

**THE FIVE FINGER PARAGRAPH®  
AND  
THE FIVE FINGER ESSAY**



Written and Illustrated  
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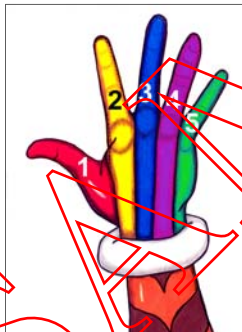
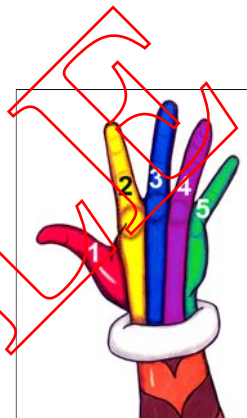
**HomeSchool/HomeStudy Student Edition**  
Grades K-12

# THE FIVE FINGER HAND



**A Hand.**

**Five Fingers.**



**Five Fingers on the Hand.**

Make a *list* of the fingers on the hand. Here is a list of the fingers on the hand: **1**, **2**, **3**, **4**, and **5**.

All of the sentences in a paragraph are about one topic (one idea), such as Space or Dogs or Japan or Cats.

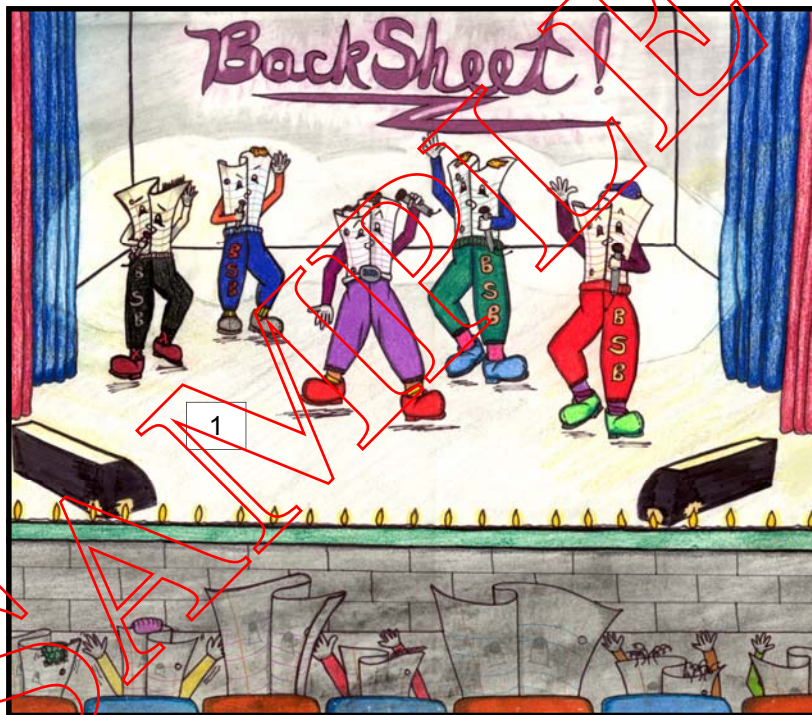
This group of sentences, called a paragraph, is about Baseball.

This picture about baseball is one of my favorites. Can you name the three left-handed players? The umpire is safely hidden behind the catcher. The home team had a lot of runs in the sixth inning. It's wonderful that baseball is the American National Pastime!



Practice with the pictures on the next few pages. There are three sentences beside each picture. Each sentence can become a paragraph.

Use picture number 1 as an example. Let's write a paragraph about this picture of a *BackSheet Boys Concert*.



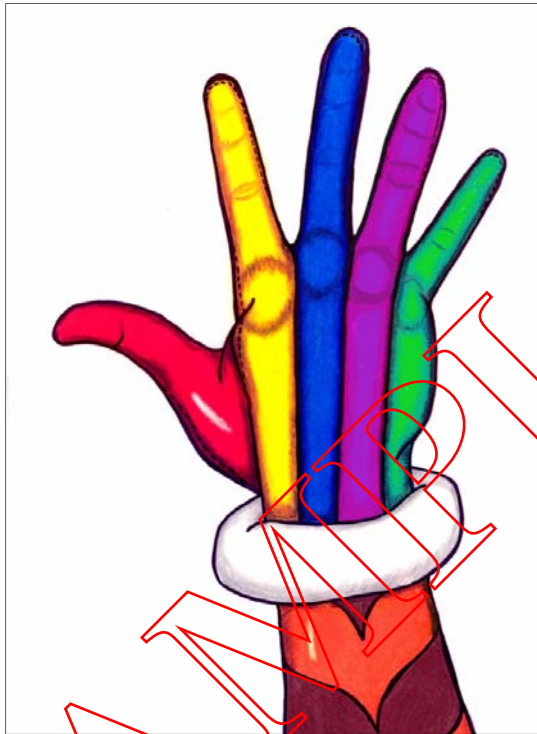
- (1) Name all the loud things.
- (2) What are the blue items?
- (3) What is made of paper?



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## THE FIVE FINGER PARAGRAPH<sup>©</sup>

The Five Finger Paragraph<sup>©</sup> is a formula, a blueprint, or a recipe for how to “build” a paragraph correctly. The Five Finger Paragraph<sup>©</sup> is as simple as having (or imagining you have!) five fingers on one hand.



