

## Five Paragraph Essay Format

This is only one method of organizing an essay. You will likely progress beyond the five paragraph essay as you move to senior level classes and post-secondary education. Nonetheless, this structure provides a good start in learning how to write an essay.

### Introductory paragraph (Paragraph 1)

- The overall structure of this paragraph will move from general to specific.
- Catches the reader's interest with interesting statements. Ways of beginning creatively include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - An important fact or relevant piece of information relating to your thesis
  - A meaningful quotation (from the book you are analyzing or another source)
  - A universal idea
- Gives brief background on your topic
  - This may include any necessary information that will give the reader additional information about the subject.
  - The novel's author and title.
    - This can also be stated in the opening statement or in the thesis; author's full name should be written the first time and then the last name used throughout the rest of the paper)
- Ends with the **thesis statement**
  - The thesis statement is what your stance is, your argument or what you are trying to prove or say.
    - Should have **three points** that support your argument.
  - The thesis statement must be arguable
  - It should be a statement that is not obviously true. For example, if you want to argue "Holden Caulfield thinks the world of adults is phony", would anyone argue with you? Will we learn anything by proving that? Rather, you should propose a thesis that will enable you to explore the causes of Holden's world view.
  - Be specific. As the preceding item suggests, the more specific you are, the more interesting your argument will be.
  - Ask why. Explore causes. A thesis statement that offers an explanation of why Holden is thinks the adult world is phony will be superior to one that merely describes his state of mind.

### Body Paragraphs (Paragraphs 2, 3, 4)

- Each paragraph develops, expands, and/or supports a point from the thesis statement
  - Each body will focus on one point from your thesis statement
  - The body paragraphs will be presented in the same order as your thesis points. With the strongest point and paragraph being last.
- Use the **TEEC** format for your body paragraphs
- Includes a topic sentence for each paragraph
  - The topic sentence will reiterate one of the points from your thesis statement.
- Provides analysis and develops your argument
  - Remember that this thesis point is one point in your argument.
  - An argument needs to be presented that explains how this point supports your thesis.
- Includes supporting details which support your points of proof.
  - Use quotations from the actual text, and cite properly.
  - Remember to link the quotations and points to the specific thesis point and thesis.
- Conclude each paragraph.

