



Olivet Baptist Church

### A Basic Essay Format

A good way to approach an essay is to envision it as a Five Part project. An essay is made up of the Introduction, Three main points (the body), and the Conclusion. So it looks like this:

I. Introduction

II. Point One

III. Point Two

IV. Point Three

V. Conclusion

Of course depending on the length and breadth of your paper you may have more than three main points. However by using this structure it will make envisioning your paper easier.

#### **The Intro...**

An Introduction should answer three questions

1. What am I talking about in this paper?

By answering this question you let the reader know what the subject of the paper is. For example, if your paper were about a particular book, your answer to this question would give the title, author, and any other necessary information.

2. How am I going to talk about it?

This is where you let the reader know how your paper is organized. Here you very briefly introduce your main points or the evidence that will prove your point.

3. What am I going to prove in this paper?

This is the dreaded THESIS STATEMENT. The thesis is usually the last sentence in the first paragraph and it clearly states the argument or point you are making in your paper.

#### **The Body...**

The Body consists of everything between your intro and conclusion and it is where you discuss your three main points. A good starting place is to envision that each point is a separate paragraph (or in a long paper each point might be a section). In each paragraph you:

- Introduce your point
- Explain your point
- Give supporting evidence (this is where quotes go!)
- Explain how the point and evidence relate to your thesis

The whole point of each paragraph is to relate your point to your thesis, but it helps to spell it out clearly in at least one sentence of the paragraph.



### The Conclusion...

Basically, the conclusion restates the introduction. So just reiterate questions 1, 2, and 3. It is also helpful to trace your argument as you made it within the essay. A good way to do this is to create a proof that might look something like this:

POINT ONE+POINT TWO+POINT THREE=THESIS

OR

POINT ONE leads to POINT TWO which leads to POINT THREE therefore THESIS is true!

So, when planning your essay consider this format:

I. Introduction

A. Subject

B. Main Points

C. THESIS

II. Point One

A. Intro and explanation of point

B. Evidence

C. How point relates to thesis

III. Point Two

A. Intro and explanation of point

B. Evidence

C. How point relates to thesis

IV. Point Three

A. Intro and explanation of point

B. Evidence

C. How point relates to thesis

V. Conclusion

A. Restate subject

B. Summarize Main Points

C. Restate THESIS

(B and C can be combined into the proof)

Organization in a paper is important not only because it makes the paper easier to write, it also guides the reader through the paper. A clearly organized paper will better hold the reader's interest and convince them that your thesis is valid.