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:
 - o An important fact or relevant piece of information relating to your thesis
 - o A meaningful quotation (from the book you are analyzing or another source)
 - o 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.
 - o 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**

- o 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.
- o The thesis statement must be arguable
- o 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.
- o Be specific. As the preceding item suggests, the more specific you are, the more interesting your argument will be.
- o 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
 - o 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
 - o The topic sentence will reiterate one of the points from your thesis statement.
- Provides analysis and develops your argument
 - o Remember that this thesis point is one point in your argument.
 - o 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.
 - o Remember to link the quotations and points to the specific thesis point and thesis.
- Conclude each paragraph.

Concluding paragraph (Paragraph 5)

- The overall structure of this paragraph will move from specific to general.
- **Restates the thesis** or sums up the argument.
- Tells the reader what you think is important to remember. (Often, this is a personal response).
- Extend your thinking on something from the essay.

Reminders about Style

- Use present tense verbs (sees, learns, resolves, etc.)
- Use third person (he, she, it, they)
- Use formal language (*somewhat interested*, not *kind of interested*) Avoid the use of words like *a lot* and *things*.
- Make sure all pronouns are clear (no use of *this* without a clear noun following it). Make sure all pronouns have a clear antecedent and that the pronouns and antecedents agree in number.
- Use a variety of sentence structures; Pay particular attention to varying sentence beginnings; make an effort to use sophisticated syntax (limit number of simple sentences)
- Use transition words and phrases to enhance fluency
- Use good diction (If you find yourself overusing one word and decide to consult a thesaurus make sure the word is an appropriate synonym that you are familiar with. All words work in context.)

Transition Words and Phrases

Transition words and phrases help establish clear connections between ideas and ensure that sentences and paragraphs flow together smoothly, making them easier to read. Use the following words and phrases in the following circumstances.

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Indeed Moreover In fact Furthermore In addition Second...Third.... etc

To indicate an example:

For instance Specifically Particularly For example

To indicate a cause or reason:

As Due to Since Because of For

To indicate a result or an effect:

Accordingly So Hence Finally Therefore Consequently

To compare or contrast:

In contrast Similarly Nevertheless
Whereas Yet On the other hand
However Likewise Although

To summarize:

After

Next

Later

Currently

Immediately

Subsequently

Briefly In brief Overall
Summing up To sum up To summarize

To indicate a particular time frame or a shift

Before

Previously Simultaneously

Meanwhile

First,...Second,..., etc.

from one time period to another:

Finally

During

Initially

Lastly

Soon

To conclude:

Hence To conclude Therefore So Thus In conclusion