

The five paragraph essay

The five paragraph essay is the basic model for academic writing. It consists of an **introduction**, three **developing paragraphs** and a **conclusion**. If you master the five paragraph essay, your writing will improve and you will be able to develop longer essays more easily, because the five paragraph model is **scalable**.

Grab your reader's attention with a strong introduction

The introduction is the most important paragraph of your essay, and it can be assembled from these parts:

"Hook" – in a single sentence, grab your reader's attention.

Theme – in a sentence or two, introduce your general theme.

Focus – in a sentence or two, narrow your focus.

Roadmap – in a single sentence, give your reader an overview of the essay's structure.

Thesis – in a single sentence, give your reader your main idea or overall conclusion.

Develop your supporting points in three body paragraphs

The roadmap in your introduction should give your reader the three supporting points you'll use to build your argument or come to your conclusion. Use the three body paragraphs to develop each of these ideas completely, one idea per paragraph.

Finish with a strong conclusion

Your conclusion should do three things. First, it should remind your reader of your main idea. Next, it should briefly summarize the supporting points you used to build your argument. Finally, it should answer the "so what" question by telling your reader why the information in your essay matters. You can do this through a "call to action" or through suggestions for more research. No matter what you choose, your conclusion should leave your reader feeling like he or she can do something with the information you've provided.

Expand the model to fit your assignment

The five paragraph essay is **scalable**, which means it can be expanded to fit an assignment that requires more than five paragraphs. Use multiple paragraphs to develop more detail in your supporting points, or generate three supporting sections comprised of multiple paragraphs.

For more information about essay writing, visit the Trinity Writing Center's website at <http://www.trinitydc.edu/offices/writing/index.html>.