

The Basic Five Paragraph Essay: Format and Outline Worksheet



Below is the pattern or format used to write a basic five-paragraph essay. Because it allows you to present information and ideas clearly and logically, it is applicable to many styles of essay for many types of academic disciplines. **There is an Outline worksheet on the back of this page** to help you start planning the content, order and organization of your essay.

Paragraph 1: Introduction -- If possible, open with an attention-getting device to interest the reader (perhaps a quote or question). Introduce the topic of your essay in general, and present some context for this topic, getting more specific in the next few sentences. End with your **thesis** statement – which is the road map for the paper; presenting your argument to the reader. The rest of the paper, the body of the essay, gathers and organizes evidence that will persuade the reader of the logic of your interpretation.

Paragraph 2: First supporting point -- It's time to support your thesis with specifics. Begin the paragraph with a **topic sentence** that introduces your first support point. Then explain in more detail what you mean. Include quotes or examples that illustrate the supporting point. Finish the paragraph with a concluding sentence

Paragraph 3: Second supporting point -- Begin the paragraph with a **transition** from the previous paragraph into the topic for this one. Continue “backing up” or supporting your thesis with a second supporting point. Say it in a topic sentence, explain it with more details, and give an example.

Paragraph 4: Third supporting point – Again, begin the paragraph with a **transition** from the previous paragraph. Finish making the case for your thesis statement with a third supporting point. Follow the “say it, explain it, give an example” format of the second and third paragraphs above.

Paragraph 5: Conclusion -- It's time to wrap up your essay and tie it all together. Restate your thesis statement. Summarize your supporting points. Refer back to your attention-getting device in the introduction paragraph. REMEMBER: This is not the time to introduce new ideas or new quotes.

You can continue to insert however many paragraphs are needed to make your argument, following this same format.

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Topic:

Introduction: (write a few general sentences then THESIS)

Body Paragraph One Topic Sentence

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Body Paragraph Two Topic Sentence

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Body Paragraph Three Topic Sentence

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Conclusion (highlight the main points of your paper and restate your thesis).
