THE FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY: developing and organizing your ideas

Introduction: Your introduction should entice your reader to read on, as well as preparing him or her to follow your discussion or argument by providing necessary, relevant, or helpful context, background, and/or information about your subject.

Names ______________________________________________________

Dates _______________________________________________________

Places _______________________________________________________

Key Terms____________________________________________________

Thesis: Your thesis should 1) present a clear statement of your argument or main idea about your subject, and 2) introduce the reasoning, examples, information, anecdotes, and/or sources you will use to support or illustrate your argument.

1) I believe __________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

(OR ________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

__________________________is true)

2) because of

#1

____________________________________________________________

#2

____________________________________________________________

#3

____________________________________________________________

Body Paragraphs: Each of the three body paragraphs of your essay should include a topic sentence or sentences that clearly signal to the reader which of your “because” statements
you are going to address. Next, the paragraph should present in detail the reasoning, anecdotes, examples, facts, statistics, or sources—in other words, the evidence—that has led you to your statement. Remember to present your body paragraphs in a logical order.

Topic sentence for body paragraph #1

___________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

Supporting points
________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

Topic sentence for body paragraph #2

___________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

Supporting points
________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

Topic sentence for body paragraph #3

___________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

Supporting points
________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

Conclusion
Your conclusion should not only remind the reader of your topic, your thesis, and your evidence, but also should ask the reader to think more deeply about your subject by addressing its implications or broader significance. If you’re stuck, ask yourself: Why should someone care about my subject? What would be different if not for my subject? What is the influence of my subject in history? What does my subject mean for the future? How does my subject relate to everyday life? How does my subject fit into a larger discussion? What lessons can be learned from my subject?