

## UNIT 5

### Lesson: *The Basic Essay Form and Historical Figure Essay (Part 1)*

#### 5.1 Learning Objectives

- A. To understand the five-paragraph form.
- B. To understand the form and development of thesis statements and path statements.
- C. To know the importance of a planning outline.
- D. To understand and employ one scheme and one trope.
  - 1. Apposition
  - 2. Metonymy
- E. To write a historical essay in five-paragraph format.

#### 5.2 The Five-Paragraph Essay Form

The basic style of essay is a five-paragraph form. Useful in many instances, it serves as a pattern for learning the parts of an essay. Later, you will learn to alter this form in order to present topics in a variety of ways.

The five-paragraph essay begins with an introductory paragraph that opens the subject and presents the contention, called a **thesis**. This is followed by three paragraphs referred to as the “body.” Each body paragraph explains different evidence in support of the thesis. Finally, a concluding paragraph summarizes the material presented and closes the essay. The following outline demonstrates how these sections fit together:

##### 5A - Five-Paragraph Essay Outline

Introduction paragraph	Body paragraph #3
Attention getter	Topic sentence
Narrowing statements	Supporting material
Thesis statement with plan of attack	Concluding sentence
Body paragraph #1	Conclusion paragraph
Topic sentence	Thesis restatement
Supporting material	Restate body paragraph #1
Concluding sentence	Restate body paragraph #2
Body paragraph #2	Restate body paragraph #3
Topic sentence	Conclusion or appeal
Supporting material	
Concluding sentence	

Although simple, this form contains the primary components of most academic essays: thesis, supporting information, summation. In reality, this essay form is simply an expansion of the paragraph form learned in *Level One*: topic sentence, supporting points, concluding sentence. The topic sentence becomes the thesis within the introductory paragraph. Each supporting point becomes a topic sentence for a body paragraph. The concluding sentence expands to become a concluding paragraph.

Succeeding lessons will discuss the introduction and conclusion paragraphs in more depth. For now, we will take a closer look at the thesis statement and body paragraphs in preparation to begin this unit's essay.

### 5.3 Thesis Statements

#### A. Thesis Statement (Proposition)

The thesis statement, also called the proposition, is a single sentence that contends something about the subject. Consequently, present the contention in the affirmative (positive) rather than the negative, whenever possible.

Negative Statement: *Bumble Bee Park is not a pleasant location for a family outing.*

Affirmative Statement: *Bumble Bee Park is a poor location for a family outing.*

#### B. Perspective

The contention stated in the thesis must be clear. While this may seem simple, many students have difficulty limiting the perspective to a simple, straightforward contention. They often create a weak thesis with mixed assertions such as the following:

*Bumble Bee Park possesses many positive and negative attributes.*

Mixing assertions is not an appropriate strategy. The product of the above thesis will be very confusing and rather boring to the reader. So what if the park has positive and negative attributes? The same is true of almost anything. It is best to present either the positives or the negatives. A thesis like the one above is a “non-thesis” since it takes no real position.

A short illustration might help clarify this issue. Imagine a defense attorney walking into a courtroom and saying, “Your Honor, my client is both guilty and innocent.” Some student “attorneys” try to soften their contentions by using even more ambiguous wording: “Your Honor, my client is a little bit guilty and a little bit innocent.” Clearly, such an approach is not going to impress a judge.

**A thesis is also called a proposition.**

**Thesis:  
A single sentence that contends something about the subject.**

The overall goal of an essay must be to defend a specific contention. Just as the attorney must take a stand, so the writer must decide on a clear perspective and then defend that position. Therefore, thesis statements used in this course will work best when narrowed to a single proposition.

### C. Defending an Assigned Position

Sometimes students struggle because they do not agree with an assigned position. Using the park example from above, perhaps the student thinks Bumble Bee Park is a fine place for a family outing. However if the assignment calls for showing that the park is a poor location for families, the student takes the assigned position and honestly addresses problems with Bumble Bee Park. A writer's job in such instances is to set aside personal bias and articulate the necessary point of view.

