

# LET'S GET ORGANIZED

## HOW-TO GUIDE

GCWC

GASTON COLLEGE  
WRITING CENTER



## CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

### PREWRITING STAGE

#### Brainstorming

Jotting down potential topics

#### Narrowing

Selecting the right topic

#### Focusing

Asking questions and researching

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

### ADDRESSING THE TOPIC

#### Hook Sentence

Capturing the audience's attention

#### Background

Giving necessary information

#### Thesis

Leading to the main point

# 2

## THESIS STATEMENT

### THE MAIN POINT

#### Taking a Position

Presenting the main argument

#### Sub Points

Incorporating supporting points

#### Roadmapping

Guiding the direction and flow

# 3

## TOPIC SENTENCES

### FOCUSED PARAGRAPH

#### Structuring the Body

Setting the topic for the paragraph

#### Utilizing a Sub Point

Highlighting a supporting point

#### Keeping the Flow

Allowing the reader to follow along

# 4

## TRANSITIONS

### SWITCHING TOPICS

#### Connecting Points

Moving from one topic to another

#### Building Similarities

Using words to show similarities

#### Showing Differences

Finding words that illustrate dissimilarities

# 5

# FLOW

## CONSISTENCY

### Logic

Ensuring content is clear

### Order

Organizing the essay effectively

### Argument

Remembering to support ideas

# 6

# USING SOURCES

## RESEARCH

### Sources

Finding solid academic research

### Integration

Using sources in the essay

### Opinion

Focusing on evidence-based facts

# 7

# CONCLUSION

## WRAPPING UP

### Repetition

Reiterating the thesis

### Summary

Readdressing main ideas

### Closing

Finalizing thoughts

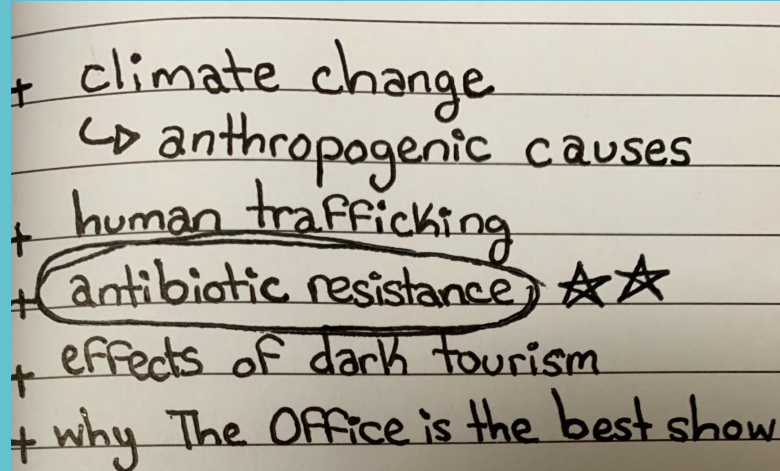
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## CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

### Step 1: Brainstorming & Selecting a Topic

Start off by creating a list of potential topics.

Narrow down your choices to the one that interests you.

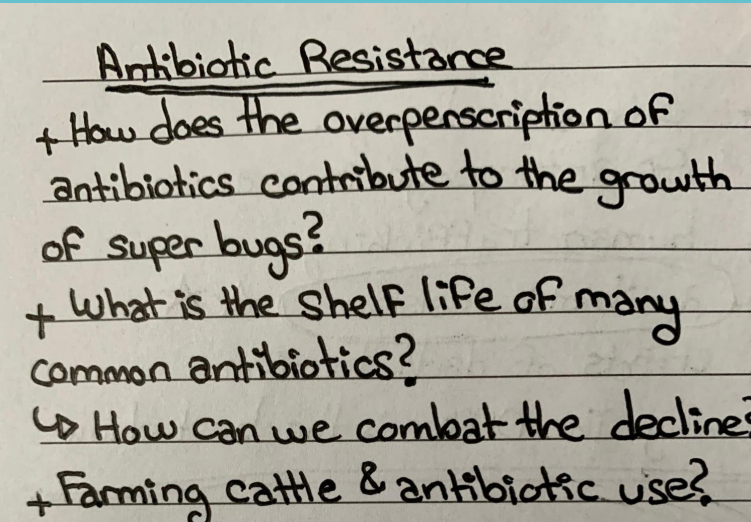


### Step 2: Focusing on the Topic

Consider questions you have about the chosen topic.

Will you need to do research?

What particular points do you want to include in your essay?



**Step 3: Hook Sentence**

A hook is a strong opening sentence(s) that captures the reader's attention. It highlights the importance of the essay topic.

Ex. "Although antibiotics are commonly prescribed for various illnesses, their long-term effectiveness is being challenged by antibiotic resistant bacteria."



