

Essay Notes - 9

Essay – an essay is a short composition dealing with a single topic, and usually expressing one person’s point of view or understanding of the topic

Essays are categorized as descriptive, expository, narrative or persuasive. **Note:** few essays are **completely** one style

Types of essays:

Expository essay – communicates information about an event, process, issue or topic. Purpose: to explain and to expose.

Ex: a magazine article that tells about laser eye surgery

Narrative essay – tells the story of an event or experience

Ex: an autobiographical essay such as Dylan Thomas’ “Memories of Christmas

Descriptive essay – describes the person, place, object or process.

Ex: Describing the characteristics of an outport town

Persuasive essay – the author tries to convince the reader that his/her opinion on a subject is the correct one

Format of the essay:

- I. **Introduction** – a good introduction does the following:
 - Capture the interest of the audience (using techniques such as a controversial statement, interesting fact, provocative quotation, question, etc.)
 - Stated the thesis (main idea of the essay).
- II. **Body** – these are the 3-5 paragraphs that develop the idea introduced in your first paragraph. Each body paragraph should have clear topic and closing sentences.
- III. **Conclusion** – a good conclusion is a summary of the points of an essay. The ending should not include any new information, but presents the final thoughts in the thesis.

Style and important terms for writing good essays:

Thesis statement:

a sentence or two that gives the main idea of the essay.

Topic sentence:

a sentence that tells what is to follow in a paragraph; The main idea of the paragraph.

Unity

means that the essay contains only what is relevant to the topic; A quality of writing in which all sentences and paragraphs support one main idea.

Coherence

refers to the logical arrangement and progression of ideas in an essay; A clear, logical flow in writing with smooth transitions from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph.

Transitional terms

are words or phrases which help to achieve a smooth carryover with sentences and between paragraphs.

Methods of organizing ideas (found in the body of the essay):

1. **Definition** – the essay defines a key term and then clarifies and expands on it.
2. **Comparison/Contrast** – explores similarities and differences between things.
3. **Cause and Effect** – considers reasons for events or behaviors and the probable results.
4. **Problem / Solution** – states a problem and then solutions are given and supported with FACTS.
5. **Statistics** – numerical facts to support an idea
6. **Authorities** – someone who is an expert in the field
7. **Brief narratives** – brief stories to prove a point
8. **Examples**

Tone of the essay:

Objective – the author tries to remain partial and **not** put his/her opinion/bias into the essay.

Subjective – the author puts himself or his opinions (or feelings) in the essay.