WCT Structure Sample Outline

Structure is extremely important to any essay or research paper, including the WCT. Good structure helps your reader follow your discussion in the same way that good driving directions help you arrive at your destination without any wrong turns. There are many ways to structure a good essay, but several components are important:

- Division of paragraphs to show where each new idea starts
- Clear topic sentences which state the main point at the beginning of each paragraph
- Transitional words and phrases to show the progression of ideas and help the reader move smoothly from one idea to the next

The sample outline below shows one way to structure an essay:

**Paragraph 1: Introduction**
Begin your introduction with a general statement to reveal your topic. Then narrow the topic until you get to your main issue. State the thesis (your position on the issue) in one clear sentence at the end of the introduction.

**Paragraph 2: Supporting point #1**
- State the point clearly in your topic sentence
- Explain the point briefly to tell the reader what you mean
- Support the point with material from sources (quote or paraphrase) or with something from your own experience

**Paragraph 3: Supporting point #2**
- State the point clearly in your topic sentence
- Explain the point briefly to tell the reader what you mean
- Support the point with material from sources (quote or paraphrase) or with something from your own experience

**Paragraphs 4: Supporting point #3**
- State the point clearly in your topic sentence
- Explain the point briefly to tell the reader what you mean
- Support the point with material from sources (quote or paraphrase) or with something from your own experience
**Paragraph 5: Conclusion**

Bring the discussion back to the thesis and wrap it up
The format shown above may seem simple, and it is! Still, it is quite functional and will work with nearly any type of written piece from a five-paragraph essay to a much longer research paper.

It is usually helpful to outline before writing. Remember that it is permissible to have an outline written in your WCT packet when you go in to take your exam. If you have an outline, you will not panic and forget what you wanted to write.

There is no "magic" about having five paragraphs. You may decide to develop four supporting points or five supporting points. In that case, your essay would have more paragraphs. This is only one model, used for example.

**One note about structure:**

Your paragraphs should have a logical order. You may want to put your points in chronological order, order of importance, etc. Some key phrases (called "transitions") can help your reader follow your essay. Such phrases as "First," "Next," and "Finally" or repetition of key words can serve as transitions. Could your reader cut the paragraphs apart with scissors, then reconstruct the essay in the same order? If not, then see if some new transitional phrases would help.