea and the argumentation

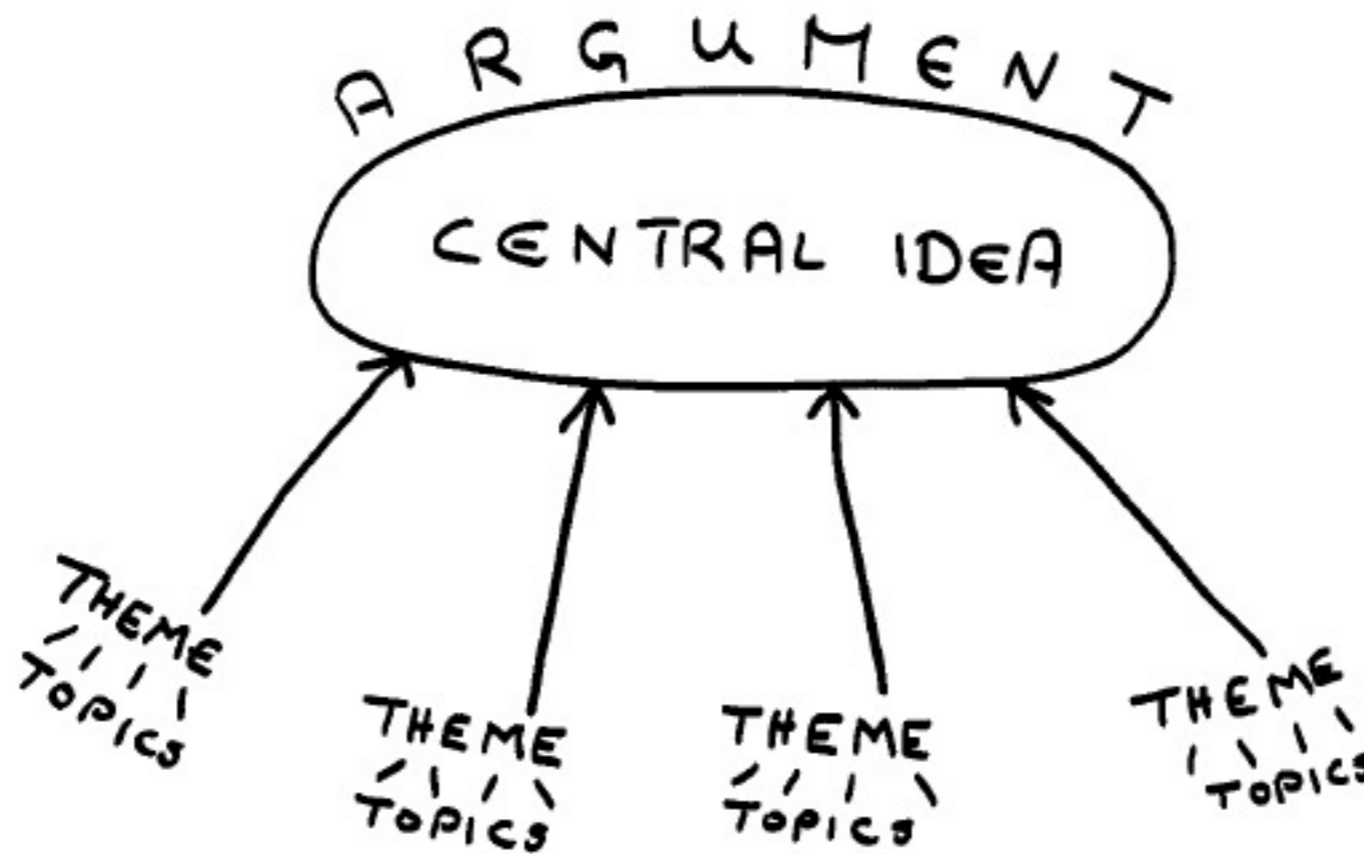


Figure 6.5 Developing an argument

“Developing an argument“

Formulate the central idea and the argumentation

- Introduce the reader step by step to the central core statement/ argumentation
- Clearly formulated, central idea with justification and references through existing literature, works, projects, theories on the topic, or through examples that deal with the topic but deviate from one's own argumentation and one's own argument can be built up by contradicting the reference arguments and thus strengthening/justifying one's own arguments
- The structure of the text is clearly structured (see Compare/contrast, Summary, Analysis,... -Writing)
- The ideas are clearly formulated and structured. The ideas are clearly formulated and structured.

Formulate the central idea and the argumentation

- Building up your argument step by step

General statement, in the next step further explanation of the statement, an example of the statement, own experiences and own example of this statement.

- Constructing your story

What is the story of your argument, choose ideas and events that weave together to build your argument, clear beginning and end of the text structure with suspense

Formulate the central idea and the argumentation

- Formulating your central idea

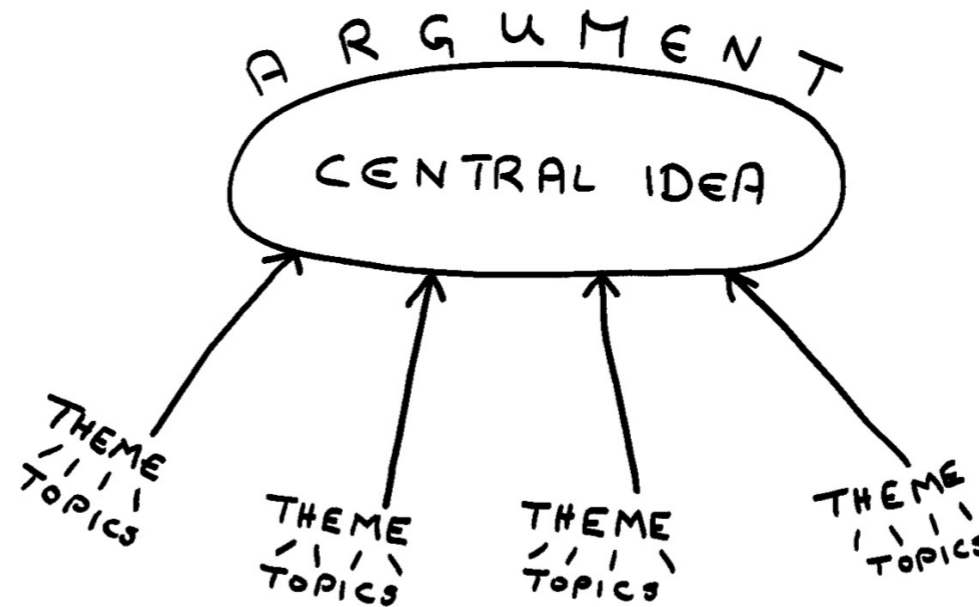


Figure 6.5 Developing an argument

- Developing your argument from topics and themes



Figure 6.6 Famine and its causes

Task for your own abstract (30min)

- formulate your central idea as a research question
- examine your abstract for keywords and thematic blocks
- present these keywords in relation to each other (structure, mind map,..)
- if necessary, briefly name a few key points and relevant literature for each core area
- after 10min! - give your abstract to your left neighbour and take the abstract from your right neighbour - repeat the structuring based on the new abstract
- after another 10min! - discuss the differences between your structure and your neighbour's structure using your own abstract.
- Present your structure and findings to the group in two groups of 4 minutes each.