Defending a position that you do not hold can result in positive outcomes. Articulating an opposing position can actually equip you to defend your own point of view more adequately. Once the points of the opposition are thoroughly understood, you can more accurately counter those arguments.

### D. The Plan of Attack

Propositions may contain more than just a statement of position. Often the thesis statement includes a list of the body paragraphs' general topics. Instructors call this list a plan of attack, supporting points, or a path statement. For example, the writer could expand the previous statement about Bumble Bee Park in the following way:

*Bumble Bee Park is a poor location for a family outing due to its unkempt condition, its poor location, and its attraction to drug dealers.*

As a book's table of contents indicates a book's arrangement, the path statement conveys the essay's order. Thus, the first body paragraph in this instance will discuss the park's condition. The second body paragraph will discuss the locale. Finally, the last body paragraph will address the influx of drug dealers to the park. Using this strategy, the writer creates a mental outline for the reader.

### E. Avoiding Superlatives

Consider another important point regarding thesis statements. The contention should not be in the superlative. "Superlative" means describing something as the very best or the very worst, absolutely and

**A plan of attack is the part of the thesis statement that lists the essay's content.**

**Superlative:  
Presenting  
something as  
the highest or  
lowest, best or  
worst.**

with no exception. Because a thesis statement establishes a burden of proof, a thesis written in the superlative may set the threshold of proof too high. For example, the following claim would be extremely difficult to prove in a simple essay:

*William Shakespeare was the best playwright that ever lived.*

What would it take to prove this thesis statement? The writer must prove it by comparing Shakespeare with every other playwright who ever existed on this earth. Naturally, this would take far more than a single essay, or even a single book. Why? This is because evidence would have to show Shakespeare better than all others. A more workable thesis would be:

*William Shakespeare was a great playwright.*

This thesis would be provable. Certainly, one could gather sufficient information that would serve as evidence to prove him great. Another example might be in order since this is such a common error of students.

Not Supportable: *The Olive Garden is the best restaurant in Portland.*

Supportable: *The Olive Garden is an excellent restaurant as evidenced by its great service, affordable prices, and delicious food.*

or

*The Olive Garden is an excellent restaurant.*

When crafting a thesis, think carefully before using the words: best, greatest, worst, biggest, most wonderful, most horrible, and so forth. If you use these, you must compare the one with all others in that category. As the above examples demonstrate, you must be certain to narrow the thesis statement or contention to an appropriate scope. You, the writer, must consider carefully the provability of a thesis within the assigned length of an essay.

## **F. Standard Patterns of Thesis Statements**

Thesis statements fit into some basic patterns. Of course, thesis statements may go beyond these patterns, but it is here that we must begin. In order to explain these patterns, we will use letters and numbers to represent components in the thesis.

1. A is 1. (No plan of attack given.)

Examples: *Adolph Hitler was a tyrant.*

*Steven proved to be an innovator.*

2. A is 1 based on  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ . (Plan of attack given.)

Examples: *Adolph Hitler's tyranny is shown by acts of genocide against Jews, the murdering of those who opposed him, and the invasion and repression of other sovereign countries.*

*Steven proved to be an innovator in his approaches to advertising, customer service, and employee relations.*

3. A is 1, 2, and 3. (Plan of attack given.)

Examples: *Adolph Hitler was a genocidal tyrant, murderer, and oppressor of many people.*

*Steven proved to be a man of innovation, of great character, and of lasting impact.*

4. A, B, and C, are 1. (Plan of attack given.)

Examples: *Hitler, Stalin, and Lenin each acted tyrannically.*

*Steven, Art, and Tim each demonstrate impeccable character.*

5. A, B, C are 1 based on  $x$ . (Plan of attack given.)

Examples: *Hitler, Stalin, and Lenin were tyrants as evidenced by the murder of those who opposed them.*

*Steven, Art, and Tim have proven themselves to be advertising innovators because sales have increased so significantly.*

6. A, B, and C are 1 based on  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ . (Plan of attack given.)

Examples: *Hitler, Stalin, and Lenin were all tyrants as evidenced by acts of murder, suppression of opposition, and oppression of sovereign nations.*

*Steven, Art, and Tim are innovators in advertising, in customer service, and in employee relations.*

Several of the sample thesis statements above contain lists of evidence. These lists make up the plan of attack for each essay, establishing the order in which the items are to be discussed. Sample 6 requires a very complex manner of development. One could discuss “A” using evidence “x,” “y,” and “z.” Then discussion of “B” and “C” would follow in the same manner. On the other hand, one could discuss “x” as it applies to “A,” “B,” and “C.” Then development of “y” and “z” would follow the same pattern. Remember that when you include a list, it determines the paper’s development.

