

ADHD & YOU

Essay Organization Tips

Children who experience the core symptoms of ADHD (inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity) may need help with school-related matters. For example:

Children With ADHD May:

- Have trouble with organization
- Have difficulty paying attention to details
- Avoid tasks requiring sustained mental effort

This Tool Was Developed to Help Children With ADHD:

- Work through each step of the essay-writing process, including:
 - Brainstorming
 - Organizing/Outlining
 - Writing
 - Revising
 - Proofreading



How to Use This Tool:

- 1 Print out a copy of this tool for a child with ADHD and review each type of graphic organizer with him or her.
- 2 Show the child the blank templates included at the end of the tool.
- 3 Provide help as needed.

Essay-Organization Tips

Essay Checklist

Instructions: Check off each step as you complete it.

Step 1. Brainstorm

Step 2. Organize/Outline

Step 3. Write

Step 4. Revise

Step 5. Proofread

Step 1: Brainstorm

The first step is to write down all of your ideas about the topic of your essay.

Instructions:

- 1 Think about your topic.
- 2 Take 5 or 10 minutes to write down every idea you have about it. You can use whole sentences or single words. Consider using 1 of the templates below to help you do this.

The "5 Ws"

Instructions:

Use the grid below to write down any thoughts you have about who or what you are writing about, when and where the things you want to write about took place, and why it is important to know about these things.

Topic: _____

The "5 Ws": Who, What, When, Where, and Why?

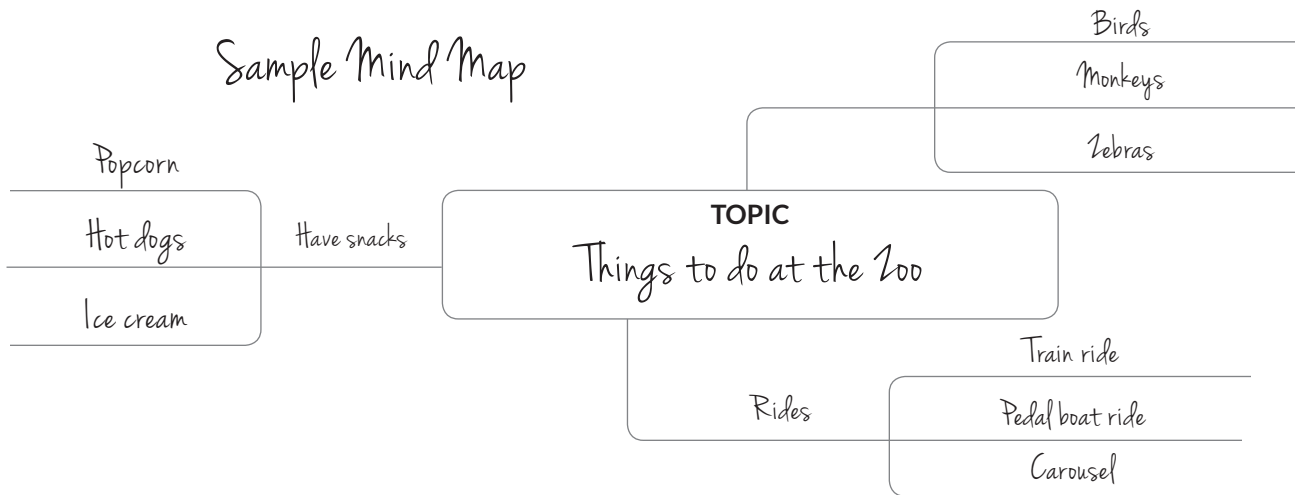
Who?	
What?	
When?	
Where?	
Why?	

Mindmap

Instructions:

- 1 Get a blank piece of paper
- 2 Write your main topic in a box in the middle of the page.
- 3 Add details that support this idea by drawing lines off of the box and writing 1 detail on each line.
- 4 Draw smaller lines that connect to each main line. Write down things you could use to support each of the main details on these lines.

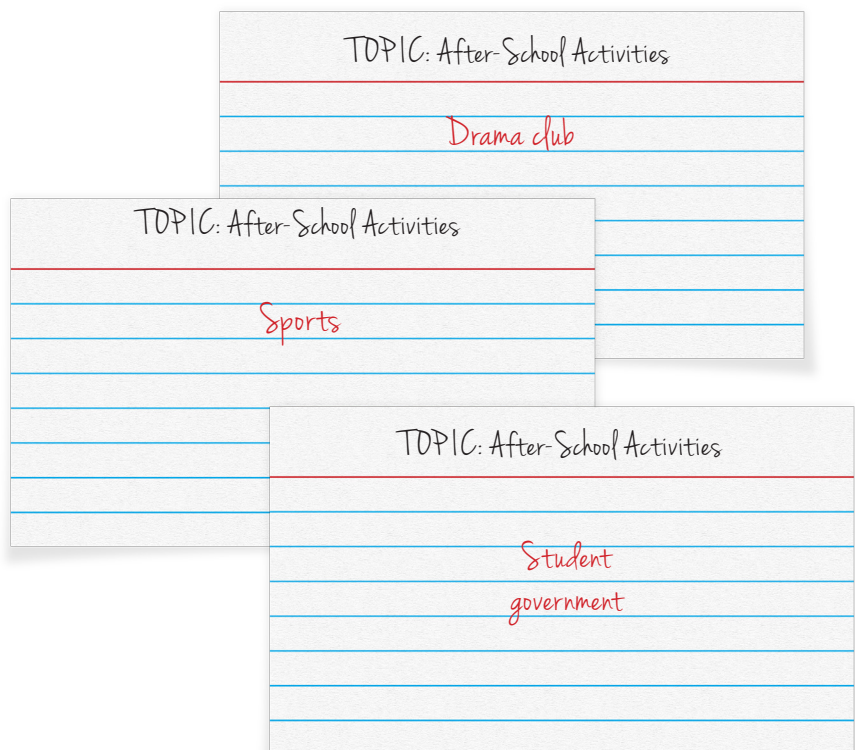
Sample Mind Map



Note Cards

Instructions:

