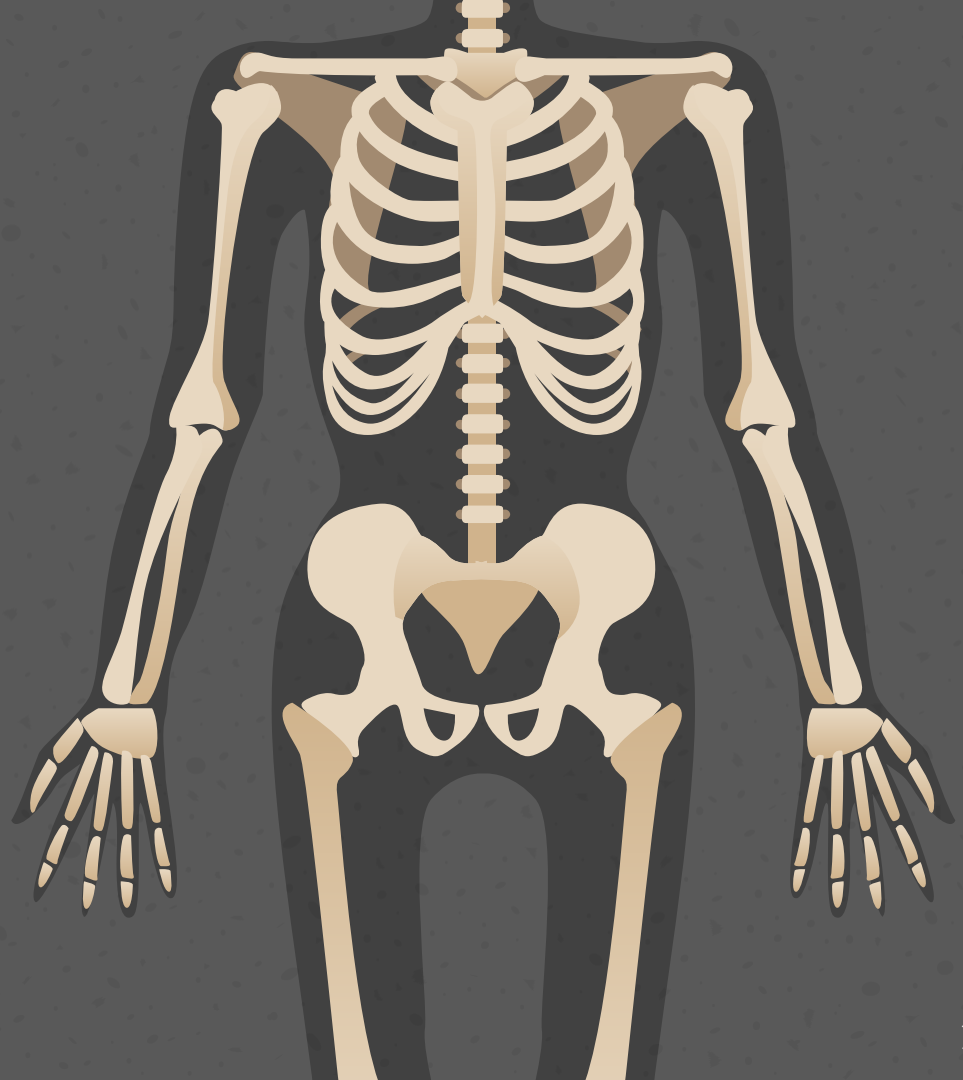


# The Bones of College Essay Writing

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The fundamentals of writing  
introductions, body paragraphs, and  
conclusions





