

How to Write the Perfect 5-Paragraph Essay

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Life Learning Academy

Courses

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About the Course

In this course you will have several modules made up of each portion of the five-paragraph essay. You can go through these at your own pace. Be sure to use the handouts as they are road maps to your perfect, awesome, most jaw-dropping, awe-inspiring essay. What? You don't believe that you can create a 5-paragraph essay worthy of those descriptors? You can, and I'll show you how.

Writing an excellent 5-paragraph essay is easy. You just have to follow a basic formula. This does NOT mean that your essay has to be a boring cookie-cutter version of someone else's. You will learn how to add your own voice and put your own spin on this so that your essay SHINES.

When you see the words, *YOUR TURN!* that will be your cue to work on the assigned activity.

About Terri Hedrick



Terri Hedrick is a homeschool mom and has been a teacher for over 20 years, is the administrator of her private umbrella school Life Learning Academy, and has been a homeschool coach for over a decade. She's helped countless students become excellent writers.

Mrs. Hedrick has studied with with some of the best writers and teachers of writing in the world, including a NYT Best Selling author!

She is also a published author, having written articles for newspapers, trade magazines and poetry magazines. Visit her websites:

<https://yourhomeschoolcoach.com>

<https://homeschoolinflorida.com>

<https://lifelearningacademy.net>

How Will This Course Help Me?

Being able to write the perfect 5-paragraph essay is important for so many reasons. Here are just a few:

You will need to write a 5-paragraph essay on your written exams in high school and on most standardized tests you'll take, like the SAT..

You will probably need to write an essay like this on college entrance exams.

Mastering the 5-paragraph essay will help you when you write research papers in high school or college.

Many licensing or certification exams contain an essay portion.

Those are the more pragmatic reasons why taking this course is important, but here are some other reasons:

Being an excellent writer helps your confidence. That's right. Being able to express your thought succinctly and in a captivating way can open doors that you might not even know are there right now.

People judge you on your writing ability (or lack of it). It might be sad, but it's true. The better writer you become, the more intelligent and capable you seem.

Maybe you want to write only for your own pleasure. That's GREAT and I hope that you DO! Don't you want to read the best writing which you create yourself?

Lesson 1

Choosing a Topic

For this course, we will be writing expository essays. Expository essays are essays that explain something to your audience. For our purposes, your audience will be the person who is reading your essay.

Many times you will be given a topic to write about, however, it is important to know how to come up with your own as well. For an expository essay, you should choose a topic that:

- you are interested in
- you know something about
- is not too broad
- is not too narrow

YOUR TURN!

BRAINSTORM YOUR TOPIC IDEAS BEFORE MOVING ON TO LESSON 2

Lesson 2

Formula & Basic Elements

This is your basic formula:

INTRODUCTION - including a WELL designed THESIS statement (See Lesson 3)

BODY PARAGRAPH 1

BODY PARAGRAPH 2

BODY PARAGRAH 3

CONCLUSION

An expository essay will have basically the same elements every time:

1. A clear thesis or controlling idea that establishes your topic and states where you are going.
2. An opening paragraph that introduces the thesis (in the first paragraph).
3. Body paragraphs that use specific evidence to "prove" the points you made in your opening paragraph.
4. Smooth transitions that connect the adjoining paragraphs. These transitions should be interesting and make sense.
5. A conclusion that restates your thesis (or central idea). This should be done in a unique way without being repetitive.

Lesson 3

Writing Your Thesis Statement

In Lesson 1, you chose a topic that you know a lot about and are interested in. You also made sure that your topic is neither too broad, or too narrow. Now it's time to craft a perfect thesis statement. Even though your thesis is only one sentence long, it has to relay a few things to your reader. The thesis is the "backbone" of your entire essay, so it's important to get this part right.

What a Thesis Statement Should Do:

- tell your reader what your paper is about
- focus your ideas
- present the topic of your paper
- clearly and specifically state your "position"
- be arguable

What a Thesis Statement Should NOT Do

- state a fact
- run on longer than one or two sentences (for this course, we will write our thesis statement in ONE sentence)
- be too general

An Example of a Poor Thesis Statement

Teens spend too much time online.

YOUR TURN!

MAKE A LIST OF REASONS WHY THIS IS NOT A WELL-CRAFTED THESIS STATEMENT

YOUR TURN!

