**The Five-Paragraph
Essay**



Top of Form



Bottom of Form

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| A classic format for compositions is the five-paragraph essay. It is not the only format for writing an essay, of course, but it is a useful model for you to keep in mind, especially as you begin to develop your composition skills. The following material is adapted from a handout prepared by Harry Livermore for his high school English classes at Cook High School in Adel, Georgia. It is used here with his permission.  |

**Introduction:**

**Introductory Paragraph**

See, first, [**Writing Introductory Paragraphs**](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/intros.htm) for different ways of getting your reader involved in your essay. The introductory paragraph should also include the thesis statement, a kind of mini-outline for the paper: it tells the reader what the essay is about. The last sentence of this paragraph must also contain a transitional "hook" which moves the reader to the first paragraph of the body of the paper.

**Body:**

**Body — First paragraph:**

The first paragraph of the body should contain the strongest argument, most significant example, cleverest illustration, or an obvious beginning point. The first sentence of this paragraph should include the "reverse hook" which ties in with the transitional hook at the end of the introductory paragraph. The topic for this paragraph should be in the first or second sentence. This topic should relate to the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph. The last sentence in this paragraph should include a transitional hook to tie into the second paragraph of the body.

**Body — Second paragraph:**

The second paragraph of the body should contain the second strongest argument, second most significant example, second cleverest illustration, or an obvious follow up the first paragraph in the body. The first sentence of this paragraph should include the reverse hook which ties in with the transitional hook at the end of the first paragraph of the body. The topic for this paragraph should be in the first or second sentence. This topic should relate to the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph. The last sentence in this paragraph should include a transitional hook to tie into the third paragraph of the body.

**Body — Third paragraph:**

The third paragraph of the body should contain the weakest argument, weakest example, weakest illustration, or an obvious follow up to the second paragraph in the body. The first sentence of this paragraph should include the reverse hook which ties in with the transitional hook at the end of the second paragraph. The topic for this paragraph should be in the first or second sentence. This topic should relate to the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph. The last sentence in this paragraph should include a transitional concluding hook that signals the reader that this is the final major point being made in this paper. This hook also leads into the last, or concluding, paragraph.

**Conclusion:**

**Concluding paragraph:**

This paragraph should include the following:

1. an allusion to the pattern used in the introductory paragraph,
2. a restatement of the thesis statement, using some of the original language or language that "echoes" the original language. **(The restatement, however, must not be a duplicate thesis statement.)**
3. a summary of the three main points from the body of the paper.
4. a final statement that gives the reader signals that the discussion has come to an end.