Many types of writing follow some version of the basic shape described above. This shape is most obvious in the form of the traditional Five Paragraph Essay: a model for college writing in which the writer argues his or her viewpoint (thesis) on a topic and uses three reasons or subtopics to support that position. In the five-paragraph model, as illustrated below, the introductory paragraph mentions the three main points or subtopics, and each body paragraph begins with a topic sentence dealing with one of those main points.

**THE FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY**

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| **Introductory Paragraph**      Opening  Thesis Sentence Points 1, 2, 3  **First Supporting Paragraph**     Topic Sentence     (Point 1)    Specific evidence          **Second Supporting Paragraph**     Topic Sentence     (Point 2)    Specific evidence  **Third Supporting Paragraph**    Topic Sentence    (Point 3)    Specific evidence         **Conclusion**  Summary and/or concluding statement | Throughout history, population growth has proceeded at a rather leisurely pace, from approximately 250 million people in A.D. 1 to 500 million people by 1650. Within the past 300 years, however, our numbers have increased dramatically, doubling in ever-shortening cycles, so that by 1930, world population stood at 2 billion and a brief 48 years later, at over 4 billion. The consequences of this accelerating population growth can already be seen , and will be even more devastating in the future. If this kind of growth continues, it will result in worldwide starvation, destruction of the environment, and literally, no room to breathe.  If population growth continues at its present rate, it will put enormous pressure on world food supplies, making it difficult, if not impossible, to avoid hunger and starvation on a massive scale. Despite all the triumphs of agriculture in the twentieth century, population growth is outstripping the gains in food production. If all the food in the world were equally distributed with each person receiving the same share, we would all be undernourished. In order to feed the world's people twenty five years from now, according to one expert, the production of cereal grains mist be doubled, animal products quadrupled, and fruits and vegetables tripled. The probability of accomplishing such goals is not high, given the vagaries of weather and the difficulty of raising sufficient capital to finance such efforts.  In addition to food shortages, raid population growth will increase the contamination of the environment. The air over many large cities has become a grayish haze because of automobile exhaust and industrial pollutants; and as population grows, so will the number of automobiles and factories. And pollution of our water and land grows apace. Monstrous oil tankers now spill millions of gallons of oil into the oceans each year, factories and municipalities pour chemical and human waste into rivers, lakes, and streams. This pollution could have catastrophic effects if phytoplankton--minute, floating aquatic plants--are destroyed, since they provide 70 percent of the earth's oxygen. Destruction of the land will increase as it becomes covered with asphalt for more roads and highways, as it becomes despoiled by giant strip-mining machines in search of more coal, ans as its natural vegetation is removed to make room for more houses and refuse dumping sites. The solution to hunger and famine obviously depends on the intelligent use of the land. If we do not cherish and protect it, it will not support our current population, to say nothing of billions more.  People also have a need for space, for room to live and play. Though we might be able to feed, clothe, and house more billions, we cannot create more space for them; and limitations of space will create serious psychological problems for humanity. The more people are jammed together, the more hostile and irrational they become. Such irrationality is evidenced in the higher crime rates, the more frequently disrupted public services, and the general impersonality and lack of community in large cities. And people need recreational space too, especially if they live and work in cramped quarters. Yet, recreational areas--beaches, camping grounds, national parks, etc., are already inundated with people. What will conditions be like when the world population reaches 8 or 9 billion?  To sum up, unchecked population growth is not merely an annoying problem exaggerated by pessimists who always worry about the future. It is, on the contrary, the most serious problem humanity faces today. Hunger and starvation, environmental destruction, and increasing human tensions and irritability --these are the certain results if we are not able to solve it. | The opening draws the reader in. The thesis states the main idea advanced in the paper. The plan of development is a list of the points that support the thesis.    The topic sentence advances the first supporting point for the thesis. The specific evidencein the rest of the paragraph develops the first main point.     The topic sentence advances the second supporting point for the thesis. The specific evidence in the rest of the paragraph develops the second main point.            The topic sentence advances the third supporting point for the thesis. The specific evidence in the rest of the paragraph develops the third main point.      A summary is a brief restatement of the thesis and main points. Conclusions are final thoughts stemming from the subject. |
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**Remember, this is a very simplistic model. It presents a basic idea of essay organization and may certainly be helpful in learning to structure an argument, but it should not be followed religiously as an ideal form.**