

Instructions and Worksheet for Writing a 5-Paragraph Essay

Step 1: Determine a Purpose for your Essay

The following are the most common purposes for essay-writing:

Narrative ~ An essay can narrate a sequence of events (i.e. the events surrounding the fall of man in the Garden of Eden; the events surrounding Daniel being thrown in the lion's den).

Descriptive ~ An essay can describe "something." ("Something" can include people, places, animals, things, ideas, periods of time, events, etc. Specific examples are George Washington, Yellowstone National Park, kangaroos, a camera, peace, Roman Empire, Civil War, etc.)

Comparative/Contrasting ~ An essay can compare and/or contrast two topics (i.e. Christianity vs. Islam).

Explanatory or Interpretive ~ An essay can explain or interpret an issue (i.e. an explanation of what it means to be a follower of Jesus; an interpretation of what Jesus meant when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father except through Me" [John 14:6]).

Persuasive ~ An essay can persuade the reader to take the same side as the writer on a specific issue or persuade the reader to take action on an issue (i.e. lying is never good; help conserve energy).

Step 2: Determine your General then Specific Essay Topic

You need to choose a general topic for your essay, and then work it down to a very specific essay topic (i.e. Jesus → miracles of Jesus → Jesus walked on water → Jesus' faith lesson to Peter when Jesus and Peter walked on water).

(Note: You may prefer to choose your topic and narrow it down BEFORE you determine the purpose for your essay. In that case, complete step 2 before you do step 1.)

Step 3: Write your Introductory Paragraph

The first paragraph of your 5-paragraph essay will be your introductory paragraph. Your introductory paragraph will introduce your topic to the reader (usually in a general way), and will share three main points about your narrowed-down topic (which will be further discussed in paragraphs 2, 3 & 4 of your essay). Your introductory paragraph will conclude with a statement (or opinion, observation, or conclusion that you have drawn) regarding your specific essay topic.

Example of an Introductory Paragraph for an Explanatory/ Interpretive Essay:

Jesus performed many miracles and taught many lessons when He lived and walked on the earth. **General** One of the miracles Jesus did was to walk on water, which we learn about in the Bible. **Point one** Not only did Jesus walk on the water in that miracle, but He also enabled Peter to walk on the water, too. **Point two** Jesus used this miracle to teach Peter to have faith in Him at all times. **Point three** Just as Peter learned from this miracle, I need to remember to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus instead of on my circumstances. **Specific statement/observation**

Step 4: Write your Second Paragraph, your First Body Paragraph

The second paragraph of your 5-paragraph essay will be the first paragraph of the body of your essay. Your introductory sentence of this paragraph will introduce the thought/idea from your sentence labeled **Point one** in **Step 3**. (This sentence can be, but does not have to be, a restatement of that **Point one**.) You will follow your first sentence with sentences that support it. (A “solid” paragraph will have three supporting sentences. However, when writing an essay, some of your paragraphs may have more or less than three supporting sentences.) You will conclude this paragraph with a sentence that both finishes the main thought of this paragraph, and which leads into the introductory sentence for your next paragraph.

Example of a Second Paragraph for the above Explanatory/ Interpretive Essay:

Matthew 14:22-33 tells us of the miracle when Jesus walked on water. **Restatement of Point one** Just before this miracle happened, Jesus had sent His disciples to go to the other side of the sea by way of a ship. **Supporting sentence 1** When the disciples were in the middle of the sea, the winds picked up and began tossing the ship. **Supporting sentence 2** That night, Jesus walked on the water toward the disciples on the ship. **Supporting sentence 3** Even though this was miraculous on its own, Jesus wasn't finished yet with this miracle. **Conclusion/lead-in sentence**

Step 5: Write your Third Paragraph, your Second Body Paragraph

The third paragraph of your 5-paragraph essay will be the second paragraph of the body of your essay. Your introductory sentence of this paragraph will introduce the thought/idea from your sentence labeled **Point two** in **Step 3**. (This sentence can be, but does not have to be, a restatement of that **Point two**.) You will follow your first sentence with sentences that support it. (Again, your paragraph may have more or less than three supporting sentences.) You will conclude this paragraph with a sentence that both finishes the main thought of this paragraph, and which leads into the introductory sentence for your next paragraph.

