A Good Way to Structure Your Essay

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# Introduction

* “X is an important problem, and here’s what it is and why.”  
  Answer to: What’s the subproblem (“problem”)?
  + Why it’s important? (Motivation for solving.)
  + Why it’s interesting (or hard)?
* “Two recent approaches to address this problem have shown promise.”
  + What each approach is and what’s been found about it.
  + One to three sentences per approach.
* “However, it is unclear which of these approaches will work better in practice (and in which situations).”
  + “For example, …”
* “In this essay, we performed an in-depth analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the tools with respect to these issues, and arrived at the following key claims.”
  + List of claims to made in this essay. (Bullet list is a good idea.)

# Background: The Tools/Approaches

* Lead-in paragraph.
* Paragraph (maybe two) about Tool A.
  + Only use as much detail as is needed to make your claims.
  + You can add more details about the tools while you’re arguing your claims.
  + You can use figures from the papers, but be sure to cite.
  + Do NOT write your paper in such a way that the tool descriptions are longer than the claims arguments.
* Paragraph (maybe two) about Tool B.

# (Background on other topics that you will use later to make your arguments?)

# Claim #1: XXXX

* “One key observation that we have made about these tools is that XXX.”
* Say something about Tool A that supports your point.
* Now say something about Tool B that supports your point.
* (Summary? Something that helps lead into the next section?)

# Claim #2: XXXX etc.

# Conclusion

* “In this essay, we have performed an in-depth analysis of two approaches to X, and arrived at the following conclusions.”
  + List claims. But add a little more concrete detail to your claims that uses ideas introduced in the body (but that weren’t yet mentioned in the introduction).
* Paragraph in which you ride off into the sunset – wax about the big picture and/or where this work is headed (or should be headed).