## 5.4 Body Paragraphs

A five-paragraph essay contains three body paragraphs that present the facts and arguments in support of the thesis. You will develop these paragraphs just like the paragraphs taught in *Level One* of this course with one small difference. Almost without exception, each body paragraph should begin with a transition to lead the reader smoothly to each new idea.

Likewise, optimal arrangement of body paragraphs enhances an essay’s flow and persuasiveness. A common strategy is to have the first body paragraph present the second strongest argument, the second paragraph detail the weakest argument, and the third body paragraph explain the strongest argument, leaving the greatest impact last in the reader’s mind. However, the essay topic could require paragraphs arranged in a chronological or spatial order. Ultimately, you will decide, within parameters given by your instructor, which organization gives your essay the greatest impact.

## 5.5 Importance of the Planning Outline

The need for a well-developed outline cannot be over-emphasized. In complex writing, an outline becomes an essential tool for arranging key ideas logically and for remaining on topic. Therefore, you must precede each composition with a planning outline. This is not optional!

Furthermore, a planning outline must contain thorough detail. Often, students’ outlines are too general. As a result, they struggle to fill their papers with meaningful ideas that truly support their positions and that fit together well. The hard work of writing occurs at the outline stage. A fully developed planning outline will contain every point expressed in the final essay, from major topics to supporting points to examples to minor details. Then, the writing of the essay becomes relatively easy. Simply convert the thoughts in the outline to complete sentences. Then, polish wording, add transitional phrases, and insert the required literary devices. So, make a plan, and then follow that plan. (See a sample planning outline in Diagram 3C on page 29.)

***A well-developed planning outline is essential for producing a strong essay.***

## 5.6 Figures of Speech

*Put That in Writing — Level One* introduced the use of literary devices, also called figures of speech. For this course too, you will be required to include some figures of speech in your essays.

Figures of speech fall into two categories: schemes and tropes. **Schemes** involve variations in patterns or arrangement of words, letters, sounds, sentence structure, or word order. The schemes learned in *Level One* included: parallelism and alliteration. **Tropes** involve veering from the common or usual meaning of a word. The tropes you studied included metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, understatement, and rhetorical question. Naturally, you should use the figures of speech you already know. Additionally with each essay in *Level Two*, you will learn new schemes and tropes.

The figures of speech to employ in this lesson's essay are apposition (scheme) and metonymy (trope). Study the definitions and examples of their use in the following chart since you will either use them in this unit's essay or create separate samples as instructed in the daily assignments.

### 5B - Figures of Speech

Scheme - variations in pattern	
Apposition:	The use of words, phrases, or clauses side by side in a sentence, and the second modifies the first. This is also called an appositive.  <u>Examples:</u> <i>Her neighbor, <u>Dorthell</u>, is a trusted friend.</i> <i>Dorthell, <u>her neighbor</u>, is a trusted friend.</i> <i>Dorthell, <u>who is her neighbor</u>, is a trusted friend.</i> <i>It was time for the family's cat, <u>Snowflake</u>, to find another home.</i> <i>It was time for Snowflake, <u>the family's cat</u>, to find another home.</i> <i>It was time for Snowflake, <u>which was the family's cat</u>, to find another home.</i>
Trope - variation in meaning	
Metonymy:	Using a representative word to stand for another in its concept, idea, or attributes  <u>Examples:</u> <i>The guilty verdict came down from the bench. (Bench stands for judges.)</i> <i>The Crown thanks citizens for their support during this difficult time. (Crown stands for the monarch.)</i>

**Schemes:**  
variations in  
patterns or  
arrangement of  
words, letters,  
sounds,  
sentence  
structure, or  
word order.