- 1 Write down any main ideas you want to include in your essay. Don't worry about the order in which you write them down.
- 2 When you are finished writing your ideas, spread your note cards out on a table. Think about what order you want to put your ideas in when you write your essay.
- 3 Put the cards in the order you want to use them.



When you are done writing down your ideas, go back to the "Essay Checklist" on page 1 and mark Step 1 as completed.

Step 2: Organize/Outline

The next step is to organize—or outline—your essay. An essay has 3 parts:

-
- 1 Introduction (beginning) → 2 Body (middle) → 3 Conclusion (end)

Instructions:

Use your ideas from Step 1 to create an outline. If it helps, you can use the template below.

Introduction (beginning): Thesis statement (the main idea of the essay)

Ask yourself: “*What is my essay about?*” This is called your thesis statement.

Body (middle)

Ask yourself: “*What does my reader need to know?*” The body can have more than 1 paragraph, if you need it.

The topic sentence and details included in each paragraph should support the thesis statement (main idea) you wrote in the first paragraph.

Topic sentence (main idea) for body paragraph # 1

Details that support this idea

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Topic sentence (main idea) for body paragraph #2

Details that support this idea

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Topic sentence (main idea) for body paragraph # 3

Details that support this idea

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Conclusion (end)

Restate the main point from your introduction (beginning) using different words, or tell your reader what your essay should have taught him or her.

When you are done outlining your essay, go back to the “Essay Checklist” on page 1 and mark Step 2 as completed

Step 3: Write

Now, you will write your essay.

Instructions:

Using the outline in Step 2, write each paragraph.

1. Begin each paragraph with the topic sentences you wrote in Step 2. In addition to stating the main idea of their paragraphs, these topic sentences should also show how a paragraph is related to the one before it. Depending on the topic of your essay, you may want to use words that:
 - a. Tell readers the order in which something happens (such as “next” or “after”)
 - b. Add something to support your topic (such as “in addition” or “moreover”)
 - c. Contrast one point with another (such as “although” or “however”)
2. Try to write 2 to 3 sentences in each paragraph that have details that support the topic sentence of the paragraph.
3. If you need to, use the template below to help you write each paragraph.

When you are writing, make sure that each sentence has a subject (a noun that names the person, place, or thing taking the action) and a predicate (a verb that describes the action taking place).

Your teacher may ask you to follow a specific style guide (such as The MLA Handbook or The Chicago Manual of Style) when writing essays. If you need help finding or using one of these handbooks, ask your teacher to assist you.

Instructions:

Use your ideas from Step 2 to write sentences for each paragraph.

Main idea of the paragraph (with a word or phrase that shows how the paragraph is related to the one before it, if needed)

Supporting sentence #1

Supporting sentence #2

Supporting sentence #3

You may write by hand or use a computer if that's easier. If you need to, you may even write your essay by talking through it out loud and having a parent, caregiver, or friend write it down for you.

When you are done outlining your essay, go back to the “Essay Checklist” on page 1 and mark Step 3 as completed.

Step 4: Revise

After you write your essay, go back and reread it.

Instructions:

Use the review checklist below to help you make sure your essay has everything you need. Reading your essay aloud to a parent, caregiver, or friend may help you find things you may have missed. Check off each step listed below as you complete it.

Review Checklist:

- I began with a thesis (main idea) sentence.
- I began each body paragraph with a topic sentence that:
 - States the main idea of the paragraph
 - Shows how the paragraph is related to the one before it
- I included 2 to 3 sentences in each paragraph to support the topic sentence (main idea) of the paragraph.
- I ended with a conclusion.

When you are done outlining your essay, go back to the “Essay Checklist” on page 1 and mark Step 4 as completed.

Step 5: Proofread

The last step in writing your essay is to check the spelling and punctuation marks. This is called proofreading. Reading your essay aloud to a parent, caregiver, or friend may help you find things you may have missed. Check off each step listed below as you complete it.

Instructions:

1. Use the proofreading checklist below to help you find mistakes in your essay.

Proofreading Checklist:

- Is the essay formatted in the correct style?
- Does each sentence:
 - Start with a capital letter?
 - Have a subject and a predicate?
 - End with a punctuation mark?
- Are all the words spelled correctly?
- Are the citations and references formatted in the correct style?

2. Fix any mistakes you find. Print a clean copy of the essay. Make sure your name is at the top of the page.

When you are done outlining your essay, go back to the “Essay Checklist” on page 1 and mark Step 5 as completed.

That's it! You're done! Hand your completed essay to your teacher.