Five-Paragraph Essay Format        (*The Triangle Page*)

I. The **Introductory Paragraph** begins with general statement about the world, life, people, etc.  It becomes more specific until the last sentence in the paragraph is the *specific* thesis (central point or idea) to be proven in the essay.  (The paragraph starts broad or general and comes to a definite point.)  Basic information about the book, name of author, and central characters should be included in the introductory paragraph.

II.  **Body Paragraph #1** starts with a clear topic sentence that states your first reason in support or defense of your thesis statement.  For example, if my thesis was "Lady Macbeth is actually a witch and none other than a fourth weird sister"  then my first sentence in my first paragraph could be, "Witches traffic with evil spirits and Lady Macbeth boldly seeks to be possessed by such spirits."  The rest of this paragraph will provide examples and support of this topic sentence.

*Clincher/Transition sentence:*The last sentence of each body paragraph should be a clincher for the paragraph.  (To form a clincher, include two or three key words from the topic sentence and restate the essential idea of the topic sentence.)  As you get more confident in writing essays, you may also use your clincher sentence to lead into the next paragraph somehow.  For example "Such a fearless approach to the dark spiritual world could only be typical of a witch; yet this is only the beginning of Lady Macbeth's sinister ways.”

III.  **Body Paragraph #2** states the second point in support of the thesis and develops that point throughout the paragraph.   Of course, this body paragraph ends with a clincher/transition sentence.

IV. **Body Paragraph #3**  states the third point in support of the thesis statement and develops that point throughout the paragraph.   Usually this is your strongest point, saved for last.  The paragraph ends with a clincher/transition sentence.

V. This final **Concluding Paragraph** begins with a restatement of your thesis.  By restating your thesis you need not use such words as "in conclusion" since your reader will recognize the end of your essay from the restatement of your thesis.  This paragraph is in some ways an inversion of your opening, introductory paragraph.  Also, in one or two sentences remind your reader of your major points in support of your thesis.   Then make sure you answer the "so what?" question in this paragraph.  Why is your thesis important?  What relevance does it have to the life and world of your reader?  Try to conclude with force and power and some idea of why your point is important or compelling.

Remember: Never say “I.”

Many thanks to Ole Anderson,  my eximious Shakespeare instructor at Washington State University.