**Tropes:**  
Veering from  
the common or  
usual meaning  
of a word.

## 5.7 Writing about a Historical Figure

Your assignment for this unit is to write an essay about a historical figure. This means that you will write about someone who actually lived, not a fictional character. Because the subject is a real person, the historical figure essay is generally classified as informative. However, you must still take a position about the person and write more than a simple biographical sketch. To produce a proper historical figure essay, apply the following guidelines:

### A. Analyze the Person

First, it is imperative to distinguish between a biographical report and an academic essay. A biography generally helps the reader become more knowledgeable about the person. Alternatively, the purpose of an academic paper is to convince the reader to accept your contention. Therefore, your thesis must state a clear position about him or her. The goal here is to analyze the person using circumstances or actions as evidence. This week's sample essay about Thomas Edison should serve as an example of the expectations for this composition. Below are a number of possible thesis statements regarding Edison and others:

#### 1. Biographical Report (not acceptable):

- *Thomas Edison was an inventor.*
- *George Washington was the first president.*
- *Helen Keller was blind and deaf.*

#### 2. Academic Essay (acceptable):

- *Thomas Edison's lack of character showed in his personal life and work life.*
- *Thomas Edison's perseverance resulted in great success in his life.*
- *Edison's anti-social behavior alienated others.*
- *Edison's supreme work ethic is what brought him out of poverty.*
- *While Edison learned to be more social, he never quite fit into society.*
- *With his innovations, Edison won wealth and admiration.*
- *George Washington played a pivotal role in the establishment of the U.S.A.*
- *George Washington led this nation with honor during very difficult times.*
- *Helen Keller overcame great challenges to become a successful spokesperson for those with disabilities.*
- *Helen Keller lived a life of great impact.*

### B. Maintain Formality

Secondly, you must refer to the historical figure in a formal manner since this is an academic essay. When writing about Thomas Edison, do not refer to the inventor as "Tom" or "Thomas." Rather, call him

“Thomas Edison,” “Mr. Edison,” or “Edison.” However, you are not limited to only these three choices. Other appropriate wording such as “the imaginative lad,” “the aspiring inventor,” or “this creative genius” may also be used. This is where a mastery of vocabulary and sentence variety plays a critical role.

### **C. Set Appropriate Scope**

Finally, consider the essay’s length. Since you are writing an essay with only three body paragraphs, the scope must be limited. If the essay bogs down into endless details, the scope of the thesis may be too broad. On the other hand, if you find yourself repeatedly making the same point, the scope is probably too narrow.

## **5.8 Creating the Essay – The Essay Writing Process**

Creation of an essay will follow a typical process. You will be able to produce a strong composition by giving attention to the following steps:

### **A. Topic**

1. Narrow from general category to specific topic.
2. Conduct preliminary research for ideas.

### **B. Audience**

Determine your target audience.

### **C. Purpose**

Determine if this essay is to inform or persuade.

### **D. Perspective**

Brainstorm possible contentions regarding the topic based on preliminary research.

### **E. Working Thesis**

1. Select a perspective and form a tentative thesis.
2. Draft rough outline by arranging researched ideas into logical discussion order. Then decide:
  - a. Does this information support my thesis?
  - b. Is this information adequate?
  - c. Is more research needed?
  - d. Should this thesis be changed?
3. Finalize working thesis if evidence is sufficient.

### **F. Detailed Research**

1. Research the topic.
2. Select specific source material for support of thesis.
3. Collect quotes, summaries, paraphrases, and statistics to use.
4. Gather proper information for citing research.

**G. Planning Outline**

1. Create a detailed outline of essay.
2. Ensure logical order and flow.
3. Ensure all points are explained by supporting details. Include examples and background information at appropriate points.

**H. First Draft**

1. Follow planning outline.
2. Include source material.
3. Properly introduce and follow-up quotes, explaining how they support the contention.
4. Include proper citations.

**I. Subsequent Drafts**

1. Fill holes in supporting information and expand explanations.
2. Add interesting style.
3. Add figures of speech.
4. Create “References” page.
5. Create introduction and conclusion.

