

## Organizing Your Paper

We all know 3 is the magic number. Every story needs a beginning, middle, and end. That's true for most writing assignments as well, although we call them the introduction, body, and conclusion. Here's a brief look at the work each part of your paper needs to do.

### 1. Introduction

- a. What are you writing about (Your general topic)
- b. Why are you writing about it? (Your purpose, goal, objective)
- c. Why is this important?
- d. What's your thesis? (Concise statement of your main contention)
- e. What's coming up? (Overall plan of your paper)
- f. What does this mean? (Define key terms)

### 2. Body

- a. Is my paper **unified**?
  - Do all my supporting paragraphs truly support and back up my controlling idea?
- b. Is my paper **supported**?
  - Are there separate supporting points for the controlling idea?
  - Do I have *specific* evidence for each of the supporting points?
  - Is there *plenty* of specific evidence for each supporting point?
- c. Is my paper **organized**?
  - Do I have an effective introduction and a solid conclusion?
  - Do I have a clear method of organizing my essay?
  - Do I use transitions and other connecting words/phrases?
- d. Do I cite the evidence appropriately?

### 3. Conclusion

- a. Do you briefly summarize your argument?
- b. Do you connect your argument to larger social or cultural issues?
- c. Do you state the implications of your findings for your field or discipline?
- d. Do you avoid stating "In conclusion"?