



Academic Support Center

Effective Essay Writing

An essay is a written composition where you express a specific idea and then support it with facts, statements, analysis, and explanations. The basic structure for an essay is known as the five-paragraph essay.

As its name denotes, a five-paragraph essay contains five paragraphs. However, the essay itself consists of three sections: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

Introduction

As its name implies, the introduction is the first paragraph of the essay. It introduces the reader to idea that the essay will address. It is also intended to capture the reader's attention and interest with a statement. The first sentence of the introduction paragraph should be as captivating and interesting as possible. The following sentences should clarify your opening statement. Conclude the introduction paragraph with a thesis statement. A thesis statement states the purpose of what you intend to prove in your essay. A good thesis statement should be clear, concise, and specific.

Body

The body of the essay consists of three paragraphs. Each paragraph will address one main idea that supports the thesis statement. The first paragraph of the body should put forth your strongest argument to support your thesis. Start the paragraph out by stating the supporting idea. Then follow up with additional sentences that contain supporting evidence or examples. The concluding sentence should sum up what you've discussed in the paragraph.

The second body paragraph will follow the same format as the first body paragraph. This paragraph should put forth your second strongest argument supporting your thesis statement. Likewise, the third body paragraph, like the first and second, will contain your third strongest argument supporting your thesis statement. The last sentence of the third paragraph should sum up what you've discussed in the paragraph.

Conclusion

The final paragraph of the five-paragraph essay provides the conclusion. This paragraph should restate your thesis statement using slightly different wording than used in your introduction. The paragraph should summarize the three arguments presented in the body of the essay. The last sentence in the conclusion should communicate that your essay has come to an end. Your concluding paragraph should communicate to the reader that you're confident that you've proven the idea stated in your thesis statement.