**J. Final Draft**

1. Edit and polish rough wording and transitions.
2. Cut extraneous wording.
3. Add interesting style.

## Addendum - Unit 5

### Example Historical Figure Essays

*(Note: Formatting is not entirely according to APA Style.)*

#### Example #1:

Thomas Edison 1

#### Thomas Edison: Achieving Against the Odds

Visionary. Idealist. Overcomer. These seem to be key traits of all inventors. For some inventors though, idealism and success did not result in great renown. Who remembers Mary Anderson for inventing the windshield wiper? Walter Hunt for the safety pin? Or Joel Houghton for the dishwasher? (Bellis, 2006). For others, the visions and persistence resulted in fame. Among those whose efforts led to achievement and renown are Benjamin Franklin, Cyrus McCormick, Isaac Singer, Louis Pasteur, and Alexander Graham Bell (Bellis, 2006). Another successful inventor was a man who struggled against significant odds. That man was Thomas Edison. Fortunately, Edison's perseverance resulted in great success in his life.

#### Troubled Childhood

As a young lad, troubles followed Edison. His natural curiosity frequently brought severe discipline his way. According to an Edison biographer named Wise (Wise, 1933), one windy day the boy tried to start a fire in a pile of leaves. When the wind blew out the fire, Edison moved his fire-starting efforts into a nearby barn. Sure enough, the barn caught fire and burned to the ground with neighbors barely able to save the livestock from inside. For this, the young inventor's father dragged the boy to the village square where the elder Edison beat his son with a leather belt. Humiliated, the six-year-old walked home past onlookers convinced that he was a dunce (Wise, 1933). School proved to be another area of difficulty for this young boy. While other children sat quietly in the classroom, Edison became bored, ran around the room, stared out the window, or drew sketches. As a result, institutional schooling lasted only three months. His teacher believed that Edison was "dull" or "retarded." This label was likely reinforced by the boy's partial deafness. To all appearances he did not receive direction or information in socially accepted ways (Wise, 1933). Additionally, Cousins (1965), another biographer, tells how Samuel Edison, Thomas's father, did not bring home a regular income for the family, so finances were tight. To earn spending money, the young Edison worked selling papers and candy at the local train station (Cousins, 1965). He worked hard at this and other ventures to provide for himself.

Thomas Edison 2

However, Edison's lot was not to remain dismal for long.

#### Edison Finds Direction

Thanks to his training at home and to his own curious nature, Edison's fortunes began to change as he grew older. Under his parents' direction, the young man became well versed in grammar, mathematics, history, and science. He also grew to love science as he studied works by Isaac Newton and Michael Faraday. Edison taught himself telegraphy, earning him a job as a roving telegrapher (Josephson, 1979). As creative ideas coursed through his brain, his knack for correcting problems with others' inventions surfaced. His improvements, for instance, led him to create the Edison Universal Stock Printer which brought him instant wealth of \$40,000 (Josephson, 1979). In 1874, he also designed the quadruplex telegraph machine which again brought acclaim (Josephson, 1979). This gift of inventing and improving began to change his future significantly.

#### Success at Last

By his 30's, Edison's fortune changed completely for the better. Again, the biographer, Josephson (1979), tells how his financial successes enabled Edison to build a scientific laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey. Here, he employed numerous specialists in the fields of clockmaking, machining, and mathematics to assist him in his endeavors. Since most inventors of the time worked alone, hiring these people was truly innovative. Moreover, the strategy allowed Edison to produce multiple inventions and to apply for even more patents each year. Routinely producing or improving inventions of one sort or another became the norm. Edison improved upon Bell's telephone by including a carbon transmitter (Josephson, 1979). Subsequently, inventing the phonograph established his reputation both nationally and internationally. Based on that renown, Edison received advance funding to create a quality incandescent light bulb. Confidence in his creative abilities led the scientist to announce in advance that he would create such a bulb. "Edison boldly announced that he would invent a safe, mild, and inexpensive electric light that would replace the gaslight in millions of homes..." (Josephson, 1979, p. 309). While the incandescent light bulb had been conceived by others, Edison improved on their ideas. He found carbon to be a suitable element for making the filament. These were the inventor's best years as he generated his own inventions or enhanced others'. He became highly respected in all circles in spite of his difficult beginnings.