REVISE THAT THESIS AND MAKE IT AWESOME!

Examples of Revisions

(yours will not look exactly like these)

1. Too much screen time is detrimental to the mental health of teens, so parents should put limits on their child's screen time.
2. Parents should monitor their teens' online time because it is too easy for teens to become addicted to the screen.
3. Screen addiction is a problem among teens and if screen time was limited, this problem would be alleviated.
4. It's important for teens to know the difference between the real world and the virtual world, so screen time should be limited.
5. Parents should put limits on their children's screen time because too much screen time negatively impacts overall health.

YOUR TURN!

BEFORE MOVING ON TO LESSON 4, THINK ABOUT THE TOPIC YOU CHOSE IN LESSON 1, AND CREATE YOUR OWN AMAZING THESIS.

WRITE YOUR FINAL THESIS HERE:

Lesson 4

How to Write a Great Hook

Now that you have your thesis statement finished, let's work on a hook. Writing a great hook is almost as important as writing a great thesis statement. A hook is an imaginary fishing line designed to GRAB the attention of your readers so that you can reel them in! There are a few ways to do this:

- Ask a question
- Tell a story
- Quote a famous person
- State an interesting fact

An example of a great hook using a quotation:

J.K. Rowling said, "The internet has been a boon and a curse for teenagers." - - this is a good example because almost everyone knows who J.K. Rowling is, and the word "boon" is catchy: doesn't it make you want to know what that means?

YOUR TURN!

CREATE YOUR OWN GREAT HOOK THAT GOES WELL WITH YOUR TOPIC AND THESIS

Lesson 5

The Introductory Paragraph: Putting it All Together

Excellent! You now have your super hook which is going to keep the attention of ANYONE and EVERYONE who reads your awesome essay. You have your well-crafted thesis statement which is going to tell your readers what your essay is about, and why this topic is important to you (and why it should be important to them!) Now let's work on putting it all together.

Follow my example using the topic "teens and screen time" which uses thesis statement #5 from page 7.

J.K. Rowling once said, "The internet has been a boon and a curse for teenagers." If the author of the Harry Potter series acknowledges the negative effects of too much screen time on teens, parents should, too. Parents should put limits on their children's screen time because too much screen time negatively impacts overall health.

YOUR TURN!

WRITE YOUR INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

Lesson 6

Body Paragraphs

Now that you have your amazing introductory paragraph written, I want you to think about **THREE** things that you'd like to discuss which specifically relate to your thesis statement. These three things must be details about what your introductory paragraph states.

In my body paragraphs (continuing with my earlier example) I am going to discuss the following details:

1. how too much screen time impacts sleep
2. how too much screen time impacts social relationships
3. how too much screen time impacts mental health

Since this is an expository essay, and I'm explaining how too much screen time affects the overall health of teens, I can explain how it affects health, but I can **ALSO** do some research and find quotations from experts who explain how too much screen time affects overall health.

For this course, we do not have to do research and use quotations. Just note that **IF** you **DO**, you will have to properly cite the the sources of information. (More on this in a future class.)

YOUR TURN!

WRITE THREE DETAILS WHICH GO ALONG WITH YOUR THESIS STATEMENT THAT
YOU WILL DISCUSS IN EACH OF YOUR THREE BODY PARAGRAPHS

WRITE THOSE HERE:

Lesson 7

Body Paragraph 1

Now it is time to take each of your three details from Lesson 6 and expand on those, each in its own paragraph. Follow my example, but use your own details to write your own essay.

Detail 1:

I will discuss how too much screen time affects sleep

Have you ever noticed that looking at your phone or tablet at night hurts your eyes, but you keep looking at it anyway? Sometimes, the light that is emitted from screens affects the brain by sending messages that do not induce sleep. Sure, there are settings that dim the light on screens, however, studies have shown that this does not really help. To ensure that their children get a restful night's sleep, parents should not allow screen time before bed.

YOUR TURN!

WRITE YOUR FIRST BODY PARAGRAPH

Lesson 8

Transitions: Why They're Important

Before we begin to discuss the other two body paragraphs, let's take a moment to talk about the ever-important transition. Transitions between paragraphs are important because they make your essay flow. With good transitions, your reader will feel as if one idea leads into another nicely. They won't be jolted out of one paragraph into the next as if you suddenly slammed on brakes and sped up again. Nobody likes that!

