

The Five-Paragraph Essay

Introduction	Paragraph 1: Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening remarks to catch the reader's interest• Thesis statement• Plan of development (optional)
	Paragraph 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence 1 (supporting point 1)• Specific evidence
Body	Paragraph 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence 2 (supporting point 2)• Specific evidence
	Paragraph 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic sentence 3 (supporting point 3)• Specific evidence
Conclusion	Paragraph 5: Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary (optional)• General closing remarks (or both)• Summary statement

The **introduction** tells the reader what the paper will be about. The **thesis statement** is a single sentence that states the main idea of the paper. It contains two parts: the topic and a significant comment about the topic. The **plan of development** is a list or explanation of the main ideas which will support the thesis.

The **body paragraphs** support the thesis that is presented in the introduction. Each paragraph should begin with a **topic sentence** that presents one of the main supporting points. The topic sentence is followed by **specific evidence** that supports it.

The **conclusion** *summarizes* the main points, gives some *general closing remarks*, or both. It should include a **summary statement**: one or two sentences which restate the thesis in a fresh way to reinforce the essay's main idea.

Example Outline The Five-Paragraph Essay

Paragraph 1	Introduction	Opening remarks, leading to the thesis statement: "Students who work while going to college face problems at school, at work, and at home."
Paragraph 2	Body	<p>Topic sentence: "Trying to juggle job and school responsibilities creates problems at school."</p> <p>Evidence (supporting details):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early classes are difficult. • I am too tired to pay attention. • Once, I slept in class. • I have little time to do homework. • I get behind in school assignments.
Paragraph 3	Body	<p>Topic sentence: "Work can suffer when workers attend college."</p> <p>Evidence (supporting details):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I tried to study at work, and I got caught by my boss. • I was reprimanded. • Sometimes I am rude to customers. • Another time, I had to miss work to take a make-up test.
Paragraph 4	Body	<p>Topic sentence: "Working students face problems outside of college and work."</p> <p>Evidence (supporting details):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have no social life. • The weekends are the only time to study. • My apartment is a mess. • My girlfriend is ready to kill me.
Paragraph 5	Conclusion	Closing remarks, leading to the summary statement: "I have learned that working students have to be very organized to cope with their responsibilities at college, work, and home."

Adapted from: Sheridan Biays, John and Carol Wershoven. *Along These Lines: A Course for Developing Writers*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997. Print.