

## The Five Paragraph Essay

**Getting started means getting organized:**

**Analyze the assignment; determine what is required.**

With a highlighter, note important words that define the topic.

Then organize your plan

**For example, you have been given this writing prompt:**

You have a present that was really memorable. It could have been given for an important occasion or just for no reason at all. Tell us about the present and why it was memorable. Include the reason it was given, a description of it, and how you felt when you got it.

**The objective is to write a narrative essay about a present you were given**

The subject is a **memorable present**

The three main subtopics are:

- **the reason it was given**
- **a description of it**
- **and how you felt when you got it**

**Outline your five paragraph essay; include these elements:**

<b>Introductory Paragraph</b>  General Topic Sentence: <b>memorable present</b>  1. Subtopic One: <b>the reason it was given</b> 2. Subtopic Two: <b>a description of it</b> 3. Subtopic Three: <b>how you felt when you got it</b>  (Transition)		
<b>First Supporting Paragraph</b>  Restate Subtopic One  Supporting Details or Examples  Transition	<b>Second Supporting Paragraph</b>  Restate Subtopic Two  Supporting Details or Examples  Transition	<b>Third Supporting Paragraph</b>  Restate Subtopic Three  Supporting Details or Examples  Transition
<b>Closing or Summary Paragraph</b>  Synthesis and conclusion of the thesis rephrasing main topic and subtopics.		

**Write the essay!** Think small; build the full essay gradually.

Divide your essay into sections and develop each piece separately and incrementally.

### The Introductory Paragraph

- **The opening paragraph sets the tone**  
It not only introduces the topic, but where you are going with it (the thesis). If you do a good job in the opening, you will draw your reader into your "experience." Put effort up front, and you will reap rewards.
- **Write in the active voice**  
It is much more powerful. Do that for each sentence in the introductory

essay. Unless you are writing a personal narrative, do not use the pronoun "I."

- **Varying sentence structure**  
Review to avoid the same dull pattern of always starting with the subject of the sentence.
- **Brainstorm to find the best supporting ideas**  
The best supporting ideas are the ones about which you have some knowledge. If you do not know about them, you cannot do a good job writing about them. Don't weaken the essay with ineffective argument.
- **Practice writing introductory paragraphs on various topics**  
Even if you do not use them, they can be compared with the type of writing you are doing now. It is rewarding to see a pattern of progress.

### Supporting Paragraphs

- **Write a transition to establish the sub-topic**  
Each paragraph has to flow, one to the next.
- **Write the topic sentence**  
The transition can be included in the topic sentence.
- **Supporting ideas, examples, details must be specific** to the sub-topic  
The tendency in supporting paragraphs is to put in just about anything. Avoid this: the work you have made above with details and examples will help you keep focused.
- **Vary sentence structure**  
Avoid repetitious pronouns and lists  
Avoid beginning sentences the same way (subject + verb + direct object).

### The Ending or Summary Paragraph

This is a difficult paragraph to write effectively.

You cannot assume that the reader sees your point

- **Restate the introductory thesis/paragraph** with originality  
Do not simply copy the first paragraph
- **Summarize your argument** with some degree of authority  
this paragraph should leave your reader with no doubt as to your position or conclusion of logic
- **Be powerful** as this is the last thought that you are leaving with the reader.

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### Edit and revise your essay

**Check your spelling and grammar:** Subjects and verbs agree, and verb tenses are consistent

**Examine your whole essay for logic:** Thought builds and flows?

Avoid gaps in logic, or too much detail.

### Review individual sentences

- **Use active verbs to be more descriptive**  
Avoid passive constructions and the verb "to be"
- **Use transitional words and phrases**  
Avoid sentences beginning with pronouns, constructions as "There are....,"  
Example: "There is a need to proofread all works" becomes "Proofreading is a must."
- **Be concise:** though vary the length and structure of sentences

**Transition Words:** Help connect ideas and ensure that sentences and paragraphs flow together smoothly. They help build coherence in a piece of writing and makes it easier to read.

Some examples:

*To compare or contrast:* however, likewise, although, similarly

*To add more information:* moreover, furthermore, second...third etc.

*To show an example:* for instance, for example, in particular

*To show a result:* therefore, however, finally

*To summarize:* overall, to summarize

*To show a shift in time:* later, next, lastly, afterwards

**Try to avoid using “*in conclusion*” in your concluding paragraph**

**The essay should use third person using “he” or “she” or “they” unless a personal narrative when the use of “I” or “you” is required to discuss your personal experiences.**