Example of a Third Paragraph for the above Explanatory/ Interpretive Essay:

Jesus' miracle of walking on the water caused the disciples, including Peter, to be fearful. **Introduction of Point two** The disciples thought the figure walking toward them on the water was a spirit. **Supporting sentence 1** When the disciples cried out in fear, Jesus told them not to be afraid, for He was the one walking on the water. **Supporting sentence 2** Peter told Jesus to invite him out on the water if it really was Him. **Supporting sentence 3** When Jesus invited Peter onto the water with Him, Peter left the ship and walked toward his lesson on faith. **Conclusion/lead-in sentence**

Step 6: Write your Fourth Paragraph, your Third Body Paragraph

The fourth paragraph of your 5-paragraph essay will be the third paragraph of the body of your essay. Your introductory sentence of this paragraph will introduce the thought/idea from your sentence labeled **Point three** in **Step 3**. (This sentence can be, but does not have to be, a restatement of that **Point three**.) You will follow your first sentence with sentences that support it. (Once again, you may have more or less than three supporting sentences.) You will conclude this paragraph with a sentence that both finishes the main thought of this paragraph, and which leads into the introductory sentence for your conclusion paragraph.

Example of a Fourth Paragraph for the above Explanatory/ Interpretive Essay:

When Peter started walking on the sea, he began with much faith. **Introduction of Point three** Peter began his faith walk on the water because he was focusing on Jesus. **Supporting sentence 1** Peter's faith started to waver when he took his eyes off Jesus and started to focus on the winds around him. **Supporting sentence 2** Peter cried out to Jesus to save him. **Supporting sentence 3** Jesus reached out and saved Peter, but asked him why he doubted when he should have had faith. **Conclusion/lead-in sentence**

Step 7: Write your Fifth and Final Paragraph, your Conclusion Paragraph

The fifth paragraph of your 5-paragraph essay will be the conclusion paragraph of your essay. Your introductory sentence of this paragraph will introduce the thought/idea from your **Specific statement/observation** in **Step 3**. (This sentence can be, but does not have to be, a restatement of that statement/observation.) You will follow your first sentence with sentences that support it. (Remember, your paragraph may have more or less than three supporting sentences.) Being a conclusion paragraph, this paragraph will tie together your final thoughts or observations on the main topic of your essay. (It is important to remember to never introduce a new thought or concept into your conclusion paragraph.)

Example of a Fifth (Conclusion) Paragraph for the above Explanatory/ Interpretive Essay:

Just as Jesus used this miracle to teach Peter an important faith lesson, I have learned an important lesson on faith, too. **Introduction of Specific statement/observation** In the same way that Peter started to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus and started to focus on the loud winds, I know I will "sink" if I focus on my circumstances instead of Jesus. **Supporting sentence 1** By remembering and learning from Peter's lesson on faith, my own faith can be made stronger. **Conclusion sentence**

Step 8: Write out your essay on a piece of white-lined paper. Indent the first sentence of each paragraph of your essay.

Step 9: Proof and edit your essay for spelling and grammar errors. Rewrite the essay if necessary to fix any errors.

Example of the Complete Explanatory/ Interpretive Essay:

A Faith Walk on Water

Jesus performed many miracles and taught many lessons when He lived and walked on the earth. One of the miracles Jesus did was to walk on water, which we learn about in the Bible. Not only did Jesus walk on the water in that miracle, but He also enabled Peter to walk on the water, too. Jesus used this miracle to teach Peter to have faith in Him at all times. Just as Peter learned from this miracle, I need to remember to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus instead of on my circumstances.

Matthew 14:22-33 tells us of the miracle when Jesus walked on water. Just before this miracle happened, Jesus had sent His disciples to go to the other side of the sea by way of a ship. When the disciples were in the middle of the sea, the winds picked up and began tossing the ship. That night, Jesus walked on the water toward the disciples on the ship. Even though this was miraculous on its own, Jesus wasn't finished yet with this miracle.

Jesus' miracle of walking on the water caused the disciples, including Peter, to be fearful. The disciples thought the figure walking toward them on the water was a spirit. When the disciples cried out in fear, Jesus told them not to be afraid, for He was the one walking on the water. Peter told Jesus to invite him out on the water if it really was Him. When Jesus invited Peter onto the water with Him, Peter left the ship and walked toward his lesson on faith.