# Welcome to the WC!

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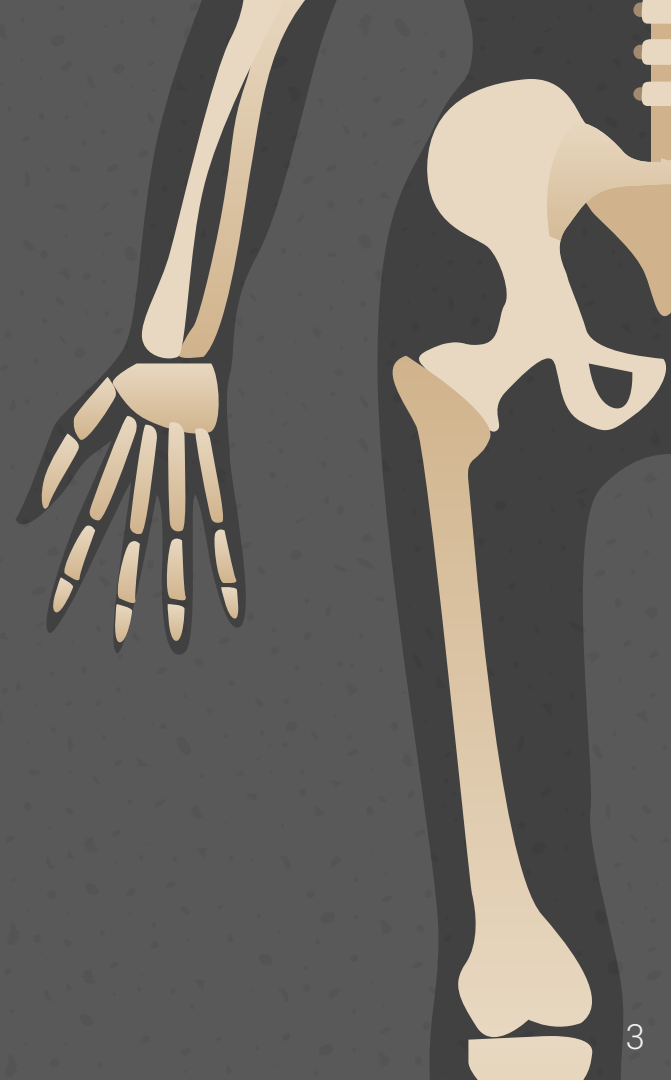
We're Téa, Ella, and Maeve and we're here to help you adjust to college-level writing expectations! This presentation will cover the bones of writing a college-level essay

**01. Welcome!**

**02. Writing an Introduction**

**03. Developing Body Paragraphs**

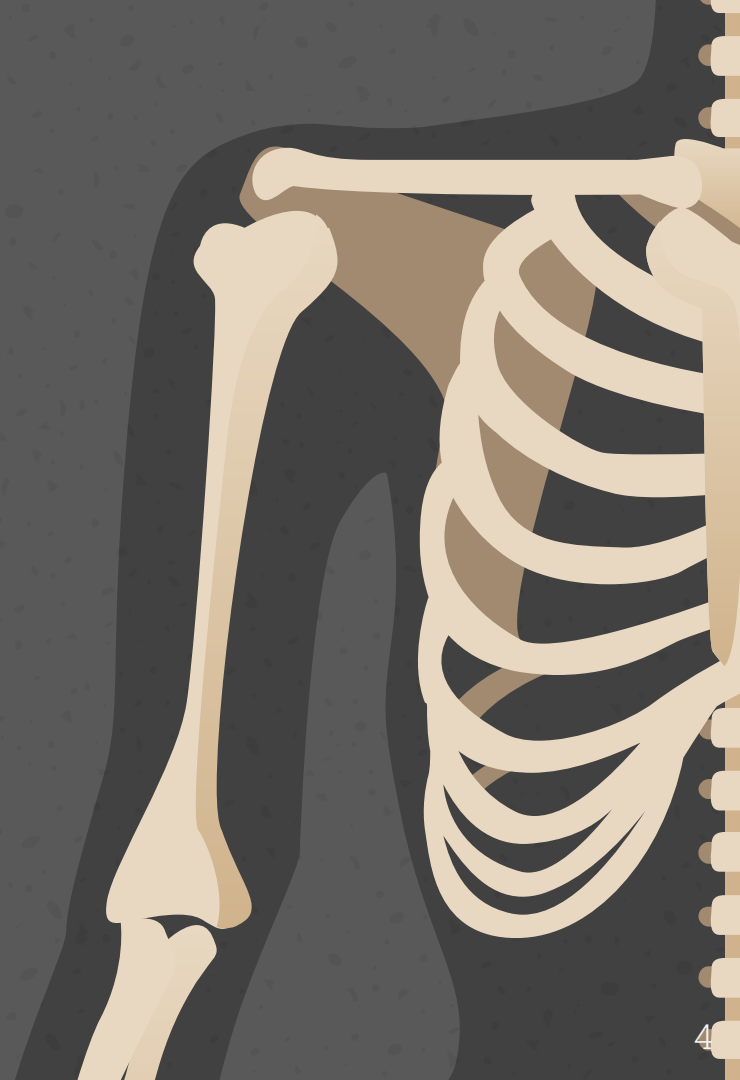
**04. Writing a Conclusion**



01.

