

Basic Writing Response Formats

Extended paragraph format: (perfect for responses to prompts on tests or for short writing assignments)

Parts of a good body paragraph:

1. **Topic sentence:** The very first sentence that clearly states what you are going to be arguing in the paragraph. (Avoid using I or You whenever possible)

Example: (informal writing/language)

In this paragraph, I am going to tell you why SpongeBob is not a good cartoon for kids.

Instead: (formal writing/language)

The long running children's cartoon SpongeBob is inappropriate for young children due to its fast-paced animation.

2. **Explanation sentence:** provides a detailed explanation of what your topic sentence means, or the main points that your sources will focus on. This usually means provided details about a historical person, location, or event.

3. **Evidence from your sources:** Incorporate a number of good pieces (**usually 3-4**) of evidence from sources that prove your point for this paragraph. A typical evidence sentence has the following structure: [Source name] says that [direct/indirect quote] which shows that [explanation] (in-text reference).

Example: Smith says that "Romans were cruel soldiers", which shows that Roman legionaries had a reputation for excessive violence (1977, 186).

As you incorporate your quotes, ensure you provide analysis and evaluation of your sources. Also make sure you cite all your examples from your source.

4. **Clincher:** Make a clear statement about how all the evidence you provided helps prove what you had stated in your Topic Sentence.

Example Extended Response

Example Extended Response Question:

How did the differences in Caesar's and Pompey's attitudes towards their defeated enemies effect how the Roman people reacted to the two leaders?

Example Extended Response Answer:

The difference between Caesar's clemency and Pompey's harsh punishments polarised the Roman populace, causing them to love one but hate the other. On one hand, Caesar spared the lives of the defeated Pompeian soldiers who had fought against him. His clemency was promoted throughout Italy, which increased popular opinion in Caesar's favour. Caesar himself was reported have said to Cicero, a close political ally, that such a strategy was intended to "willingly win the support of all and gain a permanent victory...grow[ing] strong through pity and generosity" (Cicero, *Atticus*, VII.11). It must be noted that Cicero demonstrated a favourable opinion towards the future dictator at that point in time, so the senator may have produced this notion on behalf of Caesar. However, the indication is that the stratagem worked and Caesar gained substantial popularity in Italy as a result. In contrast to Caesar's generosity, Pompey and the *optimates* were reputedly very harsh towards their enemies. They had announced that those who remained in Rome were to be regarded as enemies (Kamm, 2006, 106). This is confirmed by Goldsworthy, when he notes that after the victory at Dyrrachium, Pompey's commanders were allowed to mock and execute imprisoned troops in front of Caesar's army (2006, 421). The news of both Caesar's and Pompey's differing attitudes towards defeated enemies had a powerful effect on the Romans. The sharp contrast between the two policies of the two civil war generals impressed the Italians in Caesar's favour and, as a result, Pompey lost most of his popular support on the peninsula.

Taken from Website:

<https://www.historyskills.com/assessment/extended-response/>

Basic 5 Paragraph Response

Adapted from the website: <https://essaypro.com/blog/5-paragraph-essay/>

A 5-paragraph essay is the most common and basic format for a paper-based response. When writing response papers this is the basic format you will use. If an instructor asked for a longer paper this format can still be used, you would just need to add more body paragraphs in order to meet the length that is required.

Paragraph 1 – Introduction: 3-5 Sentences and contains **three basic parts**

- **Part 1- The Hook**

A hook is a 1-2 sentence bang that makes the reader want to keep on reading the entire text: rhetorical question, literary quote, joke, anecdote, metaphor, simile, a famous person saying, fact, or statistic. It is essential to check the credibility of information twice.

- **Part 2: Brief Introduction of topic including the basic background and introduction of analysis**

Here you are taking your supporting arguments and briefly introducing them to the reader without revealing too much information. This should explain your hook and transition the reader to your thesis.

- **Part 3: Thesis Statement**

Thesis Statement is an essential part of your entire essay; this is your argument. This statement will be the basis for the rest of your essay and should be written in formal language which avoids using first or second person when ever possible.

Example: (informal writing/language)

In this paper, I am going to tell you why SpongeBob is not a good cartoon for kids.

Instead: (formal writing/language)

The long running children's cartoon SpongeBob is inappropriate for young children due to its fast-paced animation and unrealistic situations.

Your thesis should be the LAST sentence of your paragraph.

