

Writing a Paper in US Style

The English as a Second Language Program

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The Center for Teaching and Learning

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Where do you begin?

Choose your topic

Brainstorm, research, and
organize ideas

Create a thesis statement



For more information on pre-writing strategies and on how to create a good thesis statement see:

<http://www.uis.edu/ctl/writing/PrewriteandThesisStatements.pdf.pdf> and
<http://www.uis.edu/ctl/writing/tutorials.html>

Choose Your Topic

Imagine your professor gives you the following assignment:

Research and discuss the benefits of a lifestyle choice that is unfamiliar or does not apply to you. For example, if you do not exercise, your research topic could explore why people decide to exercise regularly.

What topics might you address?

Brainstorm, research, and organize ideas

After thinking about the assignment for a day or two, you remember an experience when you first met someone who was a vegetarian.

This experience left you with lots of questions about what it is like to not eat meat, and why someone would choose to be a vegetarian.

Presto! You have your topic! **You decide to write about why people choose to become vegetarians.**

Brainstorm, research, and organize ideas

Think of reasons why someone would choose to be a vegetarian.

-possibly for their health?

-maybe they don't like the taste of meat?

Perhaps **interview** a vegetarian, find out why they made that choice.

Look for **research** on vegetarianism. Do studies list possible benefits?



- Check out the CTL's other workshops related to research:
<http://www.uis.edu/ctl/writing/tutorials.html#Research>

From start to finish

- Once you have gathered your notes, you are ready to plan the paper.
- Let's look at a finished paper to see how it's organized.

Use the first paragraph as an **introduction** to grab the reader's attention

A good way of doing this is telling a brief story, or finding another creative way of approaching the topic.

Jane Student
English 101
Essay 2
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Vegetarianism?

“Do you want to have this?” I offered the beef jerky to my friend. “No way! Don’t you know it’s from a dead animal?”

I had this conversation when I was at a party in Japan with some

foreign friends. Obviously, this person is a vegetarian. She does not eat any kind of animal flesh, does not drink milk or eat

cheese, and does not wear leather fabrics. It was my first time to talk to a vegetarian. I was surprised and asked curiously. “Yeah,

I know it is from a dead animal, but almost everyone eats it here.

Why don’t you?” She explained seriously that when she

imagined it was from a dead animal, she felt very sick. She did

not like depriving anything of its life.

Look at
paragraph 2

Where is the
thesis
statement?

What is going to
be discussed in
the rest of the
paper?

It does not seem easy to become a vegetarian. You have to create ways to cook delicious food without the tastes from animals, like consommé, and bonito soup.

Furthermore, you have to be careful of the menu when you order in a restaurant. For me, this activity seems like a pain.

I love animals, but I also like eating some of them. So far, I have not felt like I should quit eating meat completely.

However, as a result of my conversation with my friend, I began to wonder what makes some people become vegetarian. Improved health and ecological concerns are two important reasons why people become vegetarian.

The underlined sentence in bold is the **thesis statement**.

This tells us what the rest of the paper is going to talk about.

The thesis statement creates a road map for the rest of the paper.

The following paragraphs should discuss and defend why improved health and ecological concerns are important reasons why a person becomes vegetarian

It does not seem easy to become a vegetarian. You have to create ways to cook delicious food without the tastes from animals, like consommé, and bonito soup. Furthermore, you have to be careful of the menu when you order in a restaurant. For me, ~~this activity seems like a pain. I love animals, but I also like eating some of them.~~ So far, I have not felt like I should quit eating meat completely. However, as a result of my conversation with my friend, I began to wonder what makes some people become vegetarian. **Improved health and ecological concerns are two important reasons why people become vegetarian.**

This **body paragraph** deals with health as it relates to vegetarianism.

The first sentence explains what topic will be addressed in the paragraph: people become vegetarians for health reasons.

Note that the third sentence cites outside research: “Castleman (1995)...” The citation method used is APA style.



For more information on APA style check out: <http://www.uis.edu/ctl/writing/documents/APACitationMethods.pdf>

First of all, many people try to be vegetarians to maintain good health. Vegetarianism can prevent people from getting certain diseases. Castleman (1995) mentions that many studies prove that meat, especially beef, pork, and lamb, likely increase the percentages of heart disease and cancer. He states that the number of vegetarians who die from heart disease and cancer is definitely lower than meat eaters. The National Cancer research Institute has found that meat-eating women get breast cancer four times more than women who do not eat meat or eat little (“Why be a Vegetarian?” 1999). Moreover, there are other diseases which meat eaters are more likely to get than vegetarians, such as hypertension, gallstones, constipation, and diabetes (Cerrato, 1991). Consequently, vegetarians may live longer than omnivores.

These three sentences conclude the **body paragraph** that began on the previous slide.

Notice how the sentences provide evidence supporting the health benefits of vegetarianism.

The points made in the paragraph effectively relate back to the thesis statement, which states that improved health is a main reason why people become vegetarian.

Later paragraphs will discuss why ecological concerns (the other reason mentioned in the thesis) could influence someone to become vegetarian.

Not all paragraphs needed for a complete paper are shone in this presentation.

Dworkin (1999) cites a Loma Linda University study that says vegetarians live an average of 7 years longer than those who eat meat. Another positive health point of vegetarianism that Dworkin gives is the fact that vegetarians tend to be slim and their bones can last longer. Recognizing these health benefits, many people are becoming vegetarians.

Thesis: Improved health and ecological concerns are two important reasons why people become vegetarian.

Notice how this **conclusion** restates the ideas addressed in the paper but also adds a closing thought.

The writer has inserted her opinion about how the process of researching this paper has changed her opinion.

Let the process of writing be a learning experience for you too!

If I become a vegetarian, I will indirectly improve life for others. For example, when people decide to become vegetarians in order to improve their health, it may also seem like they care about others. In fact, it is just fortunate that their lifestyle will not be harmful to other creatures. This is also true for people who become vegetarians for ecological reasons. They want to reduce wasteful activity, and it consequently helps animals' lives. Vegetarianism is a habit that allows us to reflect on our life. I cannot say that everyone has to be a vegetarian, but I am learning to respect vegetarians for their reliability as unselfish people. Vegetarianism could be one of the solutions that help this chaotic world become more humane.

Things to remember

The sample paper used in this tutorial is only one example of writing and may not represent the appropriate format and style of all the writing assignments you will be asked to complete while you are a student in the U.S..

Writing is a process! Good papers are usually the result of time spent planning, writing, and revising.

When you get a writing assignment:

Make sure you fully understand the assignment before you begin (seek help from an instructor, classmate, or visit the CTL if needed)

Give yourself plenty of time to develop ideas, research, write, and revise your paper.

Happy Writing!

References

Sample essay adapted from:

Dollahite, N. E. & Haun, J. (2006). *Sourcework: Academic writing from sources*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

For more information see:

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