

FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY OUTLINE

Writers who want their work to be clear and organized should follow consistent patterns in the way they structure their writing. The five-paragraph essay is a great place to develop and practice these patterns.

TIP: Academic paragraphs should range in length from 150-250 words. When gauging the length of your paragraphs, check your word count instead of relying on the number of sentences.

THE STRUCTURE OF INTRODUCTIONS

The Introduction—Accomplishes **three main goals** and moves from **general to specific**:

1). Grabs the reader's attention in an appropriate way [i.e. a quotation, a brief illustration, an interesting fact]

2). Establishes the direction of the paper: Provides the context of the topic as it relates to the audience

3). Gets to the point: States the problem or key themes and concludes with the thesis statement*

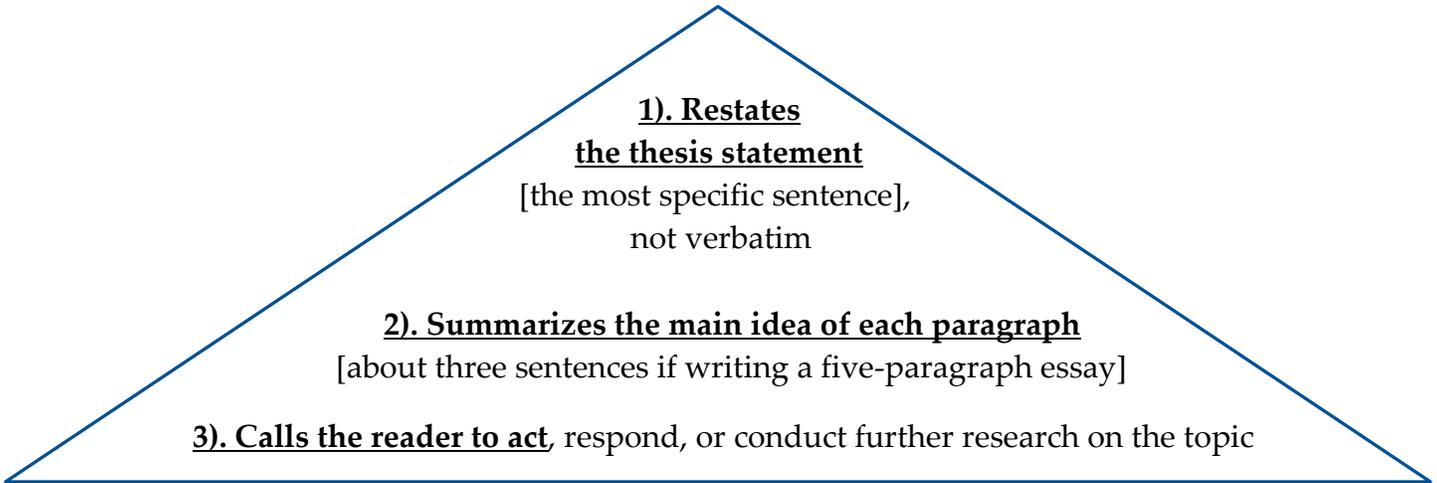
THE STRUCTURE OF BODY PARAGRAPHS

1. **Topic sentence**—Begin with a sentence that introduces *one* of the points of your thesis statement.
2. **Assertion**—Transition to a **specific point** that supports the main idea of the paragraph.
 - a. **Evidence**—Provide an **example** or **cite research** to support and explain your assertion.
 - b. **Commentary**—Include several sentences that **analyze your evidence** and that **clearly relate to the topic sentence**. Repeat steps two through four up to three times within your paragraph.
3. **Concluding sentence**— End with a sentence that **ties the paragraph's topic directly back to the thesis statement**.

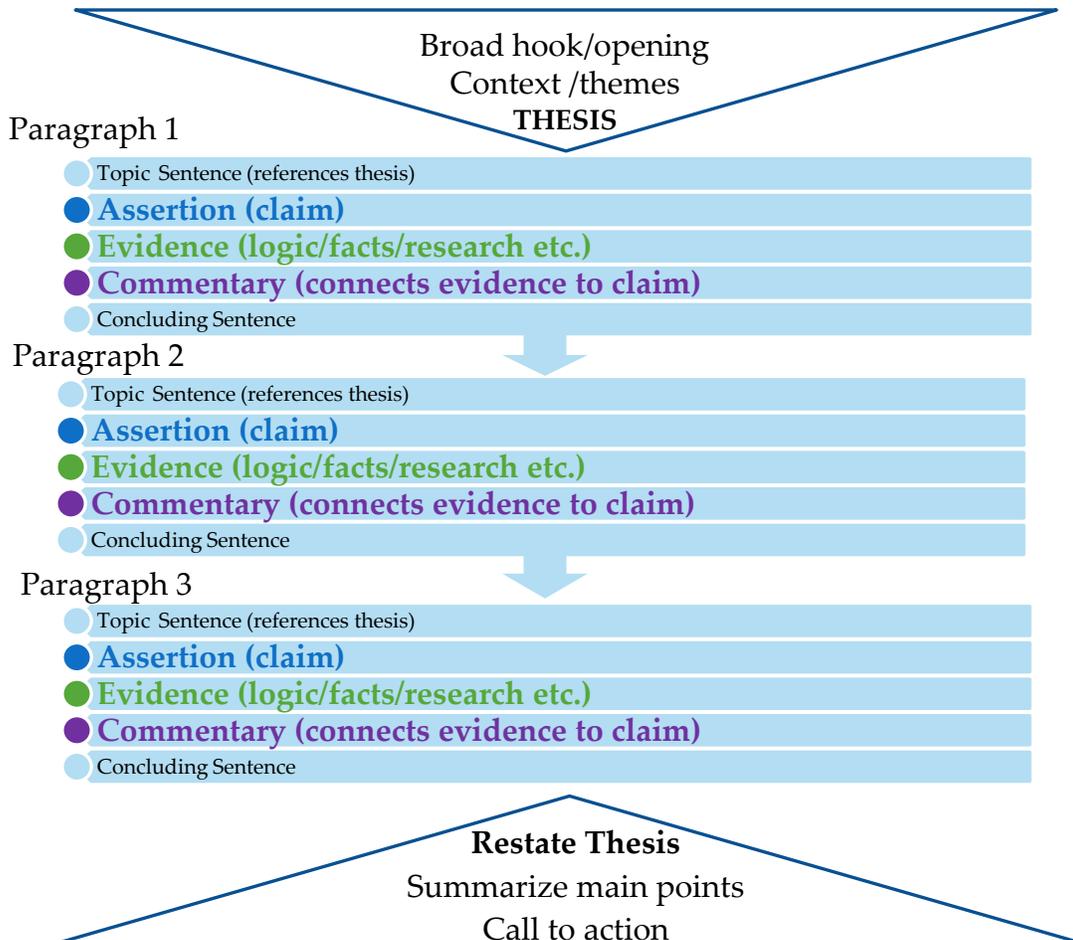
*Adapted from *The College Writer (Brief): A Guide to Thinking, Writing, and Researching* (3rd ed.), 2009, p. 57.

THE STRUCTURE OF CONCLUSIONS

The Conclusion – Reviews the main points of the paper and moves from specific to general:



SAMPLE OUTLINE



PRACTICE NOW