

Sample Five-paragraph Essay

Note to Students: The following essay is single spaced to condense the format for online viewing. Typically in college courses essays are double spaced with a header indicating the students last name and including automatic page numbering. The header is preceded by information that includes the student's name, the professor's name, the course number and section number, and the date. To see a copy of the following essay in the MLA format, please [CLICK HERE](#). To learn how to set up the document format for the essay, please [CLICK HERE](#).

In the following essay, notice that the opening paragraph builds to a thesis sentence, which states the main idea that the next three paragraphs explain and support. This thesis statement becomes the controlling idea of the entire essay. All paragraphs are unified around this controlling idea. The fifth paragraph concludes by emphasizing the main idea. The thesis statement is marked in blue, and the topic sentences of each development paragraph are marked in green. Notice that the topic sentence provides the main idea for the development paragraph. Notice also that the topic sentence makes a logical transition from the preceding paragraph.

Each year, thousands of people throughout the United States choose to spend their vacations camping in the great outdoors. Depending on an individual's sense of adventure, there are various types of camping to choose from, including log cabin camping, recreational vehicle camping, and tent camping. Of these, tent camping involves "roughing it" the most, and with proper planning the experience can be gratifying. **Even with the best planning, however, tent camping can be an extremely frustrating experience due to uncontrolled factors such as bad weather, wildlife encounters, and equipment failures.**

Nothing can dampen the excited anticipation of camping more than a dark, rainy day. Even the most adventurous campers can lose some of their enthusiasm on the drive to the campsite if the skies are dreary and damp. After reaching their destination, campers must then "set up camp" in the downpour. This includes keeping the inside of the tent dry and free from mud, getting the sleeping bags situated dryly, and protecting food from the downpour. If the sleeping bags happen to get wet, the cold also becomes a major factor. A sleeping bag usually provides warmth on a camping trip; a wet sleeping bag provides none. Combining wind with rain can cause frigid temperatures, causing any outside activities to be delayed. Even inside the tent problems may arise due to heavy winds. More than a few campers have had their tents blown down because of the wind, which once again begins the frustrating task of "setting up camp" in the downpour. It is wise to check the weather forecast before embarking on camping trips; however, mother nature is often unpredictable and there is no guarantee bad weather will be eluded.

Another problem likely to be faced during a camping trip is run-ins with wildlife, which can range from mildly annoying to dangerous. Minor inconveniences include mosquitos and ants. The swarming of mosquitos can literally drive annoyed campers indoors. If an effective repellent is not used, the camper can spend an interminable night scratching, which will only worsen the itch. Ants do not usually attack campers, but keeping them out of the food can be quite an inconvenience. Extreme care must be taken not to leave food out before or after meals. If food is stored inside the tent, the tent must never be left open. In addition to swarming the food, ants inside a tent can crawl into sleeping bags and clothing. Although these insects cause minor discomfort, some wildlife encounters are potentially

dangerous. There are many poisonous snakes in the United States, such as the water moccasin and the diamond-back rattlesnake. When hiking in the woods, the camper must be careful where he steps. Also, the tent must never be left open. Snakes, searching for either shade from the sun or shelter from the rain, can enter a tent. An encounter between an unwary camper and a surprised snake can prove to be fatal. Run-ins can range from unpleasant to dangerous, but the camper must realize that they are sometimes inevitable.

Perhaps the least serious camping troubles are equipment failures; these troubles often plague families camping for the first time. They arrive at the campsite at night and haphazardly set up their nine-person tent. They then settle down for a peaceful night's rest. Sometime during the night the family is awakened by a huge crash. The tent has fallen down. Sleepily, they awake and proceed to set up the tent in the rain. In the morning, everyone emerges from the tent, except for two. Their sleeping bag zippers have gotten caught. Finally, after fifteen minutes of struggling, they free themselves, only to realize another problem. Each family member's sleeping bag has been touching the sides of the tent. A tent is only waterproof if the sides are not touched. The sleeping bags and clothing are all drenched. Totally disillusioned with the "vacation," the frustrated family packs up immediately and drives home. Equipment failures may not seem very serious, but after campers encounter bad weather and annoying pests or wild animals, these failures can end any remaining hope for a peaceful vacation.

These three types of camping troubles can strike campers almost anywhere. Until some brilliant scientist invents a weather machine to control bad weather or a kind of wildlife repellant, unlucky campers will continue to shake their fists in frustration. More than likely, equipment will continue to malfunction. Even so, camping continues to be a favorite pastime of people all across the United States. If you want camping to be a happy experience for you, learn to laugh at leaky tents, bad weather, and bugs, or you will find yourself frustrated and unhappy.

You can also write an essay like this one that maintains a clear sense of purpose and clear explanation from beginning to end. You will have to practice to develop this skill, but you can write effectively if you remember to state a main idea, support it with relevant reasons and examples, and emphasize your main point in your conclusion. You will also need to understand that almost no one can write an essay without several drafts or revisions. The reason is that a person cannot always think of what to say and how to say it at the same time. Revision is necessary to make sure that paragraphs provide enough explanation and that they are arranged in a logical order.

- For help with revising your essay, please [CLICK HERE](#). **Note:** This document explains further the thesis sentence, introductions, conclusions, and logical organization. You will also find links to help you check your work for grammar, punctuation, and spelling.