The many challenges that young Thomas Edison faced did not deter him from pursuing and achieving great success. Behavioral problems, disciplinary problems, and financial problems could

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have proved genuine roadblocks for the lad. In spite of these difficulties, Edison applied himself to learning and to hard work. Reaching adulthood, the inventor excelled in his scientific pursuits, producing numerous innovations of his own and improvements to creations of others. Motivated individuals should be an inspiration to us all. Like Edison, we would do well to face our difficulties as he did.

Thomas Edison 4

## References

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**Example #2:**

Benjamin Franklin 1

## Benjamin Franklin, Improving and Shaping America

George Washington. Noah Webster. Thomas Edison. These great men all positively impacted America. As a great military leader and president, George Washington helped his country gain independence from England. Noah Webster aided society by writing the *Blue-Back Speller*; he also wrote America's most famous dictionary. Thomas Edison created the light bulb, phonograph, and other useful inventions. However, one man in particular greatly affected our nation in all of these areas. Benjamin Franklin profoundly affected early America through his inventions, his role in the formation of this nation, and his investment in his local community.

## Franklin the Inventor

To begin, Benjamin Franklin affected America through his inventions. One of his creations was the lightning rod. Its chief purpose was to prevent homes from catching on fire when struck by lightning. To accomplish this, a metal rod was attached to the top of the house. Wires were

Benjamin Franklin 1

then connected to the rod and made to travel down the side of the house and into the ground; thus, when lightning struck the rod, the electricity was conducted through the wires and harmlessly into the earth (Stewart, 1992). Another invention of Benjamin Franklin was a new and improved stove that later came to be named after him. During that time, the stoves did very little to warm the house; most of the heat escaped through the chimney. In order to better circulate the heat throughout the entire house, Benjamin Franklin created a firebox inside an exterior box. When the firebox became hot from the fire, it caused air to circulate through the exterior box, resulting in heat spreading more efficiently throughout the whole room (Stewart, 1992). In addition to the lightning rod and Franklin stove, this genius inventor, who continually sought to make things better, created other beneficial instruments. He introduced the bifocals that enabled one to clearly see objects both close and far away with a single pair of glasses instead of two. Another helpful tool, the odometer provided a means of calculating distances traveled. By attaching it to a wagon wheel, one could tell approximately how far he had gone (Stewart, 1992). These are only a few of Franklin's many inventions, and he continued to produce many more. It was because of his constant desire to improve and make things easier that Benjamin Franklin was able to help shape America (Stewart, 1992).

#### Franklin the Diplomat

Another avenue through which Benjamin Franklin made a difference was in his part in the beginnings of this nation. During one of the first major American conflicts, the French and Indian War, Franklin strived to unify the colonies. As a delegate to the Albany Congress, he proposed a strategy that he believed would lead the colonists to victory. The plan set forth a centralized government, which could more efficiently organize military defenses (Stewart, 1992). Continuing to serve his country, Benjamin Franklin greatly helped America leading up to and throughout the Revolutionary War. Before the major conflict ensued, this loyal patriot represented the colonies in England as chief diplomat for nearly twenty years. "During the Revolutionary War, he represented the colonies in France, where his diplomatic finesse helped persuade the French government to support the colonists' struggle against England" (St. John, 2003). Amazingly, this influential politician was also the only man to have signed the first four American documents: the *Declaration of Independence*, the *Treaty of Peace with Great Britain*, the *Treaty of Alliance with France*, and the *Constitution* (Lowman, 1983). Clearly, Franklin played a big part in American politics and is rightly said to have embodied "the spirit of the new nation" (St. John, 2003).

