

THE CLASSIC FIVE PARAGRAPH SOCIAL STUDIES ESSAY

DON'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS! Let the evidence guide you. Analyze history, don't rewrite it.

AFTER examining all the evidence and drawing your conclusion from it, THEN respond to the prompt.

1. Tell us what you're going to tell us. Use the intro paragraph to inform the reader of what you concluded.
2. Tell us. Use the body paragraphs to inform the reader of what led you to that conclusion.
3. Tell us what you just told us. Use the final paragraph to remind the reader of your conclusion.

HOW TO TELL US:

1. State your opinion.

A. First sentence: set the stage!

- Provide the background. Answer basic questions so the reader knows what the essay is going to discuss: Who? What? Where? When?

B. Next, state the problem.

- What is the problem? How is it a big deal? Why is this important to discuss?

So what?

C. Then, provide your answer to the problem. In other words, give your **thesis statement!**

- The thesis is a 1-2 sentence answer to the problem you just presented.
- It answers **Why?** and/or **How?**
- This is the **MOST IMPORTANT PART** of the entire essay! The thesis is **the answer** to the prompt **in your opinion**. If your thesis statement fails to answer the prompt, the rest of your paper is a series of facts adding up to NOTHING.

D. Finally, preview the evidence.

- The rest of your essay exists **only** to convince readers that your thesis is true.
- Prove your answer is right by explaining the thought process you took to arrive at your answer. In broad terms, provide a map of the route your paper will take by laying out the major pieces of evidence which prove your thesis.
- Thesis = Evidence A + Evidence B + Evidence C

2. Discuss Evidence A

- Topic Sentence: Explain how Evidence A connects back to your thesis.
- Provide several (at least three) **details** about Evidence A that help prove your point.
- Transition Sentence: Say something that Evidence A has in common with Evidence B.

3. Discuss Evidence B

- Topic Sentence: Explain how Evidence B connects back to your thesis.
- Provide several (at least three) **details** about Evidence B that help prove your point.
- Transition Sentence: Say something that Evidence B has in common with Evidence C.

4. Discuss Evidence C

- Topic Sentence: Explain how Evidence C connects back to your thesis.
- Provide several (at least three) **details** about Evidence C that help prove your point.

5. Wrap it up.

- The conclusion should contain no new information!
- Readers have short-term memories. Remind them what Evidence A, Evidence B, and Evidence C were again (one sentence each).
- Tell the reader how your analysis of Evidence A, Evidence B, and Evidence C led you to conclude that your thesis statement answers the problem.
ie – A + B + C = Thesis

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- Transition Sentence: Say something that Evidence A has in common with Evidence B.

3. Discuss Evidence B

- Topic Sentence: Explain how Evidence B connects back to your thesis.
- Provide several (at least three) **details** about Evidence B that help prove your point.
- Transition Sentence: Say something that Evidence B has in common with Evidence C.

4. Discuss Evidence C

- Topic Sentence: Explain how Evidence C connects back to your thesis.
- Provide several (at least three) **details** about Evidence C that help prove your point.

5. Wrap it up.

- The conclusion should contain no new information!
- Readers have short-term memories. Remind them what Evidence A, Evidence B, and Evidence C were again (one sentence each).
- Tell the reader how your analysis of Evidence A, Evidence B, and Evidence C led you to conclude that your thesis statement answers the problem.
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