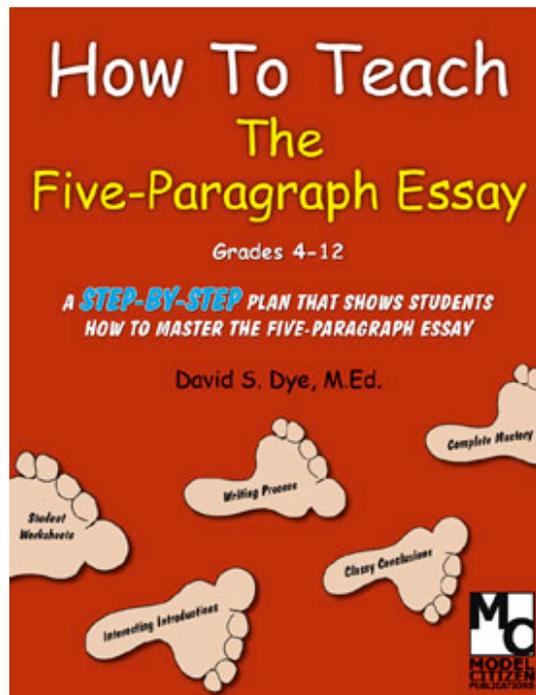


# How To Teach The Five-Paragraph Essay

By David Dye, M.ED.



# Table of Contents

---

Introduction	1
Book Format	2
Five-Paragraph Essay: Step-By-Step (Summary)	3
Pacing Chart for Teaching the Five-Paragraph Essay	5
Detailed Lesson Plan	9
Plan for Entire Class Mastery of the Five-Paragraph Essay	25
Bells and Whistles	29
The Next Level	33
Appendices	37
1. Topics for Five-Paragraph Essays	
2. Sample Essay Outlines	
3. Five-Paragraph Essay Assessment Sheet	
4. Five-Paragraph Essay Rubric	
5. Types of Introductions	
6. Interesting Introductions Worksheets # 1 and #2	
7. Comma, Comma, And... Strategy	
8. Transition Words Worksheets # 1 -#4	
9. Transition Sentences	
10. Writing Portfolio Project - Cover Sheets	

# Introduction

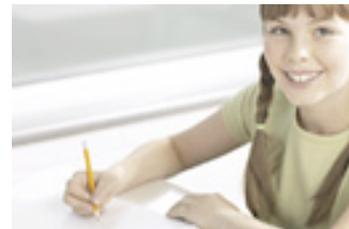
---

There are many ways to write a five-paragraph essay. Consider this: There are four domains of writing. Also, within these four domains of writing there are sub-domains such as problem/solution, persuasive, letter writing, personal narrative, biography, autobiography, cause and effect... I could go on and on. In addition to this, every person has his or her own distinct style of writing. With all of these factors to consider, it's no wonder that so many students struggle with essay writing.

Don't let all of this intimidate you. This book is going to show you how to teach the five-paragraph essay using one simple essay format. From this basic format, you will discover that adjusting it to fit the different domains of writing is very simple. More importantly, your students will feel confident in their ability to write in any situation.

## ONE SIMPLE FORMAT

This book is going to take you by the hand and show you how to teach the basic five-paragraph essay using one standard format. Following these easy steps, your students will achieve mastery of the five-paragraph essay and be prepared for ANY timed test you, your district, your state, or college throws at them.



## BELLS AND WHISTLES



Everyone likes the machine with extra bells and whistles. This book will also show your students how to add the “bells and whistles” to their five paragraph essays. Once they've mastered the basic format of the five-paragraph essay, they will learn important ideas such as Interesting Introductions, Smooth Transitions from paragraph to paragraph, Classy Conclusions, and much more. If you are teaching fourth graders, only a few bells and whistles will be needed. However, if you are teaching middle or high school, you will have all the resources you need to help your students write sophisticated essays. Once again, they will do this by adding these “bells and whistles” to a basic, easy to use five-paragraph essay format.

## THE NEXT LEVEL

Before discussing the next level, let me tell you about a common mistake used with essay writing. Many teachers will write a five-paragraph essay, such as a persuasive argument, with their class. Next, they will write a narrative with their class. Next, they will write a problem-solution, cause and effect, or compare-and-contrast essay with their class. At the end of the year, their students have wonderful, finished essays to show parents, administrators and the district. What

they DON'T have is a class full of students who know how to write the five-paragraph essay all on their own.

Isn't our goal to help students achieve mastery of the five-paragraph essay? If the students are relying on the teacher to walk them through the process, have they really mastered it?

