

HOW TO WRITE ESSAYS ACROSS DISCIPLINES:

**INTRODUCTION – BODY -
CONCLUSION**

SEED ONLINE STUDY SKILLS SESSIONS

THE INTRODUCTION

- An introduction is usually one paragraph long if you're writing an average length essay (say, 2000-2500 words)
- A paragraph is sufficient if it takes up half a page (if you're using space and a half)
- The introduction (whether a paragraph or even longer), should have the following:
 - **Hook**
 - **Background**
 - **Essay plan**
 - **Thesis statement/argument**

THE OPENING HOOK

- This is the opening sentence, designed to get the reader's attention
- It could be a quote, statistic, rhetorical question or a proverb
- BUT – it should be discipline-specific
- The Hard Sciences, for example, wouldn't usually appreciate rhetorical questions and figures of speech; the Philosophy department makes great use of rhetorical questions, however
- Ask your lecturer if in doubt
- But a quote works well across disciplines, and you can avoid a rather ordinary opening such as 'this essay will discuss.....'
- On the other hand, the above opening is perhaps favoured for writing in the Hard Sciences
- **Chomsky (2010: 45) argues that we are 'hard-wired to acquire language'.**

BACKGROUND

- Providing background information is essential
- It could consist of some history of the subject, a definition of the subject or some examples of what's going within the subject area at the current time

In other words, Chomsky is stating that there is an innate ability for humans to acquire their first language. This in turn would argue against language acquisition being largely, if not entirely, based on nurture. This argues that we acquire language simply based on copying it from those around us, such as our caregivers, and based on reinforcement.

ESSAY MAP

- Provide a list of the essay's topics, in the order you will discuss them. This need be no more than one-two sentences

This essay will discuss language acquisition, first explaining the specific aspects of Chomsky's Nativist theory, and then moving on to the various arguments connected with the Nurture position. I will then conclude with my overall opinion on this matter.

THESIS STATEMENT

- This one sentence is crucial
- Without it, your reader may well ask, 'where is your argument?'
- The entire assessment rests on, and is captured in, this one key sentence
- The thesis statement tells the reader the WHAT and WHY of your assessment
- **What** are you writing about and **why**?
- The formula below might be helpful:
- *This essay will discuss X in order to do Y*

This essay will discuss both nature and nurture in relation to child language acquisition, in order to determine which theory is most credible

LET'S PUT IT ALL TOGETHER:

Chomsky (2010: 45) argues that we are 'hard-wired to acquire language'. In other words, Chomsky is stating that there is an innate ability for humans to acquire their first language. This in turn would argue against language acquisition being largely, if not entirely, based on nurture. This argues that we acquire language simply based on copying it from those around us, such as our caregivers, and based on reinforcement. This essay will discuss language acquisition, first explaining the specific aspects of Chomsky's Nativist theory, and then moving on to the various arguments connected with the Nurture position. I will then conclude with my overall opinion on this matter. This essay will discuss both nature and nurture in relation to child language acquisition, in order to determine which theory is most credible.

WHAT IS A COHERENT STRUCTURE?

- To achieve a coherent structure in your essays, you must do the following with your essay's body:
 - Have **ONLY** one topic per body paragraph
 - Make sure that each topic relates to, illustrates, supports and connects with your thesis statement
 - Use a logical progression for your topics
 - Make sure you use connecting words (*for example, therefore, however, this suggests that, in addition, moreover, etc.*)
 - You don't need a **new** topic for each body paragraph; just maintain **one** topic for each body paragraph!

TOPIC SENTENCE

Chomsky's theory of nature is still very much discussed in linguistics

A good topic sentence, such as the one above, has (of course) a topic but also **makes a point about the topic**

- From here, you could apply one of many formulas for constructing a good body paragraph – next, I will show you one.

BODY PARAGRAPH

Follow the topic sentence with an **illustration**, then a **quote/reference to the literature** and then **do something with the quote/reference to the literature**:

Chomsky's theory of nature is still very much discussed in linguistics. It helped paved the way for how we view the amazing act of learning our native language, and Chomsky thus argued that nature must be involved in order to acquire so much grammar and vocabulary largely by the time children begin school. Indeed, Pinker (2018) further states that this complex act cannot be adequately explained by copying our caregivers and being rewarded for correct uses of language alone. This suggests that language is far too complex to be able to acquire without some internal mechanism being present from birth.

INCOHERENT WRITING

The link between language and culture is strong. Language reflects the culture(s) which it represents, just as culture is embedded in language. Language is a necessary tool for communication. Culture is everywhere to be seen. There is football culture, women's culture, etc. Text messaging is a recent development in language, and texting can help people understand visual images, tapping into visual literacy.

CONCLUSION

- A conclusion should begin with your main opinion – what opinion have you arrived at having discussed the different ideas and theories in the essay's body?
- Then, recap your main points and/or topics
- DO NOT add any new topics at this point – it's too late!
- Finish your essay with a nice 'closing thought', similar to how you began (e.g. a quote, proverb, or perhaps a prediction)

CONCLUSION

Having discussed the topic of child language acquisition, I believe that a combination of nature and nurture are responsible. It seems unlikely that nurture alone could result in such quick learning in the child's first few years and yet, to discredit the importance of nurture in a baby's early years (and beyond), seems somewhat unrealistic. Thus, inner mechanisms, in-built language learning devices, can operate in harmony with a nurturing caregiver. It is therefore important to recognise nature's role, but also the role of those for whom their first language is already acquired.