Higher Order Concerns: Organization

Organization:

One way to organize your essay is to use the five paragraph theme format. In a five-paragraph theme, there is an introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The advantage to this format is that three points can be made quickly and clearly. The disadvantage is that there is no room to develop more complex arguments in depth. Your teacher will tell you if this is an acceptable essay format.

-The introductory paragraph begins with a "hook" to get the reader interested. The introductory paragraph nearly always ends with the thesis sentence, which explains the topic. In this thesis, the author tells his reader how the essay will be organized.

- The first body paragraph states the first point or argument, just as the author agreed to do in the thesis. Note that the focus in body paragraphs is nearly always explained in the first sentence, usually the topic sentence. Next is the second body paragraph, where the author will discuss other issues mentioned in the thesis. The third body paragraph discusses another point, while playing up the points made in the first body paragraph and also tying in what was discussed in the second body paragraph.

- The conclusion reaffirms the overall value of the five-paragraph theme as argued in the thesis. It then reminds the reader of the "hook" – the uses of the theme – before ending with a little twist to keep readers involved.

Outlining:

Outlines are a very good way to keep your essay organized. Outlines help you keep track of information, while also helping you organize your ideas into a logical order.

Example: (With Introduction and Conclusion)

   I.   Introduction

          a. Thesis:

   II.   First major topic

          a. First point

   III.   Second major topic

          a. First point

   IV.   Third major topic

          a. First point

   V.   Conclusion

References:

Koch Jr., R.T., (2007). UNA Dept. of English. UNA University Writing Center. http://www.una.edu/writingcenter

Deegan, S. (2008). UNA Writing Center. http://www.una.edu/writingcenter