

The student's name is first, followed by the name of the teacher or professor, the course name or number, and the date of the essay.

This MLA formatted essay has 12-point Times New Roman font throughout. **The date order is day, month, and year (with no commas).**

All lines are double-spaced, and **all** margins are set to 1".

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Mrs. Sperry
Cultural Literacy 501
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The "Insert Page Number" feature of the word processor is used to put page numbers on each page. The **student's last name** is typed in front of the page number so that it will appear on every page. (For handwritten essays, students should ask for their teachers' preferences.)

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The title states the writer's topic and position. The title is centered and written in 12-point Times New Roman font. The title is **NOT** bolded, underlined, or italicized. There are no extra line spaces above or below the title.

Religion: A Positive Force in Humanity's Evolution

How have humans progressed so far since the dawn of their existence? They have advanced because of their need to feel that they are an important part of the universe. A careful examination of given sources reveals that religion is the foundation upon which civilizations have been built. **Religion has been a positive force** in human progress because it has allowed humans to advance **intellectually, socially, and culturally.**

First, religion has had a positive impact on humanity's intellectual progress because religious organizations began and have maintained institutions of higher education. According to the article "Oxford University," by the Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, Oxford University has held the highest reputation for scholarship and instruction for centuries, and it is one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the world. It was established in England, and, according to the article, the university "gained added strength" from the establishment of "several religious orders." The university's teachers and students have contributed to humanity's progress. Examples of contributors are the astronomer Edmond Halley, the physicist Robert Boyle, and political leaders who went on to become prime ministers. Certainly, religion has given humanity a positive push to develop intellectually, and religion continues to motivate those who wish to learn more about humanity's place in the universe.

The **introduction** begins with a **question.**

The question is answered (**non-specifically**) in a sentence or two, providing background information.

The **thesis statement** ends the paragraph, **stating the topic, the writer's position, and three supporting points** for the writer's position.

Second, religion has had an immensely positive effect on social development within families, communities, and countries. The article "Investigation of the Relations between

The first body paragraph begins with a sentence starting with the word **First**. It is followed with a restatement of the **topic and position**, then the **first supporting point** of the thesis, ending with the word *because* and an idea which supports the first point.

The second body paragraph begins with a sentence starting with the word **Second**. The sentence is completed by restating the **topic, position, and the second point**, ending with words which support the second point.

Religious Activities and Subjective Well-being of High School Students" by Ali Eryilmaza discusses studies investigating the connection between religious activities and the subjective well-being of people. In the article, researchers offer evidence that religion and religious activities might be considered part of a meaningful life. Several researchers state that people who have meaningful lives are healthier, more cooperative in social life, more productive at work, and are more likely to be good citizens. Manifestly, individuals and societies benefit from religion because as a result of people's faith and engagement with their beliefs, they contribute to the societies to which they belong.

Third, religion impacts humanity in a positive way because it contributes to cultural development. Patrick Fagan's article, "Why Religion Matters: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability," supports Eryilmaza's findings and states that the United States Congress needs to look at, "the relationship between the practice of religion and the life of the nation, on the health of America's families and the content of its culture." Fagan says, "Religious belief and practice contribute substantially to the formation of personal moral criteria and sound moral judgment." He makes it clear that religion supports individuals, families, communities, and the

culture of a nation. As David Seljak says in his article "Protecting Religious Freedom in a Multicultural Canada, Canada is "still marked by Christian values about what is allowable, reasonable, desirable or extreme." Seljak's observation is also true about the United States, Europe, and Western cultures. Although many people today do not know the origins of how Western cultures decided what is right and wrong, beautiful or ugly, acceptable or unacceptable Seljak and Fagan make it clear that religion has guided the development of culture.

While many believe that religion has a positive effect on humanity, there are those who say that religion has a negative effect. Some believe religion traps individuals within a set of

The writer begins a sentence with the word *While*, then mentions an argument that opposes his own.

The third body paragraph begins with a sentence starting with the word **Third**. The sentence is completed by restating the **topic**, **position**, and **the third point**, ending with words which support the third point.

After the first sentence, the writer gives the name of an expert, the title of the expert's work, and the expert's supporting evidence.

The writer explains what the expert's evidence proves.

The writer gives the name of another expert, the title of the expert's work, more supporting evidence, an explanation of what the evidence proves, and a conclusion.

principles. Religions have specific rules on how people should live their lives and what they can or cannot do. Seljak writes that problems occur when people "run afoul of generally accepted norms." Admittedly, it can be difficult to be the only family on the block that does not celebrate Christmas or the only family that wears unusual clothing at school or work. Seljak notes that societies need to become more accepting of people who have different customs than the majority. Conflicts occur when people are intolerant of others' religions and traditions; however, religious conflicts do not mean that religions (and their great artworks and other contributions) need to be eliminated from humanity. Such conflicts mean that people need to learn more about religions unfamiliar to them.

The writer discusses the opposing argument and argues against it.

The writer looks at the last sentence of his first paragraph and creates a similar sentence for the first sentence of his last paragraph. He begins his sentence with the word *Clearly*.

Clearly, religion has played a major role in humanity's intellectual, social, and cultural progress. Education has enabled human knowledge to grow. People who have learned to live meaningful lives have contributed to society. While no institution is problem-free, religious institutions have provided much to the world's cultures and will continue to do so. Rules and principles provide stability that allows progress to be made slowly and safely. Ultimately, religion should not become a thing of the past because it can continue to have a positive impact on civilizations.

The writer refers back to the points supporting his position.

The writer ends his persuasive essay by restating his position and looking toward the future.