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## Franklin the Citizen

In addition to his numerous inventions and assistance to this country, Franklin also greatly served his local community. For instance, he set about to reform the lackluster police system. Before changes were made, "each ward had one constable, or police officer, and he, together with a few townspeople chosen each night, walked nightly rounds" (Stewart, 1992). If one desired to get out of his watch duties, he could pay six shillings a year and be free from his job. Determined to make the system better, Franklin proposed a tax on the citizens, based on how much property each person owned. The tax money would then go to supporting a full-time police force (Stewart, 1992). Another project started by Franklin was the paving of the streets of Philadelphia; this made them cleaner and better for travel (Stewart, 1992). In addition, he also formed a library, fire department, numerous schools, hospitals, and even a garbage removal system (Lowman, 1983). Amazingly, this Renaissance man did not stop there. Through his various writings, he entertained and informed his readers with wise words and witty sayings (Lowman, 1983). *Poor Richard's Almanac* and the *Pennsylvania Gazette* are just two examples of his many great works (Lowman, 1983). Through all of these acts and services, Benjamin Franklin helped to better his neighborhood.

Obviously, this heroic figure had a profound impact on America. His innovative spirit and constant desire to improve current inventions led him to create many new devices, making life safer and easier. His leadership aided our nation in gaining its independence and helped to set a foundation for future growth. Lastly, he greatly contributed to his community by reforming the police system, establishing schools and hospitals, and through many other beneficial actions. Because of a selfless desire to serve his country, Benjamin Franklin influenced America for generations after him. What are you doing to serve your country?

Benjamin Franklin 4

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## UNIT 5

### *The Basic Essay Form and Historical Figure Essay (Part 1)*

## Daily Assignments

### ----- Exercise 1 -----

#### A. Reading Assignment:

*Read the complete Unit 5 Lesson. Be certain that you understand the basics of a standard essay and the objectives of this unit's assignment.*

#### B. Lesson Assignment:

*On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions in complete sentences:*

1. In a basic 5-paragraph essay, what establishes the purpose or contention?
2. What is a plan of attack?
3. Why should a writer avoid using superlatives in writing?
4. What are schemes?
5. What are tropes?
6. What three guidelines does this chapter establish for developing a proper historical figure essay?

### ----- Exercise 2 -----

#### Writing Assignment:

*Using research materials that you gathered in Unit 4, begin the process of creating this essay:*

1. *Narrow your topic from general to specific based on your preliminary research.*
2. *Know the audience. The audience for your essay will be your instructor and your peers.*
3. *Establish a purpose. The purpose is to inform. However, your essay must still present a clear position about the subject.*
4. *Choose a perspective*
  - a. *Write words, phrases, or even clauses describing the person. See if they fall into logical or creative groupings.*
  - b. *Brainstorm possible ways to discuss the subject.*
5. *Establish a contention*
  - a. *Choose a strong idea from your lists of words, phrases, clauses, or other ideas, write a tentative thesis.*
  - b. *Organize the logical categories of your research into a rough outline. Be realistic. Will the information be adequate to prove your assertion about the subject? If not, then consider another possible position for your essay.*
  - c. *Draft a more concrete working thesis statement.*

----- Exercise 3 -----

**Writing Assignment:**

*Conduct detailed research. Gather appropriate source materials that support your thesis statement. What quotes, summaries, paraphrases, or other information will you use? Also, gather proper data for creating APA Style citations. To review instruction on research, documentation, and proper citation of sources, see Unit 4 and Appendixes B, C, and E.*

----- Exercise 4 -----

**Writing Assignment:**

1. *Using the source materials that you identified in Exercise 3, proceed to develop your planning outline.*
  - a. *Organize your key ideas and your research into a thorough planning outline. Detail your entire essay – thesis, topic sentences, supporting points, and supporting details – in the order it will be written.*
  - b. *Review topic sentences, supporting points, and supporting details.*
    - (1) *Ensure optimal arrangement of body paragraphs.*
    - (2) *Re-arrange supporting points and details as necessary to create a smooth logical flow.*
  - c. *Avoid leaving unsupported contentions.*
    - (1) *Explain them all. Most students under-explain.*
    - (2) *One to three examples should be sufficient to prove each point.*
    - (3) *To see a strong planning outline sample, refer to page 29.*
2. *Submit this planning outline to your instructor for evaluation and correction.*

