

The Basic 5-Paragraph Essay Format



Following this format will help organize your essay and make it easy for the reader to follow your thoughts.



Logical & Effective

Paragraph 1 – Introduction



- Hook
- Tie-in to prompt
- Thesis statement with 3 clear reasons/ main ideas

Example of Paragraph 1

Hook (Quote or
Interesting Fact)



“After nearly a decade of optimism and wealth, the United States was thrown into despair on Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929, the official beginning of the Great Depression.” This miserable time period and economic crisis caused many Americans to suffer great losses. The Great Depression affected people in many ways such as families were greatly impacted, people lost their jobs and savings, and farmers were devastated by the effects of the Dust Bowl.

Tie-in to
prompt

Thesis Statement

Paragraph 2 – First Point

Begin with a transition and your first reason from thesis statement



- Example Transitions
 - To begin with,
 - In the first place,
- Cite evidence from the text to support your reason
 - Use a quote, fact, or example from the articles
- Explain in your own words. DO NOT simply COPY the text!
- Cite another example from the text to support your reason
- Explain or clarify in your own words.
- End with a justifier sentence restating reason from thesis.
 - Use a justifier transition such as: Basically,

Example of Paragraph 2



Transition

Restate 1st reason from thesis

To begin with, marriages and families were deeply affected due to the Great Depression. According to Fredrick Lewis Allen, "The Depression changed marriages in many ways." Sadly many people were forced to stay married to their partner for the simple fact that people could not afford to get a divorce nor could they afford to support two different households. As it was, it was barely feasible to support one household. The article also confirms that things got so bad that many husbands walked out on their families due to the feelings of failure as a man and the breadwinner. The text indicates that millions of women and children were left abandoned as result. Clearly, families were hurt due to the atrocities of the Great Depression.

Evidence from Text

Justifier Transition

Justifier sentence

Paragraph 3 – Second Point

Begin with a transition and your second reason from thesis statement



- Example Transitions:
 - Additionally,
 - Equally important,
- Cite evidence from the text to support your reason
 - Use an example, quote, or fact from the articles
- Explain and clarify in your own words
- End with a justifier sentence restating reason from thesis.
 - Use a justifier transition such as: Clearly,

Example of Paragraph 3



Transition

Restate 2nd reason from thesis

→ Additionally, the Great Depression caused unemployment and loss of financial wealth. According to the article, "A lack of consumer spending caused additional businesses to cut back wages or to lay off some for their workers." ← Evidence From Text
Unfortunately, a domino effect takes place in situations like this. When people are worried about the future, they stop spending. Then when people stop spending, businesses don't need as many workers. Ultimately, more and more people keep losing jobs. Thus, the number of job loss increased while the financial wealth decreased. ← Justifier sentence

Justifier Transition

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Paragraph 4 – Third Point

Begin with a transition and your third reason from thesis statement



- Example Transitions:
 - Moreover,
 - Furthermore,
- Cite evidence from the text to support your reason
 - Use an example, quote, or fact from the articles
- Explain and clarify in your own words
- End with a justifier sentence (restate the main idea of the paragraph)
 - Use a justifier transition such as: Thus,

Example of Paragraph 4



Transition

Restate 3rd reason from thesis

Furthermore, many farmers were devastated by the effects of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. It seems no one was safe from the Great Depression, not even farmers, who in the past were able to survive an economic crisis. This was because they were still able to feed their families with their own crops. Because of large debt, "banks then foreclosed on small farms and the farmer's family would be both homeless and unemployed," states historian expert Rosenberg. It didn't help that the Dust Bowl caused farmers to lose their crops and their only means of providing for their family. It additionally affected farmers because some were forced to move out west, leaving behind their home and farms. Basically, not even farmers could predict how hard the Great Depression would strike.

Evidence from Text

Justifier

Transition

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Justifier sentence

Paragraph 5 – Conclusion



- Re-state thesis in 1 or 2 sentences
- Tie-back to hook from intro
- End with a “zinger” sentence



Example of Paragraph 5

Transition, restate Thesis

Statement

All in all, the Great Depression upended many lives in many ways. People lost money and jobs, families were impacted, and many farmers felt the effects of the Great Depression. This economic downturn forever changed the lives of the Americans who lived through it. Should another economic crisis hit our nation, the United States should be better prepared; moreover, the country should not allow history to repeat itself.

Tie-back to intro

Zinger

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