

# STRUCTURING AND VISUALIZING YOUR ACADEMIC TEXT

Structuring and visualizing your academic text – (bachelor) paper, master thesis – is important for its comprehensibility. Below are some general points of attention about the **global** structure of your text, followed by some specific **tips & tricks**.

## Introduction

The **global structure** begins with the **Introduction**. In the introduction, you express the perspective of your text and begin to grab the reader's attention. As a result, you not only state what you are going to talk about (the content, your scope, the purpose of your research, your research questions, your research methodology, ...), your **arguments** for your choices, but you also state **which structure** you are going to use and what the reader can expect the following parts and chapters. You then also stick to this stated order.



## The middle part

This is the bulk of your text with chapters/sections/paragraphs that must be clearly written. Usually the 'middle' has a first part with the **exploration** of the existing work within your research domain and a second part with your **own empirical research**. Within each part there are chapters/sections/paragraphs. Each opening sentence is a link to the previous paragraph and the part after it flows seamlessly into this. Again, provide **arguments** for your choices and show **empathy with your reader**; leave **clues**, namely where he/she is in your text.



## Conclusion

In a **conclusion**, you emphasize your thesis / perspective again and give a concise summary of the most important results. You do not state any new findings in your conclusion, but you do state **any shortcomings** in your research, which you can then immediately channel into **suggestions for future research**.



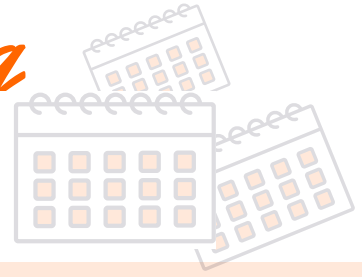
## SOS Structuring and visualising: contact Studyguidance

- **MAIL:** [guidance@vub.be](mailto:guidance@vub.be)
- **TEL:** 02 629 23 06
- **WEB:** [student.vub.be/en/study-guidance](http://student.vub.be/en/study-guidance)
- **WEB:** [www.studyguide.be](http://www.studyguide.be) and Canvas course Studyguidance



# Structuring & visualizing

## TIPS & TRICKS



### PAY ATTENTION TO:

- **Sections and Paragraphs.** The most important info is normally located at the beginning or at the end of a paragraph or a paragraph.
- **Typographical signals.** You can indicate important information by playing with fonts, line spacing and white space.
- **Key and signalwords.** These indicate the content and structure of your text respectively.
- **Introductions and (preliminary) conclusions** are usually written as separate paragraphs. Provide new paragraphs for new topics, for examples or contrasts.



### PRODUCE:

- **Classification-lay-out/building plan.** Divide the available information into topics and subtopics and then establish a sequence, which you then announce at the beginning of your chapter / paragraph
- **A chronological order.** Especially in your structure.
- **Cause and effect.** Explain this throughout your text.
- **Similarities and differences.** Compare and contrast.



### BUILD:

- **The division of your chapters** in main topics (sections) and subtopics (paragraphs), think of smooth transitions and announce everything in advance.
- **Your discussions** (in case of clearance of theoretical concepts or research results) that you conduct with relevant authors in the field; announce the authors you use in your discussion and don't forget to give your own opinion at the beginning or at the end.