Elements of the Essay

Outline

Introduction  Write four or five sentences to introduce your topic.
It is usually best to have general sentences, rather than specific examples in the introduction. The final sentence in the first paragraph is the Thesis Statement. This statement (sentence) tells the reader the scope of what you intend to present (argue). You may have three aspects of a topic that you are going to explore: Topics A, B, and C.

Paragraph 2  The topic sentence will relate to Topic A.
Support for the statement made in the topic sentence of this paragraph needs to be provided.
• Support, evidence and development of aspect one of Topic A.
• Support, evidence and development of another aspect of Topic A.

Topic Sentence for Topic A:
• Development and Support:
  1.
  2.
  3.

Paragraph 3  The topic sentence related to Topic B.
• Development and Support:
  1.
  2.
  3.

Paragraph 4  The topic sentence related to Topic C.
• Development and Support:
  1.
  2.
  3.

Paragraph 4  The Conclusion
This last paragraph summarizes and integrates the information presented in the essay.
Sample Formal Outline

The College Application Process

I. Choose Desired Colleges
   A. Visit and evaluate college campuses
   B. Visit and evaluate college websites
      1. look for interesting classes
      2. note important statistics
         a. student/faculty ratio
         b. retention rate

II. Prepare Application
   A. Write Personal Statement
      1. Choose interesting topic
         a. Describe an influential person in your life
            i. favorite high school teacher
            ii. grandparent
      2. Include important personal details
         a. volunteer work
         b. participation in varsity sports
   B. Revise personal statement

III. Compile Resume
   A. List relevant coursework
   B. List work experience
   C. List relevant coursework
   B. List volunteer experience
      1. tutor at foreign language summer camp
      2. counselor for suicide prevention hotline

NOTE
I, II, and III are the main ideas; they are equal in scope and importance

A and B are subordinate to or parts of the main ideas. But A and B are equal to each other.

1 and 2 are subordinate to A and B, and again are equal to each other.