

Beginning with the basics: The five-paragraph essay

The five paragraph essay is an important writing skill which is a necessity to be successful in school. No matter what classes or future career you chose, the five paragraph essay is the most basic form of writing. It is taught at the elementary level and expected to be learned and demonstrated all through out your education.

It is a concept that provides structure for writing that ranges from the most basic, elementary children's stories to complex, dense political essays. It's important to understand essay writing will be an incredibly useful tool as your writing grows and your skills develop into higher level writing.

The first paragraph acts as the introduction to the topic of the essay. Being clear and concise from the beginning will allow the rest of the essay to follow this pattern. Try to make your intro easy to follow, accessible for a varied audience, and try to avoid fancy language or complicated examples. It just needs to be informative about the topic you are writing about.

The next three paragraphs should be very similar in form, style, and feel. The difference should be content. If, for example, you are writing a paper about the major military conflicts that the U.S. has been involved in since 1980, you could fill these three paragraphs with information about the Gulf War, the conflict in Bosnia, and the war in Iraq. Each paragraph would address a different war, with information, details, and examples, which illustrate your ideas, opinions, and message. Generally, these three paragraphs should be similar in length as well, typically four to six sentences.

In addition, you want to keep the three middle paragraphs connected somehow. If you are working with a specific time period or theme, make sure you connect the dots of your intro paragraph to the reader. All the ideas or facts needs to relate to each other.

The conclusion is the last paragraph of the five paragraph essay. Another name for the conclusion can be a wrap up. The main purpose is to bring all the thoughts, ideas, and paragraphs into one, easy to understand ending. This is the last thing the reader will remember and some last paragraphs need to be memorable and strong; others do not as this all depends upon the topic and type of writing.

Emphasizing and reminding the reader from the paragraphs before is a technique that many writer's use when they want a specific detail to stand out. Depending on the type of essay being written, depends on how you write the conclusion. If the essay is informational, then a brief review of the information is used to close. If the essay is argumentative, then the conclusion should prove your side of the argument. No matter the topic, the five paragraph essay is the easiest format to use when writing an essay.

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