Organizing a Five-Paragraph Essay I

**Purpose:** Upon completion of this activity, students will be able to create an outline of a five-paragraph essay. This DLA should take approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete.

Although a five-paragraph essay will not work for every college writing situation, it will get you through many types of essays, essay exams, and other tests with essay components. The following outline, from the Sheboygan Falls School District web site provides an example of what a five-paragraph essay outline looks like.

**Introductory paragraph**

A. Catches the reader's interest

B. Gives brief background on your topic

C. Begins or ends with the *thesis statement*

**Body (paragraphs 2, 3, etc.)**

A. Develops, expands, and/or supports the thesis statement

B. Includes a topic sentence for each paragraph

C. Includes supporting details which reinforce the topic sentence.

**Concluding paragraph**

A. Restates the thesis or sums up the argument.

B. Tells the reader what you think is important to remember. (Often, this is a personal response).

C. Never introduce new information in the conclusion. Extend your thinking on something from the essay.

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1. For the following general topics, develop a strong thesis statement.
   - Is a college education worth the cost?
   - What are the solutions to illegal immigration in the U.S.?
   - Should people become vegetarians?

2. Then, develop a five-paragraph essay outline for one of the thesis statements you wrote. Be sure to include a sentence at the beginning of each body paragraph that
states the main idea of that paragraph (topic sentence) and list any potential supporting details you might present. Remember, **this is just an outline**, like the one listed above, and should NOT be written in paragraph format.

3. Review your outline with an instructor or tutor in the WRC, and see if the instructor or tutor has anything to add to improve your outline.

**Attach a confirmation sheet or get a signature below:**

Instructor Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________