When it comes to writing essays in college, we all need a place to start. Think of the five-paragraph essay as just that. Some students may find this to be a simple process, while others may spend a greater amount of time understanding this basic building block of college writing. Whatever the case, use the following guidelines to strengthen your knowledge of this preliminary essay format. Five-paragraph essays are incredibly useful in two situations — when writers are just starting out and when a writing assignment is timed.