

1 Introduction

Start with a 'hook' to grab the reader's attention; give some background information; narrow the focus of the topic by moving from general to specific ideas; finish with a strong, specific thesis that contains 3 sub-arguments.

2 Body Paragraph 1

Start with a topic sentence to address the first argument given in your thesis. Provide supporting details to reinforce this idea. End the paragraph with a transition sentence that somehow connects it to the next paragraph.

3 Body Paragraph 2

Begin with a topic sentence to introduce your 2nd argument; repeat the process used in the previous paragraph. Again, provide sufficient supporting detail e.g. facts, statistics, anecdotes, examples, and citations.

4 Body Paragraph 3

Begin with a topic sentence to introduce your 3rd argument, repeating the same pattern as in the first two body paragraphs. Note: try to make all body paragraphs roughly the same length as this will give the essay a nice symmetrical quality.

5 Conclusion

Paraphrase your thesis and reiterate your key arguments; broaden the scope of your discussion by addressing the significance of the issue and its possible implications; wrap up with a bold, memorable statement or possibly a provocative question.

6 Final Thoughts

Don't become overly reliant on the 5-paragraph 'formula': for papers of more than 2 or 3 pages you will need more than a single paragraph to support each argument. For this reason, the 5-paragraph essay can be rather restrictive and artificial.