So what is the next level? The next level is the ability of the students to take the basic format of the five-paragraph essay and "tweak" it to fit any domain of writing. By "tweaking", I mean simply adding an extra step or two to meet the requirements of the assignment. For example, essays are not generally stories. However, by "tweaking" the outlining/prewriting procedure for the five-paragraph essay, they can change the body of the essay into the beginning, middle, and end of their story. As you will see, this is a very easy thing to do.

## THE FORMAT OF THIS BOOK

---

1. **List of Steps** – First you will receive a list a steps to follow when teaching the five-paragraph essay. This will serve as an overview as you get comfortable teaching this process. Also, you can use this as a guide while actually teaching the five-paragraph essay.
2. **Sample Pacing Chart** – From Day 1 to Day 20, what will your daily lessons look like? Obviously it will vary from grade and ability level. However, it is nice to have a model to use as a starting point. Using this pacing chart you will find that speeding up or slowing down is easy. Simply take more time to complete each step or jump to the next step when you feel your students have understood each lesson.
3. **Detailed Lesson Plan** – Next, each step will be explained in greater detail. You will see pictures and receive a detailed explanation of each step.
4. **Plan for Total Mastery** – The goal is to have every student master the five-paragraph essay. This lesson plan will show you what to do with the students who have mastered the skill, and how to find time to work in small groups for those who continue to need support.
5. **Bells and Whistles** – Now you will learn to teach your students how to make more exciting introductions, classy conclusions, smooth transitions, and more...
6. **The Next Level** – Show your students how to use the basic format of the five-paragraph essay to create any domain of writing. Does your district give your students a timed test on persuasive letters? Are your students required to take a state writing test on problem-solution? Not a problem. In minutes your students will know exactly what to do to create any genre of writing.



# THE FIVE PARAGRAPH ESSAY

## I. The Steps

1. Review “What is a Paragraph?” Make sure the students understand that a paragraph is about ONE MAIN IDEA.
2. Teach the Three-Paragraph Essay in 60 seconds. Start your watch! Ready...Set...Go!
3. Prewriting Practice for the Three-Paragraph Essay. Creating your Three Main Ideas and listing your supporting details for each.
4. Introduction Paragraph – Make a thesis statement and give your three main ideas.
5. Conclusion Paragraph – Summarize your thesis statement, review your three main ideas, and say goodbye.
6. Putting it All Together
7. Timed Prompt Writing
8. Assess and Re-Teach as needed. Put the expert essay writers into “writer’s workshop” activities while working with those who need a little more help.

## Bells and Whistles

1. Teach Interesting Introductions
2. Teach Classy Conclusions
3. Teach Terrific Transitions

## The Next Level – Tweaking the Essay to Fit All Domains and Genres

1. Narratives
2. Persuasive Essay
3. Problem-Solution Essay
4. Cause and Effect Essay
5. Research Reports



## THE FIVE PARAGRAPH ESSAY

### III. Detailed Lesson Plan for Each Step

#### Step I – Review the Paragraph (Approx. 1 Week to 3 Months)

Make no mistake, the ability to write a strong paragraph is the very backbone of all writing. If your students cannot write a good paragraph, trying to write an essay will be futile. On the other hand, if your students can produce a well-organized paragraph, the battle is nearly over. Writing a five-paragraph essay simply requires a few extra steps.

For a more detailed lesson plan on paragraph writing, go to [CreateBetterWriters.com](http://CreateBetterWriters.com). You can download the paragraph lesson plan from the “Past Newsletters” section of this site. Below you will see an abridged version of what you will find in [How To Write a Paragraph](#).

There is one all-important, vital, key, pivotal main idea that your students must have on their minds at all times when writing the paragraph (and consequently, the five-paragraph essay). That one main idea is this:

**A Paragraph is about ONE MAIN IDEA!**

This point could not be stressed strongly enough. Pound it into your students’ minds every chance you get. To not do this is to make your job teaching the five-paragraph essay infinitely more difficult. Here are the steps for teaching the paragraph:

#### **I. Pretest: Let the students try to guess the five parts of a good paragraph.**

Write numbers 1 – 5 on the board. Have the students number 1 – 5 on their papers. Let the students try to guess the five parts of the paragraph. Make a game out of it. Offer five raffle tickets or a small prize to the student who can name the #1 part of a paragraph. (List is in order of importance.)

Offer four raffle tickets for the student who guesses the second item and so on. The class will have fun, and it will get them thinking about everything they’ve ever been taught about writing. This is a great time of review, even if they don’t discover all five. For the classes that aren’t coming close, I’ll give as many hints as I can until they get it.

#### **A GOOD PARAGRAPH**

1. One Main Idea
2. Topic Sentence
3. 5–7 Sentences
4. Closing Sentence
5. Indent; Spelling and Punctuation