----- Exercise 5 -----

**Writing Assignment:**

1. *Based on your instructor's feedback correct your thesis statement or planning outline as needed.*
2. *Following your planning outline, draft the first body paragraph.*
  - a. *Do not worry about perfect wording at this time.*
  - b. *Write a strong topic sentence supporting your thesis.*
  - c. *Keep supporting points and supporting details topical, proving the contention of the topic sentence.*
3. *Include source material and proper in-text citations.*
  - a. *Do not let the source material do the talking for you.*
  - b. *Properly introduce any quotes that you include.*
  - c. *Explain to the reader how the sourced evidence supports your contention.*

----- Exercise 6 -----

**Writing Assignment:**

1. *Following your planning outline, draft the second body paragraph.*
  - a. *Don't worry about perfect wording at this time.*
  - b. *Write a strong topic sentence supporting your thesis.*
  - c. *Keep supporting points and supporting details topical, proving the contention of the topic sentence.*
2. *Include source material and proper in-text citations.*
  - a. *Do not let the source material do the talking for you.*
  - b. *Properly introduce and follow-up any quotes that you include, explaining to the reader how the quote supports your contention.*

----- Exercise 7 -----

**Writing Assignment:**

1. *Following your planning outline, draft the third body paragraph.*
  - a. *Don't worry about perfect wording at this time.*
  - b. *Write a strong topic sentence supporting your thesis.*
  - c. *Keep supporting points and supporting details topical, proving the contention of the topic sentence.*
2. *Include source material and proper in-text citations.*
  - a. *Do not let the source material do the talking for you.*
  - b. *Properly introduce and follow-up any quotes that you include, explaining to the reader how the quote supports your contention.*
3. *This week's figures of speech must be added to the body paragraphs between now and Exercise 4 of Unit 6. If you cannot fit the devices into your paper, write two sample sentences using each assigned figure, and submit them with your final essay in Unit 6.*

----- Exercise 8 -----

**Writing Assignment:**

1. *Print a copy of your thesis and three body paragraphs for editing. Now that you have the main ideas on paper, you must make certain to word them in a way that the reader understands. Learning to correct your mistakes on the written page is just as important as doing it on a computer screen.*
2. *With the following questions in mind, read your body paragraphs thoughtfully. See if you can find any more errors in logic, grammar, or documentation and mark corrections on the paper. Re-word sentences for improved phrasing, transitions, and clarity.*
  - a. *Does my essay mirror my planning outline?*
  - b. *Is my thesis position clear? Have I avoided creating a simple factual report by taking a strong position and defending that position?*

- c. Does my chosen thesis accurately fit the assignment?
  - d. Have I worded the topic sentences in a manner that supports the thesis?
  - e. Have I worded the supporting details so that they support each topic sentence?
  - f. Are the supporting details fully explained?
  - g. Have I used transitions to connect my ideas?
  - h. Do I have proper documentation for all specific facts in the paper?
  - i. Have I used research properly?
  - j. Is the information in the essay accurate?
  - k. Do I give the reader an innovative or interesting look at the subject?
3. Advanced option: As you edit your paper, consider if a well-placed three- or four-word sentence would add punch at a key point in the paper. Sometimes inserting a short direct statement adds very effective emphasis. You may utilize this strategy in any of the essays in this course.
  4. Rewrite your body paragraphs, making all necessary changes.

----- Exercise 9 -----

**Writing Assignment:**

1. This time read your thesis and body paragraphs aloud. Listen for problem areas. Also, look for ways to change your presentation and make the material more appealing to the reader.
2. Create a draft “References” page in APA Style to submit with your paragraphs in Exercise 10. Each source listed should correlate to your in-text citations from the body paragraphs.

----- Exercise 10 -----

**Writing Assignment:**

1. Make certain that your name is at the top of the paper and that the assignment is double-spaced, and has one-inch margins. (In Unit 6, you will create a title page, add page numbering, and finalize formatting in APA style for final submission.)
2. Be certain to keep an additional copy of the thesis statement, body paragraphs, “References” page, and planning outline since you will edit the components once again in Unit 6 as you add the introduction and conclusion.
3. Submit to your instructor:
  - a. Completed Lesson Assignment from Exercise 1.
  - b. Writing Assignment work:
    - (1) Thesis statement and body paragraphs
    - (2) “References” page draft
    - (3) Planning outline for essay