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# WRITING AN INTRODUCTION



# 3 Goals of an Introduction

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## Purpose

Introduce the **purpose** of your essay and any important ideas or concepts.



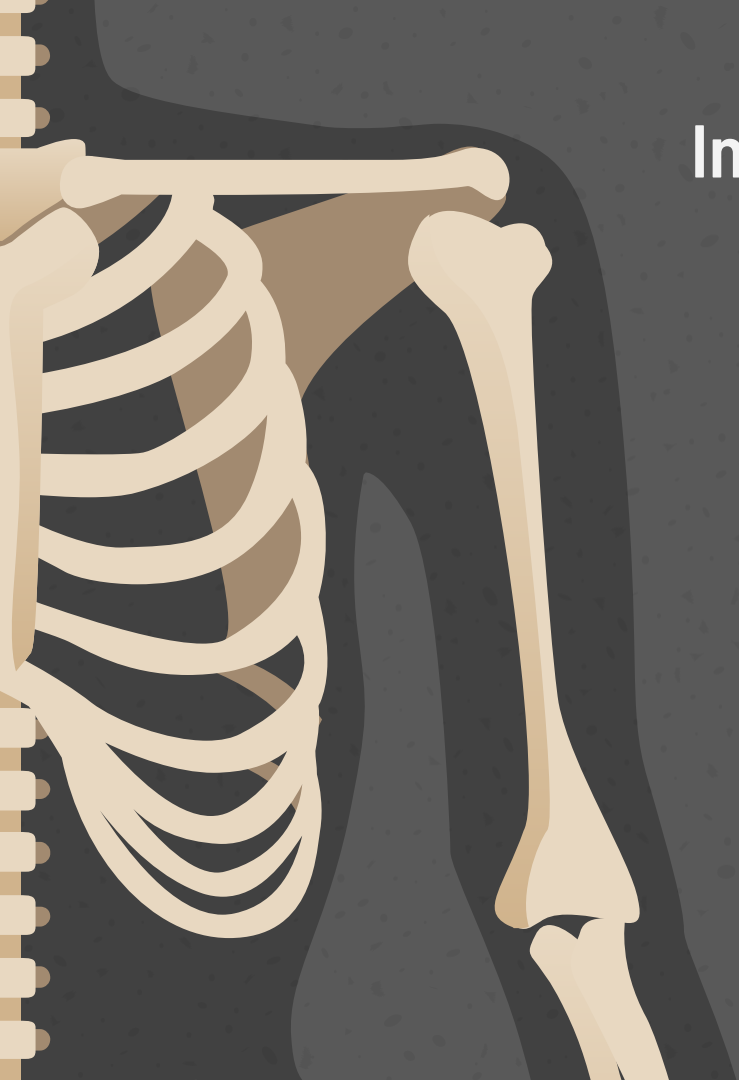
## Interest

Capture the reader's **interest**.



## Platform

Provide a **platform** for your thesis.



## Introduce the purpose of the essay

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- Set up the **context** for your discussion (**the “they” say**).
  - What is the current discussion surrounding your topic?
- Establish **key terms**.
  - These will unite your argument throughout the essay.
- Introduce the main **“players”** in your essay.
  - Central perspectives, the main theory/position, the text(s), and your research question.



# Capture the reader's interest

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- **Convince** the reader you have something interesting to say.
- Introduce **the “I say”**
- Make your topic **relevant** to the reader – try to excite your reader's interest and imagination!