Human beings are almost the only animals on earth with truly “opposable” thumbs. Only the great apes, Old World monkeys, and human beings have thumbs that will allow them to “grasp” an item, by placing the thumb “opposite” the fingers. The other primates have thumbs, but theirs are not truly “opposable.” Those animals cannot make an “O” with a thumb and any other finger on that hand. Even the great apes and

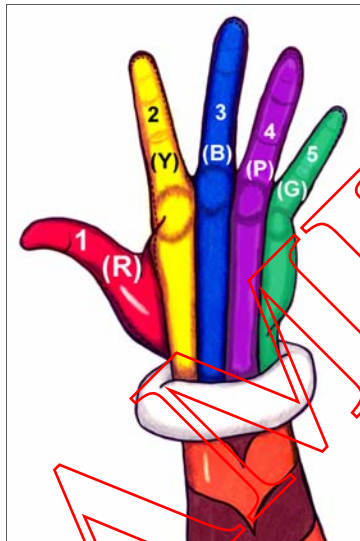
Old World monkeys can’t make much of an “O” with their thumbs and fingers.

Your thumb **is** “opposable,” which means that it can be placed “opposite” or “opposing” the other fingers. Touch your thumb to your index finger, middle finger, ring finger, or pinky finger and you are “counting off” the different varieties of ice cream, for instance, that you ate at the fair. Without your thumb, you couldn’t make those motions. So, ***your thumb is the most important finger on your hand!***

The problem with a vacation in Hawaii is that you never want to go back home!

So. Here's our perfect paragraph. (R, Y, B, P, G,). Let's put it all together.

The Hawaiian Islands are the best place in the world to take a vacation. The climate is practically perfect every day. The people are friendly, helpful, and waiting for your tourist dollars. Most of the "sights to see" (volcanoes, beaches, palm trees, mountains, etc.) are within easy driving distance. The problem with a vacation in Hawaii is that you never want to go back home!



And there we have it. Five Fingers, Five Sentences. We have a Red Sentence (R), a Yellow Sentence (Y), a Blue Sentence (B), a Purple Sentence (P), and a Green Sentence (G). Remember those letters. They are important. RYBPG. 1-2-3-4-5 will become your best friends when you write paragraphs. And RYBPG will become your best friends when you write Essays!

A fun way to remember the letters is in a mnemonic (a "trick" that makes something easy to remember) called an acronym (a "word" made up of the first letters of each of the words in a phrase). Try these.

R — Read

Y — Your

B — Books!

P — Prevent

G — Gloom!

R — Relish

Y — Your

B — Best

P — Pail of

G — Garbage!

R — Remember,

Y — You're

B — Blowing

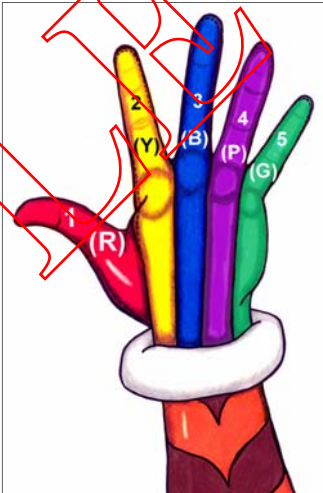
P — Purple

G — Gum!

## ANOTHER FIVE FINGER ESSAY (The “List First” Plan)

Now, we’re going to write another Five Finger Essay, this time from another point of view. Same essay, different topic, written from a different direction. This may help you when you have to write an essay with a lot of facts but without a main topic sentence. Don’t forget to refer to Appendix I and Appendix II for a better idea of how this will look.

Allright. You’re in class and the teacher writes the assignment on the board. It’s that dreaded essay! She gives you a choice of two topics – Abraham Lincoln’s young life or Thomas Jefferson’s young life. You have to pick which one you want to write about. You think about it for a minute, realize that today’s his birthday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, and writing about Lincoln on his birthday might impress her. So you’re writing about Lincoln.



Now what? Well, think about all the things you’ve read about Abe Lincoln. **First**, make a list of all the things you know about Abe Lincoln, in any order, just as you think of them. **Second**, look at all the items and see if you can make at least three categories out of the items. **Third**, group those items together. These *grouped* items are the ones you’ll use as your “describing paragraphs,” the ones in the middle of the essay between the topic paragraph and the summary paragraph. With this method, you write (or plan to write) the middle paragraphs first (the **yellow – Y** the **blue – B**, and the **purple – P** paragraphs). Then go back and write a topic paragraph (**red – R**) at the beginning and a summary paragraph (**green – G**) at the end of the essay.

had an older sister and a younger brother  
father remarried when he was 10  
father lost land because of improper registration

**formal schooling for less than a total of one year in his life  
was more or less self-educated, reading borrowed books by fire-  
light**

his stepmother encouraged reading and learning

**Abe plowed fields at an early age  
Abe learned to use an axe proficiently, splitting logs  
Abe was honest and hardworking  
piloted a flatboat down the Mississippi River as his first paid job**

saw slaves for the first time as they were marched past his father's farm in  
Kentucky

Next is the **purple (P)** paragraph about Abe's work during child-  
hood. Items are plowing, working with the axe, honest and hard-  
working, and piloting a flatboat.



born in Kentucky on February 12, 1809  
moved to Indiana at 7  
mother died of "milk sickness" when Abe was 9

**was tall and gangly as a teenager**

attended a lot of different schools  
formal schooling for less than total of one year in his life  
was more or less self-educated, reading borrowed  
books by firelight

had an older sister and a younger brother

his father remarried when he was 10  
his father lost land because of improper registration

his stepmother encouraged reading and learning

Abe plowed fields at an early age  
Abe learned to use an axe proficiently, splitting logs  
Abe was honest and hardworking  
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## Five Finger Paragraph<sup>®</sup> Writing Format

**R 1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Y 2** \_\_\_\_\_

**B 3** \_\_\_\_\_

**P 4** \_\_\_\_\_

**G 5** \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE