

# Writing Your Essay

The Most Important Part of Your VPT Success

# Conquering the Navigation

Throughout this presentation you will find links to more information. You probably won't need all of them, but you will need some.

When you see a **bright green word**, you can click that and get more information. After you've clicked, the word will turn to a **darker green**.

The new pages will have **green** headings instead of the **aqua** ones you see here, so you will know where you are. Examples have a nice **butterscotch** heading.

When you're finished, simply click your browser's "Back" button to return to the main presentation.

If you would like to open the presentation in a new window, use the "Ctrl" key while you click.

# Before You Write

When you take the VPT, you may take blank paper in with you. This is so you can plan your essay before you write.

Try using an outline or even a list of main points.

Take advantage of the paper and write down your ideas after reading the prompt.

Remember that the prompt may be pretty boring, but you should be able to have some good ideas.

Write down every idea you can think of, so you'll have LOTS to work with as you write.

# The Five Paragraph Structure

You can choose to write an essay in lots of ways, but the VPT is looking for a specific one—the five paragraph essay.

Let's give it to them.

[Click HERE to look at our sample essay.](#) (You may want to open this in a new window, so you can refer back to it. Ctrl+click, remember.)

A five-paragraph essay has these parts

- [Introduction](#) with a [thesis](#)
- [Body paragraphs](#) with clear topic sentences and transitions
- [Conclusion](#)

# Introduction

Your introduction gets your reader's attention and gives you a place to show off your thesis.

What's a thesis? It's your main idea, what your whole essay is about.

After your thesis, you want to include the three main points of your essay. (Remember, essays can have more points, but three will get you through the VPT.)

# Where's the Body?

Your body paragraphs explain your thesis in more detail. The key word is DETAIL.

- Use one paragraph for each of your three main points.
- Include at least five supporting sentences.
- Use transition words to move between paragraphs.

Click [here](#) to find out how to add detail without repeating yourself or getting a headache!

# Coming to a Conclusion

Your conclusion wraps it all up.

- You don't have to just summarize your first paragraph again. You can use one of these strategies, and by clicking on the word "conclusion" above, you can see these in action.
  - A call to action
  - A prediction or a warning
  - A question
  - A story
- Use five or six sentences to make sure you've covered all the bases. The VPT wants to see you using some of the same words in this paragraph as your first one, but don't overdo it.

# Your Essay May be Finished . . .

. . . But you aren't. Now it's time to revise, or at least check to make sure everything big is in place.

First, check to make sure that you have kept your thesis throughout the essay. You should be okay if you started with a list.

Next, look for your transition words, because the VPT is going to.

Finally, make sure your main points have enough supporting details in those body paragraphs. You may need to add a sentence or two.



# You're STILL not finished . . .

. . . Sorry.

Now It's time to proofread and edit.

Look for these things:

- Confusing word pairs
- Capitalization
- Paragraphing and paragraph formatting
- Punctuation
- Misused words

# NOW You're Finished

. . . But you may want some more practice. We recommend doing a whole essay through the link at the end of this section.

The more you practice now, the less likely you are to panic when you're confronted with the real deal on the VPT.

You can also look at some more sample essays [here](#), and [here](#), and [also here](#)!