**X's theory of \_\_\_\_\_ is  
extremely useful  
because it sheds light  
on the difficult problem  
of \_\_\_\_\_.**

Template for agreeing with a difference  
(Graff and Birkenstein, 60)

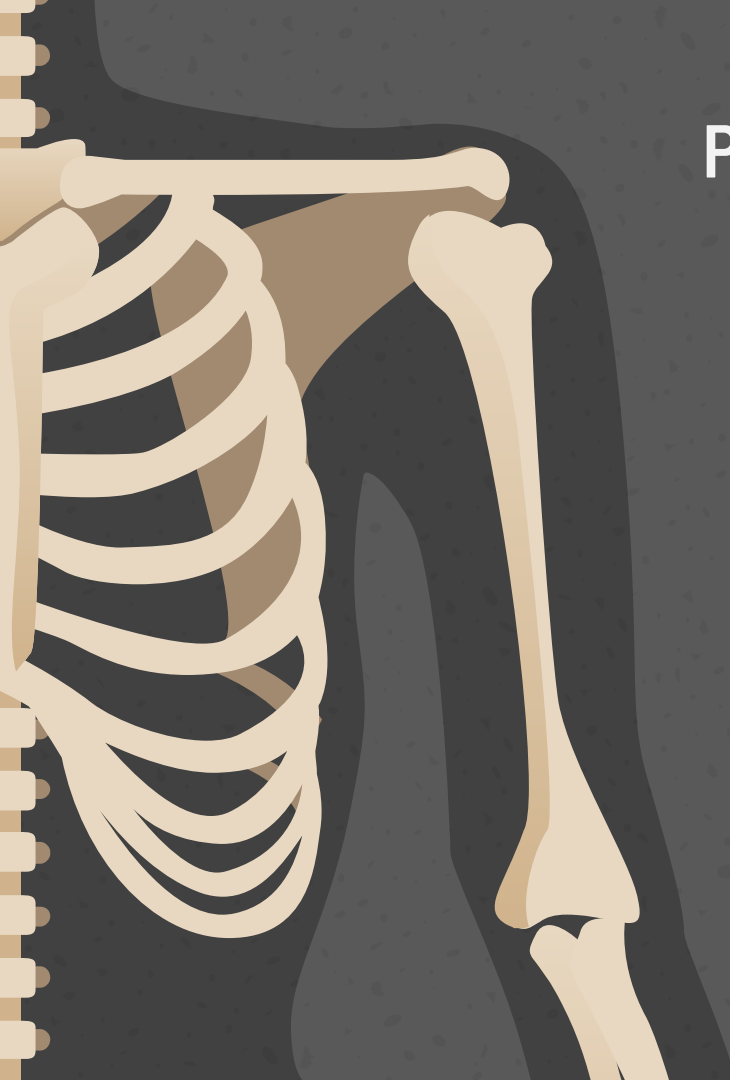


**X's claim that \_\_\_\_\_ rests  
upon the questionable  
assumption that \_\_\_\_\_.**

Template for disagreeing, with reasons.  
(Graff and Birkenstein, 58).

**Although I disagree with  
much that X says, I fully  
endorse their final  
conclusions that \_\_\_\_.**

Template for disagreeing & agreeing at the same time: qualifying your argument.  
(Graff and Birkenstein, 64)



## Provide a platform for your thesis.

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- A **platform** includes...
  - An overview of purpose and concepts of your essay.
- Important points that establish context for argument.
- An essay with a strong intro makes clear and sensible **connections** between each sentence of the platform.
  - Helps introduction flow logically towards the **thesis** at the end!

# Developing your Thesis

Your thesis is the **main argument** of your essay.  
Remember the mnemonic **PASS!**

**P**recise and concise: your thesis should be a **one-sentence statement** placed at the end of your intro.

**A**rguable and complex: makes a claim that others might dispute. NOT just a statement of fact.

**S**ubstantial and relevant: tells the reader **what your argument is and why it matters.**

**S**upportable: you must be able to **develop and prove your thesis** with the evidence you have gathered.

## Example: Revising Your Thesis (1)

Like Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* is a feminist text.

### What are some issues with this thesis?

- **Lacks specificity.**
- **Lacks an argument.**
- **Doesn't include both an idea and supporting evidence.**

## Example: Revising your Thesis (2)

Through a comparative analysis of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), this paper demonstrates how Gilman's critiques of the Victorian-era patriarchy foreshadow the second-wave feminist movement's resistance against women's infantilization while similarly neglecting the raced and classed aspects of gendered oppression.

