

Sample Structure of an Essay

Using James Baldwin as Example

Introduction/Introductory Paragraphs (What I Intend to Describe/Prove/Show/Convince You of (etc.))

Thesis Statement(s): James Baldwin is known as one of the most eloquent voices of the civil rights era (roughly, 1955 to 1970). In this essay, I will demonstrate the ways that Baldwin earned this reputation. I will do so by examining the following writings: *The Fire Next Time*, *Another Country*, and *Going to Meet the Man*. I will also touch upon other of his writings to supplement my arguments and observations.

Next . . .

The Supporting Paragraphs (“Argument” or the Place You Make Your Case)

- In *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin discusses . . .
- We can see in this essay that . . .
- Another thing that can be observed is Baldwin’s essay is . . .
- Note what Baldwin says regarding the Black Muslims (quote) . . .
- So in *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin’s eloquence is clearly demonstrated, along with his commitment to a larger vision of brotherhood and sisterhood, as noted in its closing paragraphs (quote)
- In *Another Country*, we see in the novel form another attempt to . . .
- In *Going to Meet the Man* . . .

Concluding Paragraph(s) (So, Now You Should See Why I Am Right)

I have shown, through a discussion of just several of James Baldwin’s works, that Baldwin was indeed entitled to his reputation as one of the most eloquent voices of the civil rights era. Had we the time and space to demonstrate this further . . .