When Peter started walking on the sea, he began with much faith. Peter began his faith walk on the water because he was focusing on Jesus. Peter's faith started to waver when he took his eyes off Jesus and started to focus on the winds around him. Peter cried out to Jesus to save him. Jesus reached out and saved Peter, but asked him why he doubted when he should have had faith.

Just as Jesus used this miracle to teach Peter an important faith lesson, I have learned an important lesson on faith, too. In the same way that Peter started to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus and started to focus on the loud winds, I know I will "sink" if I focus on my circumstances instead of Jesus. By remembering and learning from Peter's lesson on faith, my own faith can be made stronger.

Worksheet for Writing a 5-Paragraph Essay

Step 1: Determine a Purpose for your Essay

___My essay will **narrate** a sequence of events (i.e. the events surrounding the fall of man in the Garden of Eden; the events surrounding Daniel being thrown in the lion's den).

___My essay will **describe** "something" (i.e. a person, place, animal, thing, idea, period of time, event, etc.). (Here are some specific examples: George Washington, Yellowstone National Park, kangaroos, a camera, peace, Roman Empire, Civil War, etc.)

___My essay will **compare and/or contrast** two topics (i.e. Christianity vs. Islam).

___My essay will **explain or interpret** an issue (i.e. an explanation of what it means to be a follower of Jesus; an interpretation of what Jesus meant when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father except through Me" [John 14:6]).

___My essay will attempt to **persuade** the reader to take the same side I do on a specific issue or to take action on an issue (i.e. lying is never good; help conserve energy).

Step 2: Determine your General then Specific Essay Topic

Choose a general topic for your essay (i.e. Jesus):

Narrow down your topic (i.e. miracles of Jesus):

Narrow down your topic even more (i.e. Jesus walked on water):

Narrow down your topic even more (i.e. Jesus' faith lesson to Peter when Jesus and Peter walked on water):

(Note: You may prefer to choose your topic and narrow it down BEFORE you determine the purpose for your essay. In that case, complete step 2 before you do step 1.)

Step 3: Write your Introductory Paragraph

First sentence (general statement):

Second sentence (first point to be discussed):

Third sentence (second point to be discussed):

Fourth sentence (third point to be discussed):

Fifth sentence (statement, opinion, observation, or conclusion drawn regarding specific topic):

Step 4: Write your Second Paragraph, your First Body Paragraph

First sentence (restatement of the second sentence in the introductory paragraph, or a sentence introducing the thought/idea from that second sentence):

Second sentence (first supporting sentence):

Third sentence (second supporting sentence):

Fourth sentence (third supporting sentence):

Fifth sentence (sentence that concludes this paragraph and leads into the next paragraph):

Step 5: Write your Third Paragraph, your Second Body Paragraph

First sentence (restatement of the third sentence in the introductory paragraph, or a sentence introducing the thought/idea from that third sentence):

Second sentence (first supporting sentence):

Third sentence (second supporting sentence):

Fourth sentence (third supporting sentence):

Fifth sentence (sentence that concludes this paragraph and leads into the next paragraph):

Step 6: Write your Fourth Paragraph, your Third Body Paragraph

First sentence (restatement of the fourth sentence in the introductory paragraph, or a sentence introducing the thought/idea from that fourth sentence):

Second sentence (first supporting sentence):

Third sentence (second supporting sentence):

Fourth sentence (third supporting sentence):

Fifth sentence (sentence that concludes this paragraph and leads into the final paragraph):

Step 7: Write your Fifth and Final Paragraph, your Conclusion Paragraph

First sentence (restatement of the fifth sentence in the introductory paragraph, or a sentence introducing the thought/idea from that fifth sentence):

Second sentence (first supporting sentence):

Third sentence (second supporting sentence):

Fourth sentence (third supporting sentence):

Fifth sentence (sentence that concludes this paragraph and concludes the essay):

Step 8: Write out your essay on a piece of white-lined paper. Indent the first sentence of each paragraph of your essay.

Step 9: Proof and edit your essay for spelling and grammar errors. Rewrite the essay if necessary to fix any errors.