Example Essay

As an Olympic College student you will find that writing assignments are common in most of your classes. Regardless of one's field of study it is important that every student develop a strong grasp on how to write an essay. Unfortunately, not every student has taken English 101 before enrolling in courses that require essays, papers, and reports. Therefore this paper will discuss the organization of the essay, paragraph structure, as well as how to cite sources when paraphrasing or quoting someone. The overall goal of this paper is to provide students with an example essay and guidelines for how to write a basic academic paper.

First, it is important that the essay has a clear focus. As the paragraph above demonstrates it is very helpful to introduce the topic of the paper and the main points that you will discuss. By writing an introductory paragraph you can better alert the reader to the purpose of your paper and give them an idea of how you will achieve your goals by introducing the main points. The main points should be discussed in the paragraphs that follow the introduction. This section is often referred to as the "body" of the essay. In addition to writing an introductory paragraph, it is also suggested that you close your essay with a conclusion that recaps your main points.

Furthermore, make certain that each paragraph addresses a specific point or component of the paper. For instance, the previous paragraph focuses on the organization of the entire essay, yet this paragraph only focuses on writing individual paragraphs.
Though the topics are related, in that they both address essay organization and structure, they are two separate topics and should be addressed in separate paragraphs. The topic should be made clear at the start of the paragraph with the following sentences providing a more detailed analysis or description of the paragraph topic. Furthermore, it is also a nice habit to make sure that the transition between the paragraphs is smooth by using phrases like “secondly, furthermore, additionally, or lastly” at the start of your paragraphs. This reinforces the fact that your paragraph topics are related and each point contributes to your thesis, or main argument/purpose.

Lastly, as more and more papers require academic research and the use of scholarly articles you will want to make certain that you are citing your sources correctly. This is very important in that refraining from giving credit to others for their ideas/words constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is essentially academic theft and can result in a zero on the assignment or even referral to the Vice President of Student Services. You can avoid this by doing the following. When you put someone else's ideas or words into your own words or if you are summarizing an article or quote that you have read you are paraphrasing. When you paraphrase someone you want to follow your summary/description with a parenthetical citation that includes the author's last name followed by the year in which the book/article was published (Thompson, 2009). Sometimes you may choose to use a direct quote from an author. When you quote someone directly you need to be certain to “use quotation marks around the quote itself and end the sentence(s) with a parenthetical citation that includes the author’s last name, year of publication, and the page number for where the quote can be found” (Thompson, 2009, pg 2). In addition to citing sources in your paper, as shown in this paragraph, one will also
want to be sure to include a reference list at the end of the essay or paper. This list provides more detailed information about the sources so that the reader can find out where to locate the books, articles, and websites.

In conclusion, writing papers and essays is a major component of higher education. As such, it is very important that you develop a strong grasp on academic writing not only in your English classes, but through other course work as well. This short essay should provide a quick and simple reference, allowing you an example from which to build upon. Specifically, you should better understand how essay organization, paragraph structure, and how properly citing your sources contribute to the success of an academic essay. Try not to let the stress of writing the paper overwhelm you – practice makes perfect!

References