

The Body Paragraphs

In the five-paragraph essay, the body consists of the three middle paragraphs. In these paragraphs, you explain or prove your thesis. Each paragraph focuses on one main point. This point is expressed in a topic sentence. Each paragraph also contains details or examples that support that point. Finally, each paragraph has a concluding sentence.

Look at how this works for an essay based on the thesis statement, “**Cats make better pets than dogs, because they are cleaner, quieter, and more cuddly.**” The body of the essay contains three main reasons that support this thesis. These reasons were previewed in the thesis statement:

- **cleaner**
- **quieter**
- **more cuddly**

Each of these reasons forms the basis of a topic sentence for a paragraph in the body of the essay.

- Cats are clean animals, which makes them easy to care for.
- Cats are usually very quiet.
- Most cats love to be petted and cuddled.

Each of these topic sentences must be developed with supporting points and details or examples to make a complete paragraph. You now need to prove that cats are clean, quiet, and cuddly.

Here is how the body of this essay might read. (In the first paragraph, the different elements have been labeled for you.)

Cats are clean animals, which makes them easy to care for. [topic sentence] From an early age, they learn to wash themselves, and they do this with great regularity. [supporting point] Their owners do not normally need to bathe them. Dogs need to be bathed, and this can be quite a difficult undertaking. Many dogs dislike being bathed and they struggle against it. When they are wet, they shake and spray water all over the place. Keeping a cat’s fur clean is much easier. [details, examples, description] Cats can be easily trained to use a litter box. [supporting point] This keeps the mess covered and in one place. Changing the litter is quite simple and quick, and no smelly packages are left all over the yard. [details, examples, description] For someone who likes a clean pet, a cat is the better choice. [concluding sentence]

Cats are usually very quiet. Who has not been annoyed on occasion by a dog's incessant barking? This is not a problem with cats. Cats normally make very little noise, and, even if they do meow, it is not nearly as loud as a bark. Cats do purr, but that is a quiet, pleasing noise. Unlike dogs, cats rarely disturb the neighbours. They are quieter pets than dogs.

Most cats love to be petted and cuddled. This is the most enjoyable part of having a cat as a pet. A cat will curl up in its owner's lap and sleep there quite happily. Except for very small dogs, a dog does not normally cuddle up on a lap. Dogs are not as nice to pet, because they often leave an obnoxious doggie smell on one's hand. This is not a problem with cats. There is nothing like curling up with a good book and a sleepy cat.

Notice that each topic sentence is developed with two or more supporting details. Each paragraph focuses on its topic and helps to prove the main thesis of the essay in some way.