

## The Multiple-Paragraph Essay

### UWF Writing Lab

An essay is a written discussion of a limited topic. An essay always has a specific purpose. It may express the author's opinions or ideas or his responses or reactions to a particular subject. An essay is always a personal expression although it may vary in formality. The formal essay is serious in nature and demands the use of formal English. A more conversational, less serious form is the informal essay.

An essay must say something specific. Statements such as "The future lies ahead," "Agriculture is important," or "Automobiles are here to stay" are too general to use as the basis (thesis) for an essay. The author should choose a subject with which he is familiar, one in which he has some interest.

The author must always use specific details to support his major point. These details may include data, statistics, examples, illustrations, and anecdotes. The quality of the essay is largely determined by the supporting details.

The author must begin an essay with an organized plan. Organization is the key to success in essay writing. There is a definite structural pattern for the essay. This structural pattern is explained below.

A correctly structured five-paragraph essay may have more than five paragraphs; however, it may never have fewer than five. Certain components must be included in all structured essays, regardless of the literary classification (persuasive, comparison, etc.). The basic structural pattern of all essays contains an introduction which must include a thesis, at least three paragraphs to support the thesis, and a concluding paragraph.

#### POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- ✓ The opening remarks should be designed to capture the interest of the reader.
- ✓ The thesis statement is a simple sentence that concisely states the major subject or topic of the essay. A compound thesis statement indicates that the essay will cover more than one major topic or viewpoint. This increases the difficulty of the author's job and significantly lengthens the paper.
- ✓ Transition statements, ideas that connect one paragraph to another, may be located at the end or at the beginning of the next paragraph. Transition statements are essential to good organization and clarity.
- ✓ All paragraphs must have a clearly stated topic sentence which condenses the main ideas into one sentence. The topic sentence may be located at the beginning, middle, or end of the paragraph. It is developed through the use of subpoints and supporting details. At least two supporting details are necessary to adequately explain or develop any subpoint. A major difficulty of beginning writers is developing paragraphs of sufficient length. Many times two or more short "paragraphs" in the rough draft may be joined together to create one sound paragraph.
- ✓ The conclusion should review or restate the major point or points presented in the essay; however, this review should not be an exact repetition. In the conclusion, the author also has an opportunity to state personal opinion, his conclusion, and possible projections for the future.
- ✓ The author should begin any essay writing assignment with a carefully chosen thesis statement and an outline of topic sentences for each paragraph. After the general framework of the essay is chosen, the author may list as many supporting details as are necessary to fully develop the theme. An outline ensures the organization of the essay.

INTRODUCTION

- A. Opening Remarks
- B. Thesis Statement

SUPPORT PARAGRAPH

- A. Topic Sentence
  - 1. Subpoint
    - a. Detail
    - b. Detail
  - 2. Subpoint
    - a. Detail
    - b. Detail

SUPPORT PARAGRAPH

- A. Topic Sentence
  - 1. Subpoint
    - a. Detail
    - b. Detail
  - 2. Subpoint
    - a. Detail
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  - 1. Subpoint
    - a. Detail
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  - 2. Subpoint
    - a. Detail
    - b. Detail

CONCLUSION

- A. Review main points (Do not use exact repetition)
- B. Present conclusion, solution, and/or personal statement