YOUR TURN!

READ THE FOLLOWING LIST AND USE SOME TRANSITION WORDS AS YOU SPEAK TO FAMILY & FRIENDS TODAY. NOTICE HOW THE TRANSITIONAL WORDS YOU USE MAKE YOUR SPEECH FLOW.

Here are some transition words and phrases to choose from:

in the first place
not only
as a matter of fact
in like manner
coupled with
in the same way
in the light of
not to mention
to say nothing of
equally important
more importantly
by the same token
in addition
likewise
additionally
furthermore
again
to
and
also
then
equally
identically
uniquely
like
as
too
moreover
as well as
together with
of course
even though
however
and many more!

Lesson 9

Body Paragraph 2 With an Excellent Transition

Let's take detail #2 from Lesson 6 now and use that for the topic of body paragraph 2:

Detail 2:

I will discuss how too much screen time impacts social relationships

First, let's look at our introductory paragraph again:

Have you ever noticed that looking at your phone or tablet at night hurts your eyes, but you keep looking at it anyway? Sometimes, the light that is emitted from screens affects the brain by sending messages that do not induce sleep. Sure, there are settings that dim the light on screens, however, studies have shown that this does not really help. To ensure that their children get a restful night's sleep, parents should not allow screen time before bed.

YOUR TURN!

BEFORE MOVING ON, LOOK AT YOUR OWN DETAIL #2 AND CHOOSE A TRANSITIONAL WORD
OR PHRASE TO USE AT THE BEGINNING OF BODY PARAGRAPH #2

Here is my body paragraph #2 with transition:

Not only

should parents monitor their children's screen time at night, they should also monitor usage throughout the day. Teens don't always have the ability to self-monitor. Sometimes teens don't realize that they are spending more time on their screens than with their family. Too much screen time can negatively impact teens relationships with their friends and family, because instead of interacting with the people they love and care about, their time is spent in a virtual world. Building relationships with others takes time and attention.

Do you see how that one small transition makes a big difference in the flow of the paragraphs? Transitions are small but mighty.

YOUR TURN!

WRITE YOUR BODY PARAGRAPH #2 WITH YOUR TRANSITION

Before we move on to Lesson 10, let's take a look at our entire essay so far:

Have you ever noticed that looking at your phone or tablet at night hurts your eyes, but you keep looking at it anyway? Sometimes, the light that is emitted from screens affects the brain by sending messages that do not induce sleep. Sure, there are settings that dim the light on screens, however, studies have shown that this does not really help. To ensure that their children get a restful night's sleep, parents should not allow screen time before bed.

Not only should parents monitor their children's screen time at night, they should also monitor usage throughout the day. Teens don't always have the ability to self-monitor. Sometimes teens don't realize that they are spending more time on their screens than with their family. Too much screen time can negatively impact teens' relationships with their friends and family, because instead of interacting with the people they love and care about, their time is spent in a virtual world. Building relationships with others takes time and attention.

YOUR TURN!

TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR ESSAY SO FAR, THEN GIVE YOURSELF A HIGH FIVE



Lesson 10

~A Repeat of Lesson 9~

Body Paragraph 3 With an Excellent Transition

Let's take detail #3 from Lesson 6 now and use that for the topic of body paragraph 3:

Detail 3:

I will discuss how too much screen time impacts mental health

First, let's look at our body paragraph #2 again:

Not only should parents monitor their children's screen time at night, they should also monitor usage throughout the day. Teens don't always have the ability to self-monitor. Sometimes teens don't realize that they are spending more time on their screens than with their family. Too much screen time can negatively impact teens' relationships with their friends and family, because instead of interacting with the people they love and care about, their time is spent in a virtual world. Building relationships with others takes time and attention.

YOUR TURN!

BEFORE MOVING ON, LOOK AT YOUR OWN DETAIL #3 AND CHOOSE A TRANSITIONAL
WORD OR PHRASE TO USE AT THE BEGINNING OF BODY PARAGRAPH #3

Here is my body paragraph #3 with transition in bold:

More importantly,

parents should monitor and limit their teens' screen time because it has a negative affect on mental health. Studies have shown that after too much screen time, teens are more likely to forget about the people in their lives that they can count on. It has also been noted that too much screen time is linked to depression and even suicide. Because of the changes in the brain, teens may not make the choices that they normally would. This is probably the most important reason for parents to limit and monitor their children's screen time.

