

Example Five-Paragraph Essay (on the advantages of five-paragraph model)

I love using the five-paragraph model for writing. I can find three points to argue for or exemplify just about any topic imaginable. Cats are good pets because they're good companions, they're clean, and they're easy to care for. *Jaws* is a classic film because of its acting, its cinematography, and its musical score. Three examples of the U.S. government's checks and balances are its executive branch, its legislative branch, and its judicial branches. The five-paragraph model is a valuable tool for many writing situations because it structures my writing, it aids my readers, and it is versatile.

One advantage of the five-paragraph model is that it structures what I write. Before I learned the five-paragraph recipe, I'd either stare at a blank screen or I'd write one big block of text; now, I know to first identify three examples, reasons, or other supporting pieces of evidence. Then, I develop those three examples, reasons, or pieces of evidence into its own paragraph. I write a thesis statement based off those three examples, reasons, or pieces of evidence; I flesh out my introduction with a hook; and I write a conclusion paragraph. Following the five-paragraph model makes my writing tasks considerably less intimidating.

A related advantage of the five-paragraph model is that my following the recipe makes it easy for readers to follow my writing. When readers see five paragraphs (not one block of text), they can anticipate that I'll introduce my topic in my first paragraph and that I'll conclude my first paragraph with my thesis statement. Readers can predict that I'll provide three examples, reasons, or other supporting evidence to support my thesis statement, each of which will be fleshed out in its own paragraph: boom, boom, boom. And readers know they'll find my conclusions in my final, fifth paragraph. By using the five-paragraph model, I ease the burden on my readers.

A third advantage of the five-paragraph model is that, like most recipes, it can be doubled or even tripled. For a standard 400 to 500-word paper, I apply the standard single batch of the recipe, writing 75 to 100 words in each of the five paragraphs. For a 1000-word essay, I double the recipe writing by two paragraphs, rather than only one, for the introduction, the three supporting paragraphs, and the conclusion paragraph. I can even write a 5000-word paper with this recipe (by writing 1000 words for each of the five components). The five-paragraph model is versatile for all my writing needs.

I'm clearly a fan of the five-paragraph model. As long as I'm able to outline three reasons why Psychology is my favorite subject, three arguments why *Pulp Fiction* is better than *Forrest Gump*, and three examples of how Shakespeare's works are relevant to current day society, I can write just about any analytical essay. I wished my life was as well structured, versatile, and easy to follow as the five-paragraph model.

Based off of an essay by Dr. Robert T. Koch Jr., UNA University Writing Center; August 27, 2007
(<https://www.una.edu/writingcenter/docs/Writing-Resources/Organization5Paragraph.pdf>)

Example Five-Paragraph Essay (about Going to Movies)

I am a movie fanatic. When friends want to know what picture won the Oscar in 2001 or who voiced Optimus Prime in *Transformers*, they ask me. However, my buddies have stopped asking me if I want to go out to the movies. While I love movies as much as ever, I find it more enjoyable to wait for a movie's release on Netflix because of the inconvenience of going out, the temptations of the concession stand, and the behavior of some patrons.

First of all, just getting to the theater presents difficulties. Leaving a home equipped with an HDTV and surround sound isn't attractive on a cold or rainy night. Even if the weather cooperates, there is the hassle of looking for a parking space and the lines. There is also the worry of whether you and your friends will get all your seats together. Although none of these hindrances are insurmountable, it's much easier to stay seated on your sofa.

Second, the theater offers tempting snacks that I don't really need. At home I can control myself because there is no ice cream in the freezer, we don't have sodas in the fridge, and my snacks tend to be healthy, like fruits, nuts, and juices. At the movies, even if I only buy a Diet Coke, the smell of fresh popcorn dripping with butter soon overcomes me. And what about the nachos with cheese and the Snickers and M&M's? I'm better off without all those temptations.

Finally, some of the other patrons are even more of a problem than the concession stand. Little kids race up and down the aisles, making noise. Teenagers try to impress their friends by talking back to the actors on the screen or otherwise making fools of themselves. Some adults aren't any better, commenting loud enough to reveal plot twists that are supposed to be a secret until the movie's end. What am I doing here, I ask myself.

