

Outline for a Five-Paragraph Research Paper

Paragraph 1: Introduction

The introductory paragraph should include the following elements:

- **Background information:** Enough information necessary for your reader to understand your topic
- **Purpose statement:** Indicates your paper's topic, makes your paper's topic clear, and provides an overview of the **three main supporting points** that will unify the research. The purpose statement is typically the last sentence.
- If you are writing in response to a text, the introduction should include the title, author of the text, and the branch of science it relates to.

Paragraph 2: Body Paragraph

- Begins with a **topic sentence** that identifies **one main idea** that will be discussed as support or proof for the purpose statement
- **Supporting sentences** use specific details, demonstrated through closely related examples or evidence, to expand and explain the main idea. Generally, a well-developed paragraph has at least five to eight sentences.
- **Paragraph unity** means that all ideas in a paragraph are closely related to its topic sentence and further develop that topic sentence. That is, all sentences in a single paragraph must be unified around a central point or idea.

Paragraph 3: Body Paragraph

- This paragraph should begin with a **topic sentence** that informs the reader that you will present the chemical data related to your topic, and that a **new idea** or point is being introduced.
- As you organize your chemical facts and data, keep in mind its coherence. **Coherence** refers to connections among paragraphs and your research topic—the logical sequence of your researched data.
 - Use **transition words or phrases** at the *outset* of your body paragraphs and to move from one chemical data/fact to another *within* your paragraphs.
 - Have you transitioned logically from the main idea in the previous paragraph to this one? Are you making clear connections among the paragraphs and data? Be sure to think about coherence throughout each stage of the writing process as you piece together your researched information.

Paragraph 4: Body Paragraph

- This paragraph begins with the final **topic sentence** that informs the reader that you will present why/how your topic is important to society/environment. Each new idea should relate to your purpose statement.
- Again, for each main idea give specific examples, details, and provide relevant support.
- Be sure to maintain paragraph unity. That is, each sentence must relate to your topic sentence.

Paragraph 5: Conclusion

- The conclusion revisits your overall purpose for writing and often invites your reader to consider the implications/reasons of why your research is important.
- The conclusion may restate the purpose, summarize the paper's major points, or leave the reader with a final thought to ponder. If you choose to restate the purpose or summarize the main research ideas, do not repeat the same wording from the introduction or body paragraphs. Remember not to introduce new, unrelated ideas in the conclusion.

Remember, the five-paragraph model can be expanded to include more body paragraphs that probe more deeply into your subject. Check with Mr. Liddell to ensure whether or not you can exceed this length for an assignment.