

The Basic 4-Paragraph Essay Format



Following this format will help organize your essay and make it easy for the reader to follow your thoughts.



Logical & Effective

Paragraph 1 – Introduction



- Hook
- Tie-in to prompt
- Thesis statement with 2 clear reasons, including one character trait

Example of Paragraph 1



It's bedtime, so I turn the lights off. Savoring the silkiness of the sheets, I feel the shores of sleep approaching. Suddenly, a thought creeps into my mind and keeps pestering me like a fly buzzing around in my head. I'm remembering what my principal said about conducting random backpack and purse searches. **The mere thought of people pawing through my belongings bothers me so much that I am having trouble getting to sleep.** Having random backpack searches is an awful idea because it's unconstitutional and it will promote bad feelings between students and faculty.

Intro



Tie-in to prompt



Thesis Statement



Paragraph 2 – First Point

Begin with a transition and your first reason from thesis statement



- Example Transitions:
 - To begin with,
 - In the first place,
- Follow up with 6 solid sentences to support your reason
 - Use an example and either a quote or a statistic
- End with a justifier sentence (restate the main idea of the paragraph)
 - Use a justifier transition such as: Obviously,

Example of Paragraph 2



Transition

Restate 1st reason from thesis

Historical Example

Initially, backpack and purse searches are considered unconstitutional. It specifically states in the Bill of Rights that you cannot search through someone's personal property without a warrant. If this were not followed, police officers could barge in anytime they felt like it and demand to look through anyone's stuff. They could look through your valuables and look in places no man has a right to poke his nose into. Just because we're minors, doesn't mean we don't have rights; that we're not Americans! When I polled my classmates about this concept, **nine out of 10** students agreed with me (and we're not counting number ten because he's a teacher's pet.) Obviously, random backpack and purse searches go against the very foundation of this wonderful country we live in.

Statistic

Justifier Transition

Justifier sentence - persuasive

Paragraph 3 – Second Point

Begin with a transition and your second reason from thesis statement



- Example Transitions:
 - Additionally,
 - Equally important,
- Follow up with 6 solid sentences to support your reason
 - Use a **different type of** example and a quote or a statistic
- End with a justifier sentence (restate the main idea of the paragraph)
 - Use a justifier transition such as: Clearly,

Example of Paragraph 3



Restate 2nd reason from thesis

Transition

In addition, these random searches would promote a bad feeling between students and faculty members. A perfect example of this would be if a teacher suddenly decided to conduct a random search in class. Let's say that one kid in the class doesn't like another kid in there. All the first kid would have to do is slip something wrong into the second kid's backpack and WHAM! Instant expulsion! The kid who was expelled would then resent the teacher for initiating the search. Anyone would be thoroughly insulted if someone thought they were smuggling drugs or carrying weapons if they weren't. The accused would never look at the accuser the same way again, always remembering that time, and vice versa. People who saw and heard about it as well would feel differently toward the accused and would probably show contempt toward the individual. People need to remember, "What you do in life comes back to you tenfold." Basically, don't just look for bad in someone by trying to find something wrong. This negative energy will just bring bad to you. Clearly, random backpack and purse checks will spawn mistrust and anger.

Personal Example

Quote

Justifier Transition

Justifier sentence - persuasive

Paragraph 4 – Conclusion



- Re-state thesis in 2+ sentences
- Tie-back to hook from intro
- Complete introduction



Example of Paragraph 4

Restate Thesis Statement

Overall, spot checks are a bad decision because they go against the very foundation of this country and our constitution. Also, the mistrust that will be spawned between students and faculty members will be almost impossible to overcome. The last words of my principal echo in my head and I can't help but think of how very wrong he is. I turn over in my bed and try to get comfortable. Tomorrow I'll go speak to the principal and make him see reason. Hopefully now I can fall asleep!

Tie-back to intro

Conclude

Here's another example!



This essay written by Stephanie begins with a quote introduction.



Example of Paragraph 1

Quote

Transition & Explanation

Jackie Hans, my best friend, once told me, “The mall is an immense Jamba Juice smoothie of culture.”

By this she means the mall is jam packed with different stores, various cultures, and more styles of clothes than you can imagine.

This teen mecca is a place where everyone can go to get whatever they need to

express themselves. A person’s clothes style reflects his or her personality in that it shows what the person likes and illustrates their family’s culture.

Tie-in to prompt

Thesis Statement

Example of Paragraph 2



Transition

Restate 1st reason from thesis

Entertainment
Example

To begin with, most of the time it is easy to tell what a person likes just by the type of clothing he or she wears. If I spotted someone dressed completely in black with a lip ring and heavy eye liner, a good guess is that they fancy hard rock and heavy metal bands like Slipknot and Pantera . The quickest way to find out is if they're wearing a t-shirt with the band's logo on it. You can also tell about someone's hobbies by the way they're dressed. **Four out of five students** who were wearing a soccer jersey were on a soccer team (the other guy was just a huge fan). Obviously, this all adds up to how a person's style of dress illustrates what they are into.

Statistic

Justifier Transition

Justifier sentence

Example of Paragraph 3



Transition

Restate 2nd reason from thesis

Equally important, culture can affect how someone dresses. For an example, recently I read a book entitled The First Day of School. It was about a young girl from South Africa named Kufasse Karni. She had just left her tiny village near Capetown and was on her way to Washington D.C. to live with her Aunt Mable. Kufasse was to attend a public school in that district. On her first day, she went dressed in her traditional clothing, while the rest of her class was attired in a t-shirt and jeans. Kufasse stood out majorly. Some of her fellow classmates discriminated against her because she wasn't wearing the latest styles. On the other hand, some were fascinated by her colorful dress and her strong accent. I've always been intrigued by what other cultures wear. My mother has always told me, "Embrace differences in others if you want them to do the same for you." Basically, treat others with the same respect you want given to you. Every culture deserves respect. **As one can see**, heritage and culture does have influence on the way a person dresses.

Literary Example

Quote

Justifier Transition

Justifier sentence

Example of Paragraph 4



Restate Thesis Statement

In a nutshell, a person's clothes choices reflect his or her personality in that it shows what they are into in life. Also, the family's culture is often represented by their choice of clothes.

Jackie Han was definitely right. The mall is filled with random people who are all searching for the perfect outfit. I think I'll go and join them and find something for myself.

Conclude

Tie-back to intro