**Does this thesis P.A.S.S.?  
Is it precise? arguable? supportable?**

# Revising your Thesis (3)

**Gilman's critiques of the Victorian-era patriarchy foreshadows the second-wave feminist movement's resistance against women's infantilization while similarly neglecting the raced and classed aspects of gendered oppression.**

**Why does this thesis P.A.S.S.?**

- **Specific**
- **Concise**
- **Arguable**

# Quick Thesis Check

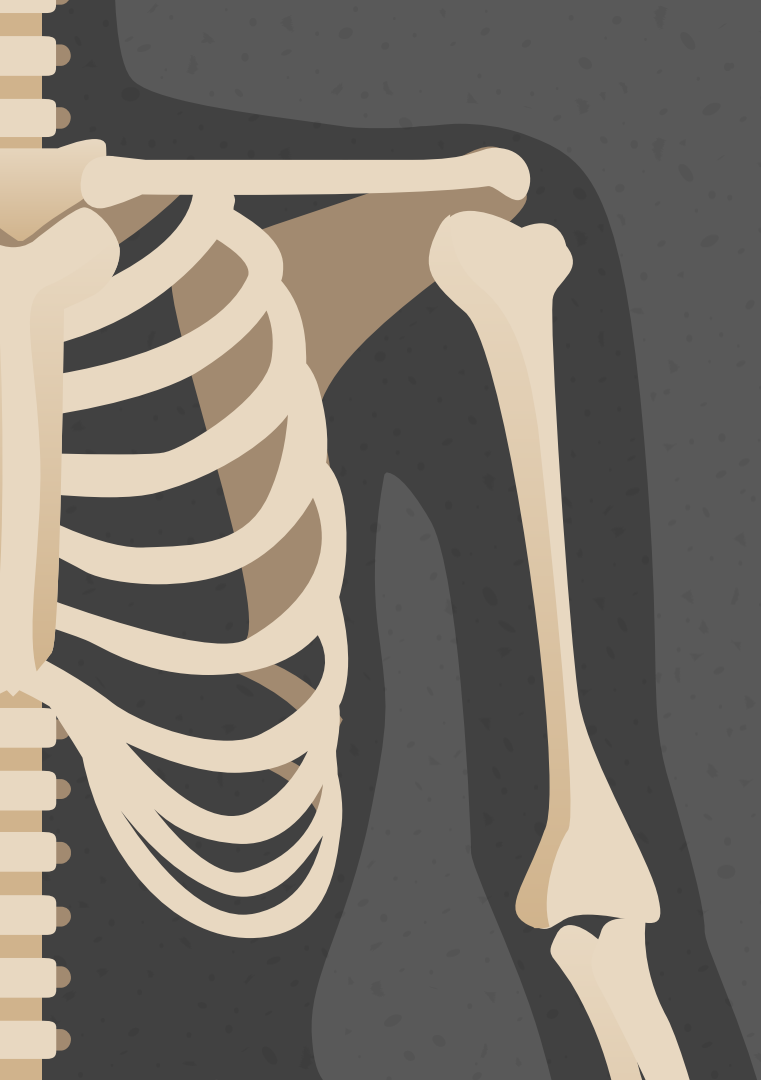
**Do I answer the question or respond to the assignment?**

**Does my thesis reflect an interpretation or analytical understanding of the material/texts I am using?**

**Is my thesis specific enough?**

**Does my thesis pass the “so what” test?**





02.

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## WRITING A BODY PARAGRAPH

# The Types of Paragraphs

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## Popular Writing

- 4-6 sentences
- More Informal
- Ex. Narrative Essays, Magazines



## Academic Writing

- 6-15 sentences
- “Mini-essay” paragraphs
- Ex. Expository Essays, Research Paper

# Parts of a Paragraph

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## Topic Sentence

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Tells reader main point of paragraph

## Definition of Key Terms

---

Explain and define topic-specific words and concepts to reader

## Use of Evidence

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Provide examples to strengthen main point of paragraph – be purposeful

## Discussion & Analysis

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Explain how evidence explains your thesis (majority of paragraph)

