Writing the Five-Paragraph Essay

- Body Paragraphs
  Will include explanations/examples/illustrations of **three** points of the thesis statement. (“Illustrations” can take the form of “for example,” “for instance,” or “such as” sentences.)

  Must include **compound** and **compound-complex** sentences.
  - (compound: contains at least two independent clauses)
  - (complex: contains independent clause and at least one dependent clause)
  - (compound-complex: contains at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause)

  Need to have **correct word endings** (“ly” on adverbs, “ing” or “ed” on verbs when needed, etc.).

  Need to use correct subject-verb agreement, and use **pronouns** properly.

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- The following will contribute to a **failing essay**: incorrect or missing word endings; subject-verb disagreement; improper use of pronouns; sentence fragments; more than one or two comma splices; an **illegible** (unreadable) essay; or an unclear thesis statement.
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Sample of first body paragraph:

I have lived in a big city before, and while there were many things that were convenient about living there (I could walk to work, there were many restaurants close to my office building, and there were lots of things I could do in my spare time), I did not enjoy the crowded conditions that are typical of cities. When it was raining, for example, I would try to take a bus instead of walking to work—but so would many other people. Sometimes three or four buses would pass my bus stop before one arrived that had room for new passengers. Also, if I needed to stop at the grocery store on my way home, there were always lines at the cash register. I was never comfortable living in a place surrounded by so many other people.

Concluding paragraph

Should not begin with the words “In conclusion” because it implies that the discussion of the topic is completely finished, which is not true. You could, for example, probably come up with two or three more points to discuss in additional body paragraphs.

Can use “As a result” or another transition for the last paragraph of the essay. The transition must, however, be one that fits in with what you’re writing.
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• Sample concluding paragraph

The conditions I’ve mentioned about big-city life (crowding, safety issues, and higher cost of living) caused me to want to live in a smaller city or town. While I don’t regret the experience of having lived in a large city, I am happier living where I am now. I can still take advantage of the good things a city has to offer by living in a smaller place that is still within driving distance of a larger city.

Writing the Five-Paragraph Essay

• Using a two-part title

A college essay usually has a two-part academic title. It offers the reader a title and a subtitle. Title and subtitle are separated by a colon. An example—

Big-City Life: It’s Not for Me