

The 5 Paragraph Essay



Introduction

§1 introduces the topic and provides a road map of the rest of the essay. It defines the main idea. This paragraph usually ends with the **thesis statement**. It encapsulates the essay's argument; it is your essay boiled down to one sentence.

§2: Argument A:

The second paragraph provides information and supporting points. Use your second strongest argument here.

§3: Argument B:

More info and thoughts that support your thesis statement. Use your weakest argument here in the middle.

§4: Argument C:

Use your strongest argument, the “kicker” that the reader will remember.

§5: Conclusion

Summarize the arguments that were discussed in the body paragraphs and reassert the thesis statement in other words.

What is the heart of your essay?

An essay is a form of writing that defends a **thesis statement**. This statement typically appears at the end of the first paragraph. Poor thesis statements suffer from vagueness; the more precise you can be, the stronger the essay. A strong thesis statement is not only a guide for the reader, it is also a guide for the writer. If you become stuck or find yourself writing in circles, a good thesis can remind you exactly what you are after.

What is the purpose of your thesis? What do you want to convince the reader of?

What are the main arguments of defense that you can develop into coherent argument paragraphs? Remember: Each paragraph is a mini-essay in itself and needs

a topic sentence

a body (your argument, examples, details)

a concluding sentence, often leading on to the next paragraph

Make sure each paragraph deals with only ONE argument or aspect of the problem.

How can you wrap up your essay and sum up all your arguments most convincingly? Rephrase your thesis statement and show to your reader that your arguments really lead to a very clear conclusion and evaluation of the problem.

Before you finish go through your essay one more time and check:

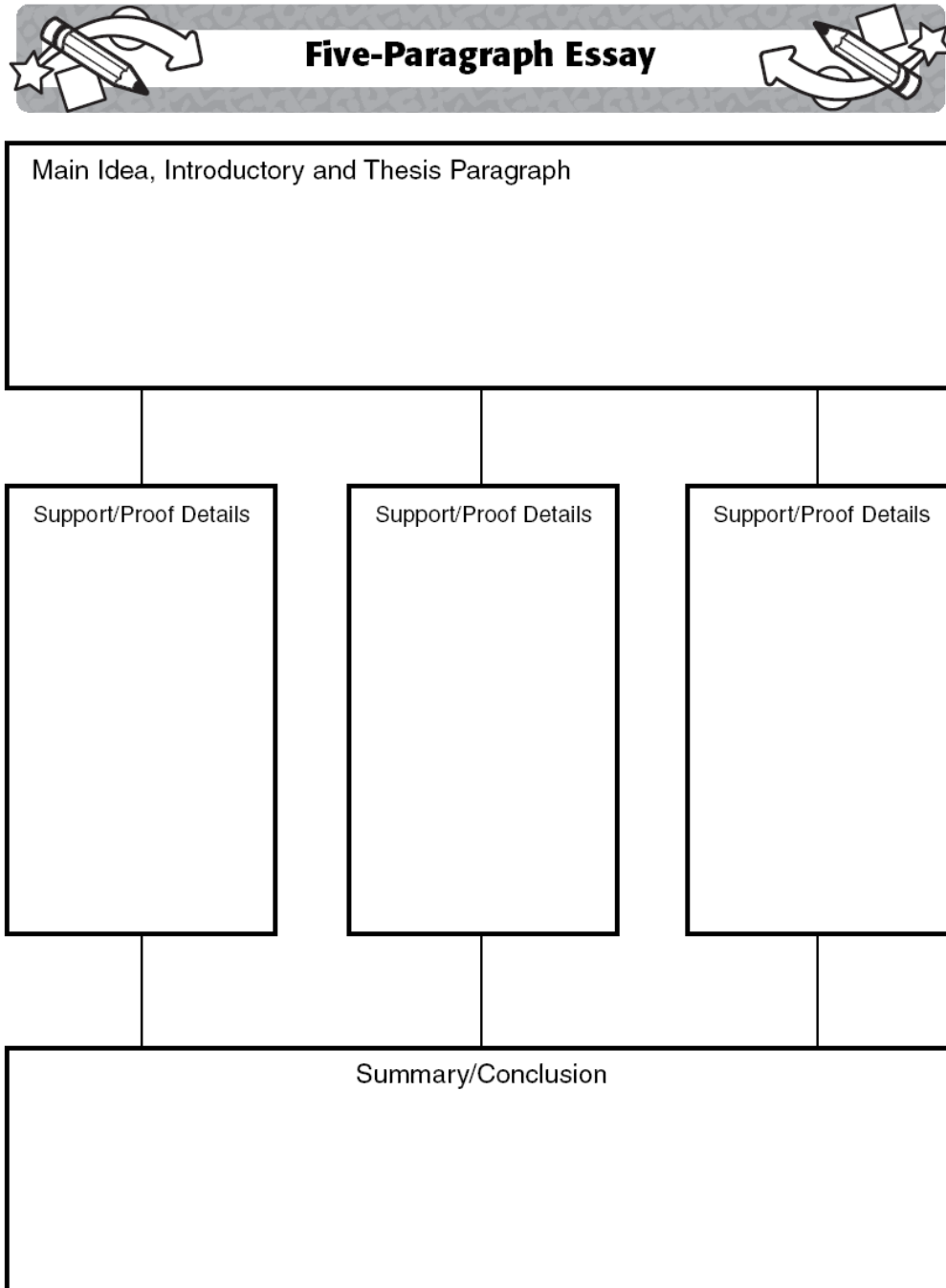
- Has your intent remained clear and consistent throughout the arguments and conclusion of the essay?
- Does your essay contain ONE MAIN IDEA that is supported by examples, explanations, comparisons, and/or definitions?
- Has each paragraph been constructed around one idea or argument?
- Have you linked your ideas and paragraphs logically? Have you used appropriate linking words and phrases to guide your reader through your essay.