After arriving home from the movies one night, I decided I had had enough. I was not going to be a moviegoer anymore. I was tired of the problems involved in getting to the theater, resisting unhealthy snacks, and dealing with the patrons. The next day, I arranged to have premium movie channels added to my cable TV service, and I got a Netflix membership. I may now see movies a bit later than other people, but I'll be more relaxed watching box office hits in the comfort of my own living room.

Modified from John Langan (<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1JCvHCo6icEPJ6dEdVrtuWBM0r13Pr9KgMetaBpS-joY/>)

Example Five-Paragraph Essay (about Cats)

Man's best friend has historically been considered a dog. But dogs are not the only animal friend whose camaraderie people enjoy. For many people, a cat is their best friend. Despite what dog lovers may believe, cats make excellent house pets because they are good companions, they are civilized members of the household, and they are easy to care for.

Cats are good companions. Many cats are affectionate. They will snuggle up and ask to be petted or scratched under the chin, and who can resist a purring cat? If they're not feeling affectionate, cats are generally quite playful; they love to chase balls and feathers — or just about anything dangling from a string. And when they're tired from chasing laser pointers, cats will curl up in your lap to nap. Cats are loyal housemates.

Cats are also civilized housemates. Unlike dogs, cats don't bark or make other loud noises; most cats don't even meow that often. Cats don't usually have accidents; mother cats train their kittens to use the litter box, and most cats will use it without fail from that time on. Cats do have claws, but a tall scratching post in a favorite cat area of the house will often keep the cat content to leave the furniture alone. Compared with other pets, cats are actually quite polite.

Cats are easy to care for. They don't have to be walked because they get plenty of exercise in the house as they play. Even cleaning their litter box can be a quick, painless procedure. Cats also take care of their own grooming; bathing a cat is almost never necessary because under ordinary circumstances cats clean themselves. Cats are so easy to care for they can be left home alone for a few hours without fear.

Cats are low maintenance, civilized companions. People who have small living quarters or less time for pet care should appreciate these characteristics of cats. However, even people who have plenty of space and time still opt to have a cat because they love the cat personality. In many ways, cats are an ideal house pet.

Modified from Kathy Livingston (<http://klivingston.tripod.com/essay/sample.html>)

Example Five-Paragraph Essay (about Exercise)

Everywhere people turn -- websites, magazines, and infomercials -- advice for improving health bombards them. Although much of this advice is commercially motivated by those eager to sell questionable supplements and diet gimmicks, some of it, especially that advocating a regular exercise program, merits serious attention. Such a program, if it consists of at least thirty minutes three times a week and if a person's physician approves it, provides numerous benefits. Regular exercise releases tension, improves muscle tone, and increases stamina.

One of exercise's most immediate benefits is the release of tension. Tension builds in the body because of an over-accumulation of adrenaline produced by stress, anxiety, or fear. Doctors agree that exercising for thirty minutes releases tension. After tension is released, petty irritations and frustrations should be less troubling. Planned physical exercise, therefore, can reduce, or at least control, stress.

Improved muscle tone is a second benefit of regular exercise. Although not as immediately apparent as a better disposition, improvement does come. About a month after starting a regular exercise program, increased strength can be observed not only in one's muscles but also in one's posture. Continued exercise will continue to increase strength. In fact, the increase in muscle tone from regular exercise is a cumulative benefit.

In addition to lowered stress and increased physical strength, exercise produces stamina. A stronger, less stressed body is more capable of withstanding normal fatigue than a tense, weak one. A worker who exercises regularly should be able to complete a forty-hour week and still retain enough energy for non-work activities. Similarly, a student who exercises regularly is in better shape, literally and figuratively, for pushing through during the busiest time of the semester. Improved endurance is one of the most important benefits of a regular exercise program.

Although easy solutions to the goals of fitness saturate the media, acquiring the benefits of fitness is not easy. The rewards, however, are fully worth the effort of an established exercise program. Regular physical activity can make a person feel more relaxed, stronger, and have greater stamina for unusual as well as routine activities.

Modified from Bette Latta (http://faculty.southwest.tn.edu/jfriedlander/sample_5-paragraph_theme.htm)