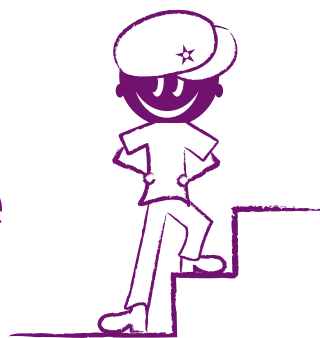


# Step-by-Step Guide to the 5 Paragraph Essay



1

## STEP

Read **the question** carefully, and identify the topic, the issues to be addressed and the **instructions**.

- Ask yourself **“What am I being asked to do?”**
- For example, the assignment says, *“Most young people these days own a mobile phone. What do you think may be some of the advantages and disadvantages to owning a mobile phone? Give reasons for your opinion.”* The **topic** is “mobile phones”, the **issue** is “What are the advantages and disadvantages of owning one?”, the **instructions** are to write about both advantages AND disadvantages, with supporting evidence (reasons) for your ideas.
- If unsure, talk it through with someone, get them to explain it in a way that makes more sense to you, have a chat about the “surface” and “deeper” meanings.
- **You need to really understand the question before moving on.**

2

## STEP

On a blank sheet of paper, write a brief answer to the question in **ONE SENTENCE**. For example:

*“Mobile phones are a fact of life for everyone these days, and the best thing is that you can keep in touch with your friends, but a bad thing is that they cost a lot to run.”*

This helps you to form a **statement** of your thinking, which will be useful when you start the actual writing.

3

## STEP

### PLANNING:

**Argument essay:** List 3 points that support your argument.

This may be a list of the 3 sources that you are going to use, or 3 points for an argument (e.g. about the effect of mobile phones on the world’s economy). This depends entirely on your essay topic.

**Discussion essay:** List 2 points supporting the issue, 2 points against.

**Explanation essay:** List 3 factors related to the topic.

Then write a **“statement” sentence** about each point. These will become the first sentences (topic sentences) of each main paragraph.