In Context Toolbox – How to Organize a Report

The **In Context Toolbox** tip sheets are designed to help middle school and high school researchers prepare a written report. This document will explain how to **organize your report**.

> Need more help with your report? Visit Help in any In Context resources for more **In Context Toolbox Tip Sheets**!

Getting organized means putting things in order. When you write a report, the things to put in order are paragraphs. There are many ways to put paragraphs in order to make a good report. If you're not sure how to organize a report, here's one way you might do it. Divide your report into three sections:

- Call your **first paragraph** the **Introduction**.
- Call your **next paragraphs** the **Body**.
- Call your **last paragraph** the **Conclusion**.

Here's what you might put into each section:

The Introduction

The introduction also has some stuff you can put in order. They're called points. Points are sentences that say what you think is important about your topic. Start by making a list of some things about your topic that really seem important to you. Try to list at least three important things. If you can't think of three important things about your topic, you should do some more research.

Now, look at your list. One of the things on your list is the main idea. Decide which one it is. Then write a **topic sentence** about it. The other things on your list are called supporting points. Write complete sentences for all of your supporting points. Then read these sentences. Find the one that agrees most with your main idea. The one that agrees most with your main idea is your first supporting point. Put it right after your topic sentence. Then find another supporting point that agrees with your main point. Write it as your second supporting point. If you want to, you can add a third supporting point.

Once you've covered all your points, your Introduction is finished! If you've written a good Introduction, people who read your report will be interested in the topic. They'll want to keep reading, just to find out what you have to say about it!

The Body

You can also put your body paragraphs in order. First comes a paragraph about your main point. Next comes a paragraph about your first supporting point. Then comes a paragraph about your second supporting point. Then comes a paragraph about your third supporting point. What should you write in these paragraphs? Facts, details, and ideas that help explain your points. If you've written good body paragraphs, people who read your report will find plenty of good information that supports your points.

The Conclusion

The last paragraph you write in your report is the conclusion. In this paragraph, everything comes back to your main point. Start with a sentence about your main point. Then write a sentence or two that shows how your report proves your main point. Then, congratulate yourself! Your report is finished!

Need more help? Ask your librarian!