

# What is expository essay

Law



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Associate Program Material Characteristics of the Expository Essay What Is an Essay? An essay is an important part of your college experience because it requires critical thinking as well as organization and research. Essay is a broad term. Sometimes an essay is just a page long; sometimes, essays are five pages or longer. Essays, however, focus on a single subject and idea. They also have different purposes: to persuade, explain, or entertain. Consider the following essay titles: “ Why You Should Never Vote for a Democrat” • “ My Friend Harry Reasoner” • “ Cell Phones: Getting the Most for the Least” • “ Gay Marriage Does Not Hurt Traditional Marriage” • “ How to Write an Essay” How would you categorize the essays above based on the titles? Is “ Why You Should Never Vote for a Democrat” a persuasive essay or an entertaining one? Does “ How to Write an Essay” explain or persuade? Even within a classification, writers use different types of development and have multiple purposes for their essays.

Essay Classifications Writers classify essays in different ways. The following table includes common types of essays as well as examples:

Type of Essay	Definition	Example
Expository	Uses evidence, examples, or facts to explain a concept or to inform about a topic with a thesis as its base; the information must be presented fairly and in a nonbiased manner	“ How to Stop Smoking”
Persuasive or Argumentative	Uses evidence, examples, or facts to persuade your reader to accept your point of view on a subject	“ High Schools Should Offer More Technical Courses”
Cause and Effect	Explains why something happened and what its consequences were (or will be)	“ The Connection Between Trans Fats and Obesity”
Comparison-Contrast	Shows the similarities and	

differences between | “ Dogs and Cats Are More Alike Than Different” | | | ideas, people, objects, places, and so forth | | | Character Study | Focuses on a specific person of interest | “ The Life of Richard M.

Nixon” | | Literary Analysis | Analyzes one or more parts of a literary piece | “ Horse Symbolism in James Joyce’s Ulysses” | | | or writing | | | Division | Takes a subject and separates its elements into | “ How Parts of a Television are Connected” | | | smaller pieces to examine the relationships | | | between or among the elements | | | Classification | Separates a large group into smaller groups | “ The Wonder of Bears” | | based on the specific characteristics of the | | | items | | | Narrative | Retells a story or event | “ My Summer Vacation Disaster” | | Descriptive | Uses sensory details to show exactly how | “ The Red Rock Country of Sedona, Arizona” | | | something feels, looks, smells, and so forth | | | Definition | Defines or specifies a word or subject | “ The Beauty of Greed” | | Process | Shows how to complete a process, usually in | “ Steps to Making the Perfect Pumpkin Pie” | | | steps | | Focusing on the Expository Essay Expository essays are common college assignments because they build on both critical thinking and research.

Therefore, this course focuses on the expository essay—the foundation for all other types of academic writing, including research paper writing. Originally, the purpose of an expository (explanatory) essay was to explain (“ How to Win at Five-Card Draw”, for example). Now, it is a more general term. Characteristics of the expository essay include:

- A defined and narrowed thesis in the introduction
- Evidence, examples, statistics, or facts in each paragraph in the body of the paper to support the thesis
- Information presented fairly and in a nonbiased manner, showing both sides of the topic

- The use of third-person rather than I or me Point of View In the world of journalism, the news is reported as objectively as possible.

If television news broadcasters, for example, reported, " I think so and so," and " I saw this-and-so," perhaps their opinion would not be substantial enough to prove their point to the viewing audience. Somehow, using the third person seems to make the reporting seem much more objective. The same is true for essay writing. One of the main reasons academic writing requires the use of third-person point of view is to minimize the opinions of the writer. When you write in third person, you can be more objective. When you cite other sources, you also borrow from their respectability in the field and their expertise. It is almost as though you are an academic reporter. Consider the following example of how first-person opinions may be converted into an acceptable third-person topic: First Person | Third Person | | In my opinion, standardized testing negatively affects the | Standardized testing negatively affects the curriculum being | | curriculum being taught in schools and how teachers teach their | taught in schools as well as the instructional methodology that | | students. | teachers use. | | | | In this essay, I will examine how standardized testing affects | | | the curriculum being taught in schools and how teachers teach | | | their students. | |

Thesis Plus Support in the Expository Essay Most expository essays build on a similar structural pattern: 1. Introduction (including the thesis statement) 2. Supporting body paragraphs 3. Conclusion The thesis statement conveys the main idea of your essay. Use the following formula to craft your thesis statement: Limited Topic + Controlling Idea, Point, Attitude, or Slant = Thesis. The thesis is part of the introduction of your essay, usually positioned

at or near the end of the introduction. The introduction also includes any pertinent background information, definition of unfamiliar terms, or other information your audience must know in order to understand your position.

An introduction must grab the attention of your readers and make them want to continue reading. Your thesis must be supported by facts, examples, reasons, and other objective research in the body of your essay. The essay ends with a conclusion that neatly wraps up your essay. Use the Thesis Plus Support approach to write expository essays and other types of academic papers, including the research paper. Four Ways to Develop Expository Essays There are four basic ways to develop expository essays: 1. Topic: An expository essay developed by topic systematically organizes information about a topic (someone or something) in the most logical fashion, for example, from the least important to the most important characteristics of a mammal. 2.

Time order: An expository essay developed by time order involves the sequential or chronological organization of information from one time period to another. This type of expository development arranges information according to date or specific time, for instance, from the earliest to the most recent or vice versa. An essay about armed conflict in the Middle East might use this type of organization. 3. Space order: An expository essay developed by space order involves the spatial organization of ideas. This arrangement refers to information that deals with the location of people, places, or things; for example, the nearest planet to the farthest away from Earth. 4. Informative process: An expository essay developed by informative process may best be described as a how to essay, or demonstration.

This essay involves a step-by-step process, with steps arranged in their natural order, for example, “ How to Write an Expository Essay”. Because classifications cannot always be strictly defined, it is also possible for writers to combine development types within one expository essay. Wrap-Up This course presents the basics of effective essay writing. Learning to write effective expository essays prepares you to write longer, more complex research papers in other University of Phoenix courses. Learning to write well also improves your critical-thinking and organizational skills, laying the groundwork for success not only in college, but also in your current or future career.