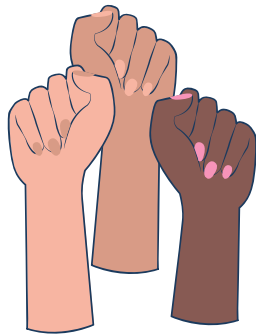
YOUR TURN!

WRITE YOUR BODY PARAGRAPH #3 WITH TRANSITION

Lesson 11

The Conclusion: Tying it All Together

Your essay is looking great! Now we have to finish **STRONG!** You can do this!



Remember that your conclusion should restate your thesis in a unique way without being repetitive. Before we do this, let's take a look at our entire essay so far. Mine is on the next page.

YOUR TURN!

PUT YOUR ESSAY TOGETHER AND READ WHAT YOU HAVE SO FAR.

THEN START THINKING ABOUT YOUR CONCLUSION

J.K. Rowling once said, "The internet has been a boon and a curse for teenagers." If the author of the Harry Potter series acknowledges the negative effects of too much screen time on teens, parents should too. Parents should put limits on their children's screen time because too much screen time negatively impacts overall health.

Have you ever noticed that looking at your phone or tablet at night hurts your eyes, but you keep looking at it anyway? Sometimes, the light that is emitted from screens affects the brain by sending messages that do not induce sleep. Sure, there are settings that dim the light on screens, however, studies have shown that this does not really help. To ensure that their children get a restful night's sleep, parents should not allow screen time before bed.

Not only should parents monitor their children's screen time at night, they should also monitor usage throughout the day. Teens don't always have the ability to self-monitor. Sometimes teens don't realize that they are spending more time on their screens than with their family. Too much screen time can negatively impact teens' relationships with their friends and family, because instead of interacting with the people they love and care about, their time is spent in a virtual world. Building relationships with others takes time and attention.

More importantly, parents should monitor and limit their teens' screen time because it has a negative affect on mental health. Studies have shown that after too much screen time, teens are more likely to forget about the people in their lives that they can count on. It has also been noted that too much screen time is linked to depression and even suicide. Because of the changes in the brain, teens may not make the choices that they normally would. This is probably the most important reason for parents to limit and monitor their children's screen time.

Here is my conclusion with transition in bold:

Even though

there are definitely times when using computers, tablets and phones is good and necessary, you can see that the negative effects are many. Just like anything else in life, a balance is key. If parents monitor their children's screen time as they are growing up, kids will be more likely to monitor themselves and avoid the negative consequences of too much screen time later on in life.

Do you see how I :
brought the reader's attention back to my original topic?
restated my thesis in a different way?
used a transition to tie the conclusion in with the rest of the essay?

YOUR TURN!

WRITE YOUR CONCLUSION WITH TRANSITION NOW

Put It All Together

Points to remember:

nobody loves their first draft

famous writers spend more time editing than they do writing

first ideas are often great, but revised ideas are even better

keep editing and making your essay better

writing a 5-paragraph essay is easy - the formula is the same - all you need to do is add your own touch and your own magic to make it great!

you've GOT this!

Lesson 12

Read your essay to a friend or family member and start brainstorming your next super-awesome, amazingly-written essay!



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This certifies that

has completed the *How to Write the Perfect 5-Paragraph Essay* course with
Life Learning Academy

Date:

Ferri L. Hedrick, M.S., Teacher/ Administrator

Print your certificate of completion and add it to your portfolio. Great work!

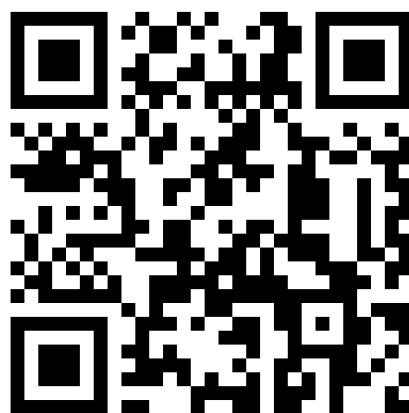


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