

Sample Five-Paragraph Narrative Essay

Learning something new can be a scary experience. One of the hardest things I've ever had to do was learn how to swim. I was always afraid of the water, but I decided that swimming was an important skill that I should learn. I also thought it would be good exercise and help me to become physically stronger. What I didn't realize was that learning to swim would also make me a more confident person.

New situations always make me a bit nervous, and my first swimming lesson was no exception. After I changed into my bathing suit in the locker room, I stood timidly by the side of the pool waiting for the teacher and other students to show up. After a couple of minutes the teacher came over. She smiled and introduced herself, and two more students joined us. Although they were both older than me, they didn't seem to be embarrassed about not knowing how to swim. I began to feel more at ease.

We got into the pool, and the teacher had us put on brightly colored water wings to help us stay afloat. One of the other students, May, had already taken the beginning class once before, so she took a kickboard and went splashing off by herself. The other student, Jerry, and I were told to hold on to the side of the pool and shown how to kick for the breaststroke. One by one, the teacher had us hold on to a kickboard while she pulled it through the water and we kicked. Pretty soon Jerry was off doing this by himself, traveling at a fast clip across the short end of the pool.

Things were not quite that easy for me, but the teacher was very patient. After a few more weeks, when I seemed to have caught on with my legs, she taught me the arm strokes. Now I had two things to concentrate on, my arms and my legs. I felt hopelessly uncoordinated. Sooner than I imagined, however, things began to feel "right" and I was able to swim. It was a wonderful feeling - like flying, maybe - to be able to shoot across the water.

Learning to swim was not easy for me, but in the end my persistence paid off. Not only did I learn how to swim and to conquer my fear of the water, but I also learned something about learning. Now when I am faced with a new situation I am not so nervous. I may feel uncomfortable to begin with, but I know that as I practice being in that situation and as my skills get better, I will feel more and more comfortable. It is a wonderful, free feeling when you achieve a goal you have set for yourself.

Basic Five-Paragraph Essay Structure

1. Introduction – The introductory paragraph should identify the topic and explain why it is important and worthy of discussion. The sample essay begins with a general statement: “Learning something new can be a scary experience.” This statement introduces the subject of the essay, which is a particular learning experience the author had.
2. Body Paragraph A – The first body paragraph should support and expand upon the thesis, main idea, and/or argument presented in the introductory paragraph.
3. Body Paragraph B – The second body paragraph should further develop the idea presented in the first two paragraphs, and may introduce a second viewpoint and/or supplementary evidence to support the argument.
4. Body Paragraph C – The third body paragraph should relate to the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph, and present the final idea or evidence.
5. Conclusion – The concluding paragraph may be the most important. The writer must not merely repeat the introductory paragraph, but explain in expert-like detail what has been learned, explained, decided, proven, etc. The writer must reveal the ways in which the paper’s thesis might have significance in society. In the final paragraph of the sample essay, the author reflects on the larger meaning of the experience described. The author concludes that learning to swim helped her feel more confident about herself in other new situations, and the idea that self-confidence comes from conquering fears is something all people can relate to. This is the point of the essay.