

5-paragraph essay (Outline)

1

The introductory paragraph should include the following elements:

- **Background information:** Enough information necessary for your reader to understand your topic (this may look like a definition in context)
- **Thesis statement:** Indicates your paper's topic, makes your paper's purpose clear, and provides an overview of the three main supporting points that will unify the essay. The thesis statement is typically the last sentence.

If you are writing in response to a text, the introduction should include the title, author, and genre of that piece.

2

- Begins with a **topic sentence** that identifies one main idea that will be discussed as support or proof for the thesis statement
- **Supporting sentences:** use specific details, demonstrated through closely related **examples** or **evidence**, to expand and explain the main idea. Generally, a well-developed paragraph has at least **five to eight sentences**.
- consider paragraph unity

Paragraph unity means that all ideas in a paragraph are closely related to its topic sentence and further develop that topic sentence. That is, all sentences in a single paragraph must be unified around a central point or idea.

3

- This paragraph, and any subsequent body paragraph, should begin with a **topic sentence** that signals the reader that a **new idea or point is being introduced**. As you organize your essay, keep in mind its coherence. Coherence refers to connections among paragraphs and ideas—the logical sequence of your thoughts.
- Include **Supporting sentences:** use specific details, demonstrated through closely

As you organize your essay, keep in mind its coherence. Coherence refers to connections among paragraphs and ideas—the logical sequence of your thoughts.

○ Use transition words or phrases at the outset of your body paragraphs and to move from one idea to another within your paragraphs. Have you transitioned logically from the main idea in the previous paragraph to this one? Are you making clear connections among the paragraphs and ideas? Be sure to think about coherence during the revision stage of the writing process.

4

- This paragraph begins with the last topic sentence.
 - Again, flesh out this main idea with specific examples, details, and relevant support.
- Be sure to maintain paragraph unity. That is, each sentence must relate to your topic sentence.

Remember not to introduce new, unrelated ideas in the conclusion.

5

The conclusion revisits your overall purpose for writing and often invites your reader to consider the implications of why your ideas are significant.

The conclusion may restate the thesis, summarize the paper's major points, or leave the reader with a final thought to ponder. If you choose to restate the thesis or summarize the essay's main ideas, do not repeat the same wording from the introduction or body paragraphs.