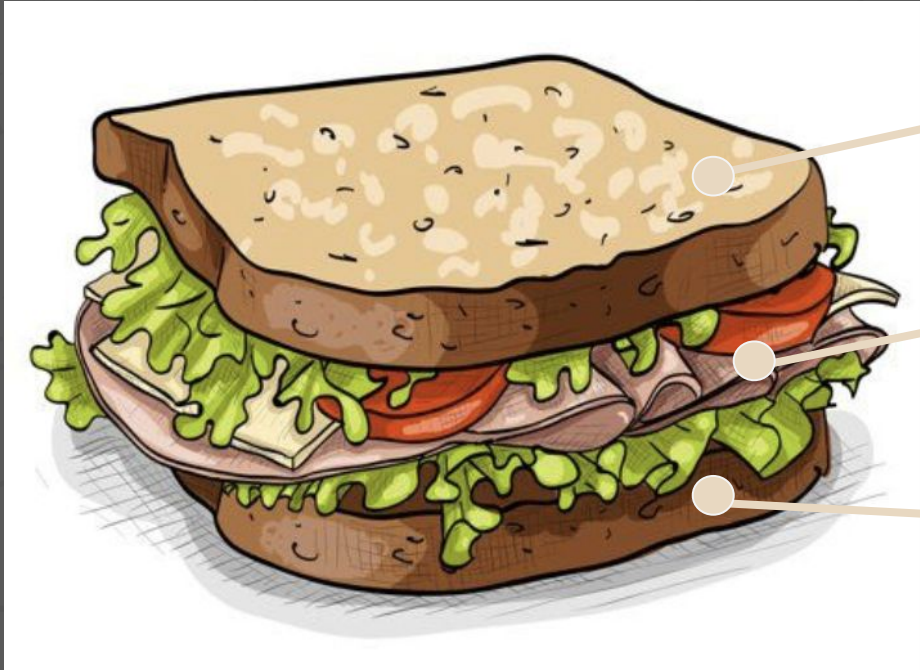
## Concluding Sentence

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Bring together main points of paragraph (not a transition to next paragraph)

# Quote Sandwich

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Introduce Quote

Quote

Provide Analysis  
for Quote

# Example Body Paragraph

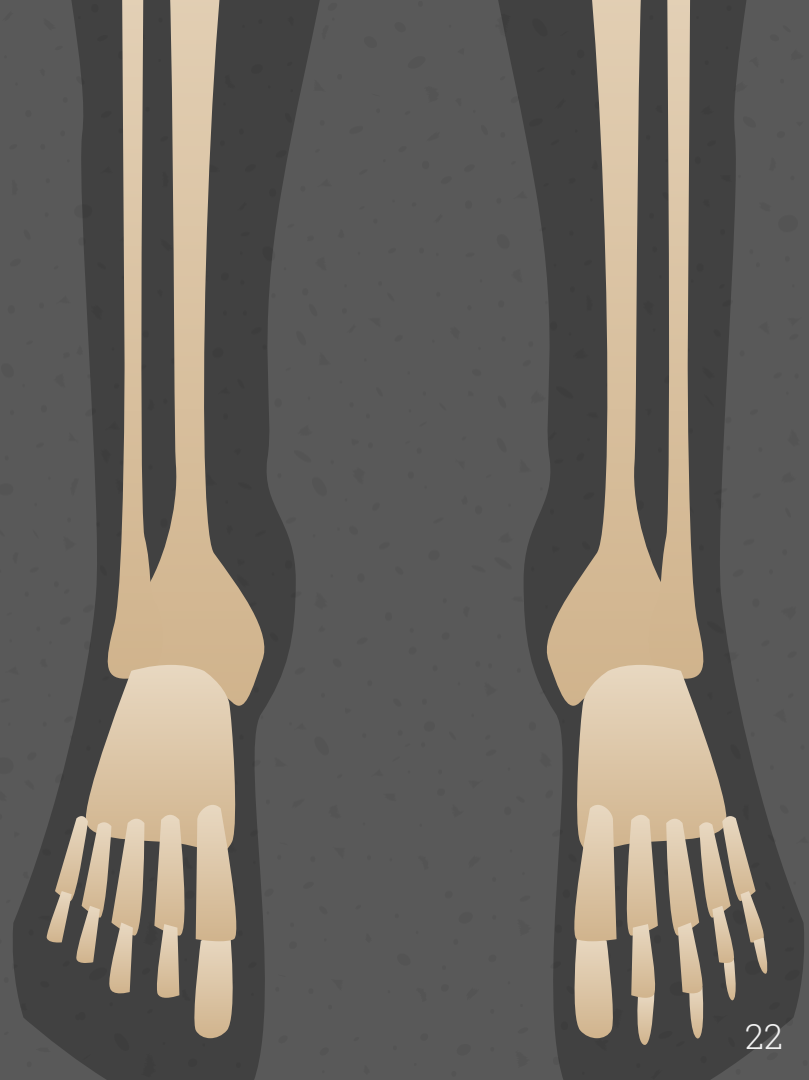
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[Topic Sentence] In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, J.K. Rowling suggests through her portrayal of Hagrid that appearance can be misleading. [Supporting Details] Although he is one of the most loved characters in the Harry Potter universe, his initial confrontation with Harry strikes intimidation in the young boy's heart. The narrator notes that Hagrid's face is "almost completely hidden by a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard," and his eyes, "glint[ing] like black beetles," peer down at Harry (Rowling 46). [Discussion/Analysis] Harry's anxiety seeps through the page as he is confronted by an intimidating figure, and because this description paints such a scary picture, the reader might expect Hagrid to be a rather frightening person as the book progresses. This initial description, however, is contrasted by Hagrid's true character. Besides serving as a trusted informant to Dumbledore and a crucial ally to Harry and his friends, Hagrid displays an immense compassion for animals, an affection so powerful it sometimes reduces the giant to tears. [Conclusion/Transition] Hagrid's humble actions and earnest compassion show that appearances can be misleading, a theme that many characters mirror in the book. (San José State Writing Center)

