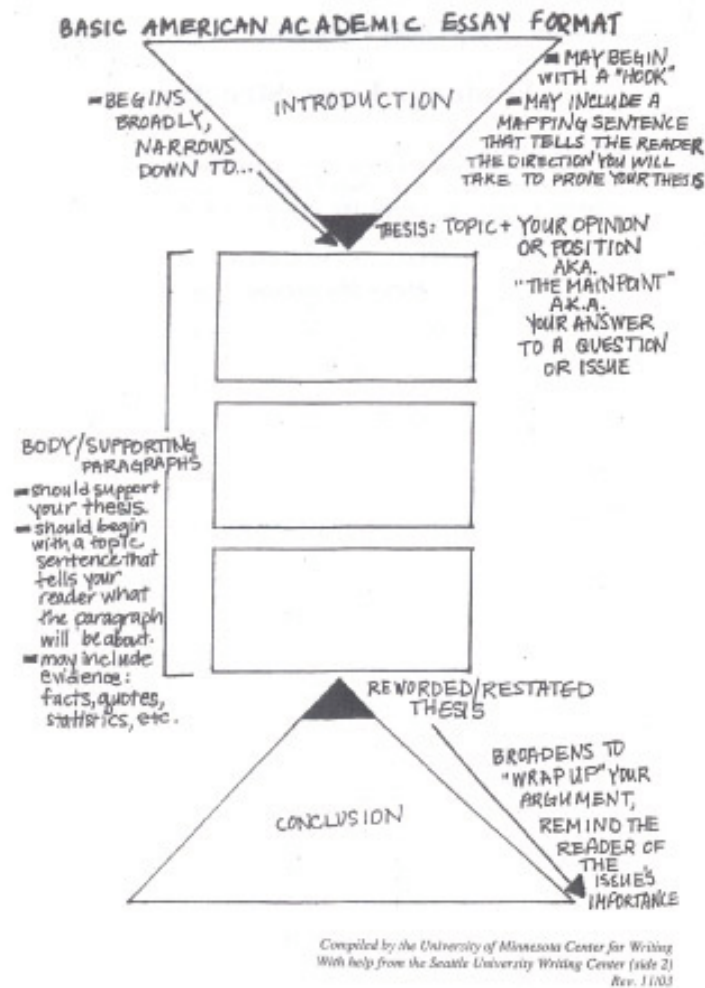


# Academic Essay Structures

Standard American argumentative essays follow a uniform structure composed of an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The **introduction** provides an overview of the topic and key related issues; it ends with a **thesis statement** that identifies your main argument. Thereafter, a series of **body paragraphs** elaborates on your topic and thesis, usually through a series of sub-points that support your main argument. It is important that each paragraph or section has a clear **topic sentence** to guide the reader. Finally, the **conclusion** typically restates your thesis and the main points of the essay. It may also suggest broader implications of your topic and arguments. Below is a visual representation of this format.



*With special thanks to the Seattle University Writing Center.*