AN ESSAY WRITER'S MANTRA

I will not be aimless, confused or self-contradictory. I will be coherent and logical. I will use lots of effective transition sentences. In the end, no one will oppose my thesis statement.

Before writing an essay always make an outline like this:

In My Opinion . . . (Main Topics and Supporting Points)



Before passing your essay on to your peers or teacher, check if your arguments are clearly and logically linked. Use some of the following linkwords to make your reasoning crystal clear.



Adding more to a point already made

moreover; furthermore; again; further; what is more; in addition
besides; above all; as well (as)
either; neither...nor; not only...but also; similarly; correspondingly; in the same way; indeed
in fact; really; in reality, it is found that...
as for; as to; with respect to; regarding

Writing in lists

first(ly); second(ly); third(ly)
another; yet another; in addition; finally
to begin with; in the second place
moreover; additionally; also
next; then; and to conclude; lastly; finally

Putting the same idea in a different way

in other words; rather; or; better; in that case
to put it (more) simply
in view of this; with this in mind
to look at this another way

Introducing examples

that is to say; in other words
for example; for instance; namely; an example of this is
and; as follows; as in the following examples; such as; including
especially; particularly; in particular; notably; chiefly; mainly; mostly

Introducing an alternative viewpoint

by contrast; another way of viewing this is; alternatively; again; rather; one alternative is; another possibility is
on the one hand...on the other hand
conversely; in comparison; on the contrary; in fact; though; although

Returning to emphasise your earlier viewpoint

however; nonetheless; in the final analysis; despite x; notwithstanding x; in spite of x

while x may be true, nonetheless

although; though; after all; at the same time; on the other hand; all the same; even if x is true; although x may have a good point

Showing the results of something

therefore; accordingly; as a result

so, (then,) it can be seen that

the result is; the consequence is

resulting from this; consequently; now

we can see, then, that; it is evident that

because of this; thus; hence; for this reason; owing to x; this suggests that; it follows that

in other words; otherwise; in that case; that implies

Summing up or concluding

therefore; so, my conclusion is

in short; in conclusion; to conclude; in all; on the whole

to summarise; to sum up briefly; in brief; altogether; overall; thus; thus we can see that

Useful phrases to introduce quotations

- as X points out,...
- According to X,...
- To quote from X, '...'
- X states/suggests that...
- X tells/shows us that...
- In an article entitled 'Name of Text', X makes the point that...
- Referring to ..., X argues that
- As X stated/wrote/argued/discussed/expressed the concern, ...
- In Name of Text, X primarily suggests ...
- Whilst acknowledging ... X makes the significant claim that ...
- Writing in 1926, X argued that ...

Useful phrases to follow quotations

- However, Y suggests that
- Yet this does not go far enough
- This seems untenable because
- This theory best fits the known facts, since...

References: adapted from Stella Cottrell *The Study Skills Handbook* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003)