03.

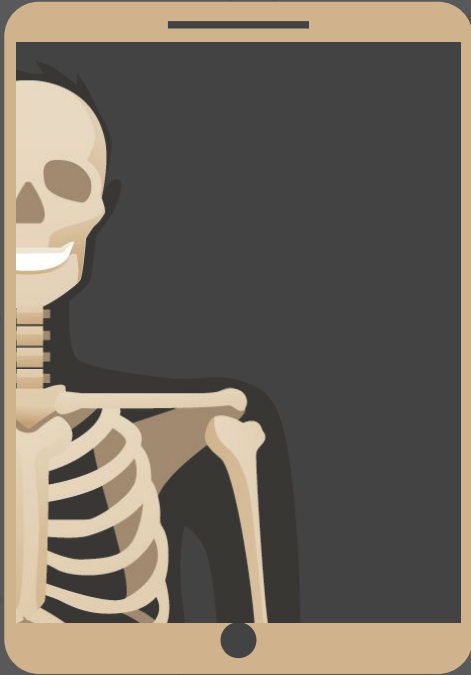
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## WRITING A CONCLUSION



# Think about the ending to your favorite movie

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- How did you feel after the movie? (Was there more to think about?)
- Were all of the plot points resolved?
- Were the themes of the movie clear in the ending scenes?



# Goals of a Conclusion

Convince the reader of your argument

Wrap-up/Give Closure

Leave room for more research/conversation



# Different Types of Conclusions



## Shorter Essays

(Less than 10 pages)

Illustration or Anecdote

Offer a Solution

Indicate a Preference

Predict an outcome

Revisit (but don't repeat)  
thesis

## Longer Essays

(More than 10 pages)

Reverse the order of your  
introduction

Rephrase the language of your  
thesis

Remind readers of the  
significance of your claim

Revisit a main concept and  
redefine it

# Exercise

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- On a sheet of paper, think about how you would rephrase this thesis statement in a conclusion paragraph:
  - Through a comparative analysis of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), this paper demonstrates how Gilman's critiques of the Victorian-era patriarchy foreshadow the second-wave feminist movement's resistance against women's infantilization while similarly neglecting the raced and classed aspects of gendered oppression.

## Example

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- Gilman's critique of the Victorian-era patriarchy in *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) was mirrored by the second-wave feminist movement. Particularly when put in comparison to Betty Friedan's subsequent *The Feminist Mystique* (1963), it becomes clear that Gilman foreshadowed the resistance against women's infantilization, while ignoring intersectional aspects of gendered oppression.



Any Questions?

# **Our Hours**

## **Téa's Hours**

Monday and Thursday 4pm-6pm

## **Ella's Hours**

Monday and Tuesday 6pm-8pm

## **Maeve's Hours**

Wednesday and Thursday 6pm-8pm



# Thanks!

Remember to come visit us in the  
Writing Center! Open Sunday - Thursday  
4p-10p

And follow us on instagram!  
[@oxywritingcenter](#)

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# Works Cited

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