I. Introduction
   A. Interest the reader in the topic by doing any of the following:
      1. Capture attention
      2. Provide a background: a history, a problem, a context or a setting
      3. Ask probing questions
   B. Express the reason for writing: the thesis statement (see II. below)

II. Thesis Statement
   A. Location: Usually placed as last sentence of 1st paragraph
   B. Purpose: To show what the essay will be about and why.
   C. Contains:
      1. The topic to be addressed: Topic should be clearly defined and narrow enough to be afforded depth of consideration; may also include main points to be examined within that topic or provide structure for the evidence to follow.
      2. Argument: the assertion (claim) conveying your point of view. Declares the central message of or lesson for the essay; in other words, it answers the question, “Why is this important?”

III. Body
   A. Purpose: Separation of main points of discussion and details to support argument. Each paragraph focuses on one sub-point of thesis and is supported by details
   B. Development: Use a (1) topic sentence—a general statement that sums up the main idea of that paragraph. The paragraph then should (2) explain that idea, (3) exemplify and support the idea, (4) analyze the support and the idea, (5) and synthesize (unite) the idea with the thesis.
   C. Forms of “support”
      1. Explanations/Analogies/Narration
      2. Examples and/or Description (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, movement)
      3. Definitions; Classifications
      4. Causes (Background) and Effects (Results)
      5. Facts: Statistics, Research, Names, Dates
      6. Procedures or sequences of steps
      7. Comparison and Contrast
      8. Critical thinking: Analysis and/or synthesis

IV. Conclusion
   A. Purpose: Create balance with the introduction, and unify the sub-points of body
   B. Content: Synthesis (summary) of key points; rephrasing of thesis in light of the evidence; show the reason for writing. Answer the question, “Why should the reader care?”
Once you know your topic, you may want to create an informal outline as follows (note that you may have as many body supporting sections [subtopics/points] as is needed to support your thesis):

Keyword for Topic: ______________________________________
Subtopics: (1) ______________________________________ (2) ______________________________________
(3) ______________________________________ (4 or more) ______________________________________

I. Thesis Statement: ______________________________________

II. Sub-point #1: ______________________________________
   Supporting details
   A. ______________________________________
   B. ______________________________________
   C. ______________________________________
   Add additional supporting details if needed.

III. Sub-point #2: ______________________________________
    Supporting ideas:
    A. ______________________________________
    B. ______________________________________
    C. ______________________________________

IV. Sub-point #3: ______________________________________
    Supporting ideas:
    A. ______________________________________
    B. ______________________________________
    C. ______________________________________
    Add additional supporting details if needed.

V. Sub-point #4: ______________________________________
   Supporting ideas:
   A. ______________________________________
   B. ______________________________________
   C. ______________________________________
   Add additional supporting details if needed.

Any further sub-topics (points) continue same pattern on additional sheet.

V. Concluding thought/lesson: _______________________________

The complete essay will contain:
- A clear thesis statement with clearly expressed subtopics
- Developed (Substantial) paragraphs
- Topic sentences for each body paragraph
- Supporting information for each subtopic
- Analysis and Synthesis
- A conclusion that unifies the essay