Basic Essay

One may have learned a Five Paragraph Essay format for standardized tests. He or she must expand that idea for college writing.

Title:
• Should get the reader’s attention
• Consider introducing subject

Introduction Paragraph:
• Present the subject
• Use an anecdote to help the reader better understand the subject (Optional)
• State the main idea
• Create interest for the reader
• End with the thesis statement (containing 3 or more points)

Second Paragraph (Body):
• Focus only on the first point of the thesis statement

Third Paragraph (Body):
• Focus only on the second point of the thesis statement

Fourth Paragraph (Body):
• Focus only on the third point of the thesis statement

Subsequent Paragraphs (Body):
• Focus on subsequent points, in order, of the thesis statement

Concluding Paragraph:
• Make the essay complete
• Re-emphasize the main points
• Do NOT introduce new information; instead, give the reader a sense of completion
• Restate the thesis

Organization of Body Paragraphs:

Generally, begin with the second strongest point, move into the weakest, and end with a restating of the strongest. If possible, adjust the thesis to fit this organization scheme.

Here is an example of a general outline for a research paper:

I. Intro
   A. Introduce author and piece
   B. Thesis--including at least three specific points

II. First body paragraph
A. Topic sentence that relates directly to first point in thesis
B. First point that supports topic sentence
   a. Quotation to support
   b. Explanation of how quotation supports
C. Second point that supports topic sentence
   a. Quotation to support
   b. Explanation how quotation supports
D. Concluding sentence

III. Second body paragraph
   A. Topic sentence that specifically relates to second point in thesis
   B. First point to support topic sentence
      a. Quotation
      b. Explanation of how quotation supports
   C. Second point to support topic sentence
      a. Quotation
      b. Explanation of how quotation supports
   D. Concluding sentence

IV. Third and subsequent body paragraphs (same as those above)

V. Conclusion
   A. Wrap up points
   B. Restate Thesis
   C. End with completion; do not try to introduce more information.