

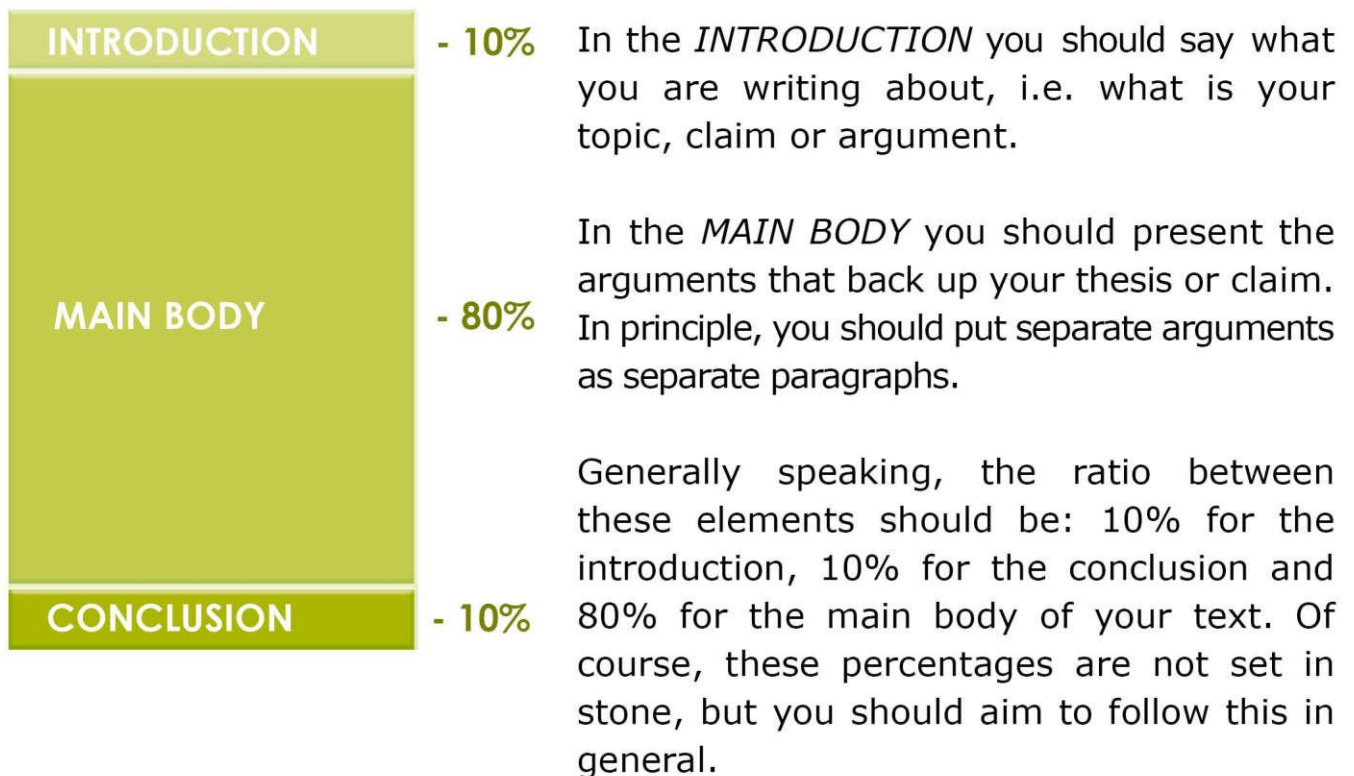
VII

BASIC RULES OF WRITING

Every story and every written text have certain logic, they are constructed according to certain principles.

Essentially, basic underlying structure is the same, or similar, to all writing. Same logic applies to a story, academic book, or an article. Of course, these different forms of writing differ in many ways as well, in terms of length, complexity, depth.

Still, we can identify some basic logic or principles. Every text typically needs to have an **introduction**, **main body** and **conclusion**.



What do you think that the ratio between these parts should be?

7.1. CONSTRUCTING A PARAGRAPH

Great Irish writer James Joyce once said that the art of writing consists of writing sentences.

One could paraphrase this and say that the secret of good writing is to write good paragraphs.

Think about a paragraph as a separate unit of text, as a separate little world – at the beginning announce its content or basic question or questions. Each sentence that follows should add something or contain some new information. The direction of presenting should be - from familiar to unfamiliar, from known to unknown, from old to new. End paragraph with a conclusion. Sentences should thus be connected in a logical order and your paragraph should have a clear flow of ideas and information.

I live in a flat at New Belgrade. I like my view from the balcony. I have been living there for two years. I have a daughter. Last summer I took her to the seaside and will take her again this year. Her school is close by... She has many friends in the area. I am satisfied with this flat.

I moved to New Belgrade two years ago and enjoy living here. My flat is situated in a residential area close to the Danube embankment and historical area of Zemun, full of diverse architecture and dynamic history. Even though the river is not quite visible from the balcony, one can feel its scent and I also have a nice view of the surrounding hills. I have a daughter and spend a lot of free time with her here, except in the summer, when we go to the seaside together. She enjoys it here. She has a big room and a lot of friends. School and playgrounds are nearby. We are very satisfied with our neighbourhood and we hope to stay here for many more years.

Compare these two paragraphs – even though both contain pretty much the same information, it is perfectly clear that the second one is far superior. Why?

Basically, while sentences in the first paragraph are somehow mechanical and unrelated, in the second one you can see the flow from one thought to another, and easily follow the logical order. you have an opening sentence that describes the topic of the paragraph, and everything that is said there somewhat contributed to the main topic. So, this would be one way to correct the things that are missing to make the first paragraph look better.

Final tip for good writing would be: **revise, revise, revise.**

If repetition is the mother of all learning, revision is the mother of all writing.

The filmmakers have a saying that the movie is made in the edit room. So, if you think that your writing is over when you put the final dot, be sure that it is certainly not the case.

Now comes the editing part. So, check:

1 If now, after all that you wrote, your introduction actually adequately announces the content of your piece (usually this is not the case, so the introduction needs to be revised).

2 Does your conclusion contain your key points or essence of everything that is written?

3 Are your paragraphs well organised, that is, are all your arguments in order?

If you organised your text well, every paragraph will have a central statement, so that, if you take them all out, they should contain your main arguments.