Paragraphs 2,3,4- Body Paragraphs: should be three paragraphs each 5-7 Sentences long

Structure of each body paragraph

- **Topic Sentence:** first sentence of the paragraph that directly supports or relates to your thesis statement in some way. All other information in the paragraph must directly support this sentence.
- **Evidence and analysis:** This is a combination of evidence from your sources (this must have a citation) and your own ideas, analysis and explanation of the topic sentence.
- **Concluding Sentence:** the final sentence of your paragraph should tie all your information together, emphasize your point in the paragraph and provide a transition for your reader to your next paragraph.

Paragraph 5- Conclusion paragraph: Restate main points and final statements for the reader (min. of 4 Sentences)

This is taking your supporting arguments (your body paragraphs) and rephrasing the main points you made in one sentence per paragraph. This should leave the reader with what you want them to remember about your paper and should remind them of your analysis of the argument.

How to correctly cite your work

In order to avoid plagiarism, all outside information has to be cited both in text and in a works cited. There are two formats that are used either MLA (for English class) and APA (for science, math, history). The examples for just the basic evidence, please see your English teacher for extra help. Avoid using quotes that are over three lines long and make sure to use your own words to introduce provide your analysis for each piece of evidence.

Works Cited page basics

1. Do not Number entries
2. Do not separate by type – put them all together in alphabetical order
3. Each entry is like a formula (either APA or MLA) – it must be in the correct order and use the correct punctuation to be correct.
4. Do not add extra space between entries – instead create a hanging indent in order to separate entries.
5. The page should be titled Works Cited (no underlining, no excessive capitalization, no bold, no big font).

MLA Style
— Works Cited Sample —
List of all Works Cited
Include at the end of your research paper

Mathewson 12

Works Cited

“Chapter Six: The Monster.” *Stranger Things*, season 1, episode 6, Netflix, 15 July 2016. *Netflix*, www.netflix.com/watch/8921805.

Dworkin, Ronald W. “Science, Faith and Alternative Medicine.” *Policy Review*, vol. 108, no. 2, 2001, pp. 3-19. *Academic Search Premier*.

“Historical Census Browser.” University of Virginia Library, 2007. www.mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/. Accessed 6 Dec. 2008.

Robbins, Michael. “Paul Muldoon’s Covert Operations.” *Modern Philology*, vol. 109, no. 2, 2011, pp. 266-99. JSTOR, doi:10.1086/663233.

Double space. Do not add additional line space between entries.



MLA

Intext internet citation

Basic:

“Many students feel that citing evidence from websites is tedious and not needed” (Mallory 17)

With introductory hook: (try to use as much as possible as it gives your reader more information)

According to author James Mallory, from the online magazine Highlander News, he argues that “many students feel that citing evidence from websites is tedious and not needed.”

Matching works cited entry:

Electronic Sources:

Full-text article on a database such as the North Dakota State Library databases

1. name of author (last name first)
2. title of article, in quotation marks
3. title of magazine, italicized or underlined
4. publication info for the original article, including original page numbers
5. name of database (underlined)
6. name of the subscription service
7. library that subscribes to the service
8. date of access (the date you found the info)

Jones, Mallory. “Rite of Passage.” Highlander News 12 April 1995: 16- . Student Resource Center--College Edition--

Expanded. InfoTrac. WVNCC Library, New Martinsville, WV. 12 July 1998.

Website (basic)

1. name of author
2. title of work (could be the webpage within a larger website), in quotation marks
3. title of full website (if applicable), italicized or underlined
4. date of access
5. full URL, in angle brackets

Stein, Mark. “Poborsky Leaves Manchester United.” Official Manchester United Home Page. 26 June 1998

<<http://www.sky.co.uk/sports/manu>>.

APA

Intext internet-based citation

Basic:

“Many students feel that citing evidence from websites is tedious and not needed” (Mallory, 1995, p. 16).

With introductory hook: (try to use as much as possible as it gives your reader more information)

According to author James Mallory, from the online magazine Highlander News (1995), he argues that “many students feel that citing evidence from websites is tedious and not needed” (p. 16).

Or

According to author James Mallory, from the online magazine Highlander News (1995), he argues that “many students feel that citing evidence from websites is tedious and not needed” (p. 16); regardless of the fact that Mrs. Zentner gave them all the information they needed to create the citations.

Matching works cited entry:

Basic Web Site:

Jones, M.(1995, April). *Rite of Passage*. InfoTrac. **Student Resource Center--College Edition Expanded. InfoTrac .**
<https://humanparts.medium.com/laziness-does-not-exist-3af27e312d01>

From online Database article:

Jones, Mallory(1995). *Rite of Passage*. Student Resource Center – College Edition Expanded. *InfoTrac, WVCC Library* 16(2), 16-118. **<https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20105>**