



DALLAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

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.