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**Step 4: Background Information**

It is vital to provide the reader with necessary data.

Does the reader need:

- the historical context of the issue?
- names of important individuals or organizations?
- key facts and figures?

**Step 5: Base Argument**

Every essay needs a main argument.

Ex. "The prevalence of antibiotic resistant bacteria is increasing."

The increasing bacteria would be the start of the argument. However, a **strong** thesis statement needs supporting points.

**THESIS  
STATEMENT**

**Step 6: Supporting Points**

A standard essay usually relies on three sub points that support the argument.  
Ex.

1. overprescription of antibiotics
2. use of antibiotics in livestock
3. lack of proper water treatment

**Step 7: Combining the Two**

Base Argument + Supporting Points

Ex. **Thesis Statement:**

**"The prevalence of antibiotic resistant bacteria is increasing due to the overprescription of antibiotics, the use of antibiotics in livestock, and the lack of proper water treatment."**

This thesis gives the argument and sub points that map out the entire essay.



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**TOPIC  
SENTENCES**

**Step 8: Beginning the Body**

A topic sentence expresses the main idea of the body paragraph and introduces the supporting point.

It is always the **first sentence** in the paragraph.

Let's use the first supporting point (overprescription of antibiotics) to create a sample topic sentence.

Ex. "The overprescription of antibiotics by doctors in the United States is contributing to the growth of super bugs that are resistant to such medication."

This statement lets the reader know the paragraph will discuss facts & figures relating to the excess use of antibiotics by medical professionals.

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## Step 9: Connecting Points

Transitional words or phrases help the writer move from one point to another.

They are often utilized at the beginning or ending of a body paragraph to help keep the flow of the essay.

### Types of Transitions

Transitions are divided into multiple categories: contrasting; similar; logical order; cause and effect.

## TRANSITIONS

### Contrasting

- On the other hand,
- Nonetheless
- In contrast
- However,
- Alternatively

### Similar

- Moreover
- Furthermore
- Also
- In addition
- Additionally

### Order

- First and foremost
- Firstly
- Secondly
- Subsequently
- Finally

### Cause & Effect

- Therefore,
- Consequently
- Thus
- Because
- So

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## Step 10: Assessing Flow

In order for an argument to be effective, the paper must flow in an organized manner.

Topic sentences and transitions help to keep an essay flowing, but the supporting points must also be in

### Order of Supporting Points

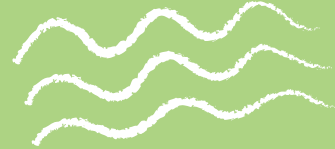
Going back to our list of supporting points:

1. overprescription of antibiotics
2. use of antibiotics in livestock
3. lack of proper water treatment

It is vital that we address these points in order throughout the body section of the essay.

Therefore, the overprescription of antibiotics will be discussed in **body paragraph #1**, while the use of antibiotics in livestock will follow in **body paragraph #2**.

## FLOW



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## USING SOURCES

### Step 11: Sources

Professional academic sources are necessary for research essays.

#### Trustworthy Source

- .edu(education) and .gov (government) sites generally contain reliable data
- Written by professionals with verifiable credentials
- Peer-reviewed sources are best as they have been fact checked by multiple professionals

vs.

#### Untrustworthy Source

- .com(commercial) and .org (nonprofit) sites must be considered carefully
- May be blog posts by unknown individuals
- The publishing author(s) may be unclear



### Evidence-Based Research

- Keep in mind that personal opinions are not facts.
- Any claims made should be backed by research.
- Avoid "I" statements such as "I think" or "I feel."

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## Citing Research

In order to properly cite a source you must have:

### 1. An in-text citation

Ex. MLA: (Schrute 52)      APA: (Schrute, 2020)



### 2. A citation listed on a Works Cited (MLA) or Reference (APA) page

Ex. Schrute, Dwight. "Antibiotic Resistance? False." *Beet Farmer Monthly*, vol. 20, no. 4, Aug. 2020, pp. 52-57. *ProQuest Central*, [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com).

(MLA digital journal article citation)

For more specific citation examples, feel free to check out the PerdueOwl website or refer to *The Everyday Writer Handbook*.

## CONCLUSION

### Step 12: Concluding the Essay

- The conclusion paragraph should summarize the entire essay.
- **First Sentence:**  
Begin by restating the thesis statement, but try to reword the sentence slightly to avoid repetition.
- **Next Few Sentences:**  
One should reiterate the major points found in each body paragraph.
  - One sentence per point is ideal.
  - Make sure to discuss the points in the order they appear in the essay.
  - Be certain that you do not include any new information in the conclusion.

YAY!

### Closing Sentence

- Try to end with a captivating sentence that leaves your audience wanting to learn more about the topic.

Contact Us:  
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THANK  
YOU

Request an Appointment:  
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