

## THE CLASSIC FIVE PARAGRAPH SOCIAL STUDIES ESSAY

### 1. State your opinion.

#### A. First sentence: set the stage!

- Provide the background. Answer basic questions so the reader knows what the essay is going to discuss: Who? What? Where? When?

#### B. Next, state the problem.

- What is the problem? How is it a big deal? Why is this important to discuss?  
*So what?*

#### C. Then, provide your answer to the problem. In other words, give your **thesis statement**!

- The thesis is a 1-2 sentence answer to the problem you just presented.
- It answers *Why?* and/or *How?*
- This is the **MOST IMPORTANT PART** of the entire essay! The thesis is *the answer* to the prompt *in your opinion*. If your thesis statement fails to answer the prompt, the rest of your paper is a series of facts adding up to NOTHING.

#### D. Finally, preview the evidence.

- The rest of your essay exists *only* to convince readers that your thesis is true.
- Prove your answer is right by explaining the thought process you took to arrive at your answer. In broad terms, provide a map of the route your paper will take by laying out the major pieces of evidence which prove your thesis.
- Thesis = Evidence A + Evidence B + Evidence C

### 2. Discuss Evidence A

- Topic Sentence: Explain how Evidence A connects back to your thesis.
- Provide several (at least three) *details* about Evidence A that help prove your point.
- Transition Sentence: Say something that Evidence A has in common with Evidence B.

### 3. Discuss Evidence B

- Topic Sentence: Explain how Evidence B connects back to your thesis.
- Provide several (at least three) *details* about Evidence B that help prove your point.
- Transition Sentence: Say something that Evidence B has in common with Evidence C.

### 4. Discuss Evidence C

- Topic Sentence: Explain how Evidence C connects back to your thesis.
- Provide several (at least three) *details* about Evidence C that help prove your point.

### 5. Wrap it up.

- The conclusion should contain no new information!
- Readers have short-term memories. Remind them what Evidence A, Evidence B, and Evidence C were again (one sentence each).
- Tell the reader how your analysis of Evidence A, Evidence B, and Evidence C led you to conclude that your thesis statement answers the problem.

