5-PARAGRAPH ESSAY STRUCTURE – VISUAL OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

→ Hook (general statements, quotes, pop culture references, personal anecdote, …)
   “Modern human society has to deal with many serious problems, such as crime, poverty …”
→ Narrowing of your topic (move from general information towards more specific ideas)
   “One of the most persistent problems for communities has been the management of trash…”
   (Especially for research papers: provide additional background info about the topic, special terms, definitions, etc.)
   “Recycling is a publicly funded program that turns trash into usable materials…”
→ Thesis Statement (states main idea of essay, suggests topic for each body paragraph, has parallel structure)
   “Recycling programs should not be funded because (1) they are ineffective, (2) cost too much money, and (3) disturb the peace in the community.”

BODY PARAGRAPHS

→ Topic sentence (overview over the first main argument/supporting point)
   “One reason for why recycling programs should not be funded is that they are ineffective.”
→ Explain topic sentence (rephrase and/or provide important background info)
   “A publicly funded program must achieve its stated goal; if this is not the case, then they should be eliminated.”
→ Provide evidence (use sources, logical arguments, or personal anecdotes)
   “According to John Skolnick in his article Trash is Bad Business, most recycling programs fail to turn less than 10% of trash into recyclable materials.”
   “In other words, recycling programs fail to produce useable materials that…”
   (if applicable) provide second piece of evidence
   “In his book Recycling – A Myth, author Daniel Steeler provides more evidence for why recycling is not living up to its promises.”
→ Concluding remark (Sum up the main idea of the paragraph)
   “Therefore, recycling programs are not effective and should not be funded…”

→ Repeat as above, covering your next supporting point

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CONCLUSION

→ Wrap up your paper with a review of the main supporting points, or the general idea
   “In summary, recycling programs are not worthwhile public projects because they are ineffective, consume excessive amounts of resources and cause disturbances in the community.
→ Move away from the specifics of your paper (make general statements, provide brief suggestions for alternatives, suggest future paper topics, or return to the way in which you opened your introduction)