1. **Your thesis** is the first step. It is what your essay is going to be about.

**My thesis:** Durango is the best town because there are so many activities; as a result, I am outside having fun every weekend.

(We will write an introduction paragraph later.)

2. You need **3 reasons** to prove your thesis. These will become your **body paragraphs**.

**My reasons:**

* Hiking
* Winter sports
* Water sports

3. Look at your first reason. Turn that topic into a topic sentence.

**My first reason as a TS:** One of the best things to do in Durango is **hiking** because there are so many places to go that you’d never have to hike in the same place twice.

4. Now, come up with **3 concrete details** (facts, things you’ve experienced, seen, heard) to explain your first reason.

**My CDs about hiking:**

* Hiking La Plata canyon
* Hiking Animas City Mountain Trail
* Hiking Cascade Creek

5. Turn your CDs into complete sentences.

**My CDs in complete sentences:**

* My autumn hike in La Plata Canyon offered some of the best views I’ve ever seen.
* I hike Animas City Mountain Trail after school because it is very close to home.
* I have seen the best waterfalls during a hike on Cascade Creek trail.

6. Just like the perfect 11-sentence paragraph, each CD needs **2 commentary (CM) sentences** (ideas, opinions, beliefs, feelings). These make it more personal and interesting to read.

**My CDs with CMs added:**

* My hike in La Plata Canyon offered some of the best views I’ve ever seen.
	+ The 6 mile hike up to Kennebec Pass was long, but totally worth it because we could see the colors change across the land below us.
	+ We hiked up the road, which made the long hike easier than an ordinary trail.
* I hike Animas City Mountain Trail after school because it is very close to home.
	+ I like to get a little bit of exercise after a long day of teaching.
	+ The switchbacks are difficult at first, but the rest of the trail is easy and offers really great views of Durango below.
* I have seen the best waterfalls during a hike on Cascade Creek trail.
	+ In August, the trail is amazing because everything has grown so lush and beautiful.
	+ There are so many plants and berries around that I’m always on my guard for bears on the trail!

7. Now that you have your outline, form your sentences into a well-flowing paragraph with **transitions -** look for these in gold!

**My first body paragraph:**

**(TS)** One of the best things to do in Durango is **hiking** because there are so many places that you’d never have to hike in the same place twice. **(Transition)** To start, **(CD)** My hike in La Plata Canyon offered some of the best views I’ve ever seen. **(CM)** The 6 mile hike up to Kennebec Pass was long, but totally worth it because we could see the colors change across the land below us. However, **(CM)** we hiked up the road, which made the long hike easier than an ordinary trail. **(CD)** I also hike Animas City Mountain Trail after school because it is very close to home. **(CM)** I like to get a little bit of exercise after a long day of teaching. The switchbacks are difficult at first, but the rest of the trail is easy and offers really great views of Durango below. Finally**, (CD)** I have seen the best waterfalls during a hike on Cascade Creek trail, which is one of my favorite hikes near Durango. **(CM)** In August, the trail is amazing because everything has grown so lush and beautiful. **(CM)** There are so many plants and berries around that I’m always on my guard for bears on the trail! **(CS)** With all of the amazing places to go hiking in and around Durango, I know that I have something amazing to do every weekend!

8. Your final step is to add a conclusion (CS) that restates what you said in your TS and offers something new for the reader to think about!

**Repeat steps 3-8 for your other two body paragraphs!**