

On writing process assignment



In Greek legend, the goddess of wisdom, Athena, was born fully armed from the head of Zeus. Unfortunately, this is the only recorded instance of instant wisdom. Especially in the medium of the written word, the communication of complex ideas is a process—a process that requires thinking and rethinking, working and reworking. The student who claims to have dashed off an ‘A’ essay at one in the morning the night before it was due is either a liar or a genius. This document has been formulated to assist you in learning to write effective, intelligent essays.

It is divided into the following parts: PART I: Types of Essays PART II: Developing a Thesis from a Topic PART III: Introductions PART IV: The Body Paragraphs PART V: The Rebuttal PART VI: The Conclusion PART VII: Writing an Exam Essay PART VIII: Stylistic Considerations PART IX: Sentence and Paragraph Structure PART X: Sample Essays PART XI: Using Quotations PART XII: Sample Essay Template PART I: Types of Essays The Expository Essay The function of the expository essay is to explain, or to acquaint your reader with a body of knowledge.

By explaining a topic to the reader, you are demonstrating your own knowledge. For example, if you are asked to write an essay about taming dragons, you decide what you plan to concentrate on, create a paragraph structure, and describe the process step by step. An essay becomes more complicated when a position has to be defended, as in a persuasive essay. The Persuasive Essay The persuasive essay must choose a side, make a case for it, consider and refute alternative arguments, and prove to the undecided reader that the opinion it presents is the best one.

You must be aware of other sides and be fair to them; dismissing them completely will weaken your own argument. It is always best to take a side that you believe in, preferably with the most supporting evidence. It can often be educational to adopt a different position from what you might normally choose (debating requires this kind of flexibility). The Informal Essay The informal essay is written mainly for enjoyment. This is not to say that it cannot be informative or persuasive; however, it is less a formal statement than a relaxed expression of opinion, observation, humour or pleasure.

A good informal essay has a relaxed style but retains a strong structure, though that structure may be less rigid than in a formal paper. The informal essay tends to be more personal than the formal, even though both may express subjective opinions. In a formal essay the writer is a silent presence behind the words, while in an informal essay the writer is speaking directly to the reader in a conversational style. If you are writing informally, try to maintain a sense of your own personality. Do not worry about sounding academic, but avoid sloppiness. The Review A review may be either formal or informal, depending on the context.

Its goal is to evaluate a work, which implies that the reviewer's personal opinion plays a significant role in the process. However, a certain objective standard needs to be maintained and, as in a persuasive essay, your assertions need to be proved. The formality of the review will be determined by how much of the essay is analysis, how much is summary, and how much is your reaction to the work you are reviewing. A more formal review will not only discuss the work on its own merits but also place it in context.

Newspapers and popular magazines tend to review in terms of finance: is this record or film worth spending money on?

Critical journals will attempt to determine whether a new novel or play has achieved something new and significant. A good review will discuss both the qualities and the importance of a given work. The Research Essay The research essay leads you into the works of others and asks you to compare their thoughts with your own. Writing a research paper involves going to source material and synthesizing what you learn from it with your own ideas. You must find texts on the subject and use them to support the topic you have been given to explore.

Because it is easy to become lost in a wilderness of outside material, you must take particular care to narrow your topic. The greatest danger inherent in the research essay is plagiarism. If your paper consists of a string of quotations or paraphrases with little input of your own, you are not synthesizing but copying, and you should expect a low grade. If any of the borrowings are unacknowledged, you are plagiarizing, and the penalties are severe. A research paper should demonstrate what you have learned, but it should also show that you have a perspective of your own on the subject.

The Literary Essay In the literary essay, you are exploring the meaning and construction of a piece of literature. This task is more complicated than reviewing though the two are similarly evaluative. In a review you are discussing the overall effect and validity of written work, while in a literary essay you are paying more attention to specifics. A literary essay focuses on such elements as structure, character, theme, style, tone and subtext. You

are taking a piece of writing and trying to discover how and why it is put together the way it is.

You must adopt a viewpoint on the work in question and show how the details of the work support your viewpoint. A literary essay may be your own interpretation, based only on your reading of the piece, or it may be a mixture of your opinions and references to the criticism of others, much like a research paper. Again, be wary of plagiarism and of letting the opinions of more experienced writers swamp your own response to the work. If you are going to consult the critics, you should reread the literary work you are discussing and make some notes on it before looking at any criticism.

PART II: Developing a Thesis from a Topic Choosing a Topic Over the course of your academic career, you will find that you will be provided a topic for an essay as often as you will be required to formulate a topic. Topics are often disguised in the form of a question on an assignment or test; the answer to the question is your thesis. When you are required to pick your own topic, you can select a general subject that you would like to pursue and then formulate questions about that subject in order to come up with a meaningful line of exploration.

When the essay is on a topic of your choice, developing a topic and formulating a thesis go hand in hand, and it's difficult and perhaps not necessary to separate one process from the other. The Thesis The thesis statement usually appears in the introduction of your essay, and is best expressed in one sentence as a definition of your position, or the point you intend to prove in your essay. A good thesis statement will help organize

your essay and give it direction; it is the central idea around which the rest of the essay is built.

The ideal thesis will be neither too broad nor too narrow for the compass of your essay. Clearly a 3000-word essay will have a more complex argument, and correspondingly a more complex thesis, than an essay of 600 words.

One of the most common problems with essays is that they are based on a thesis that is too obvious to be worth arguing—altruism. Topic: How

commercials manipulate their audience • A thesis that is a truism: “

Television Commercials attempt to sell their products to the largest possible audience. • A thesis that is too broad: “ Several tactics are used to entice

consumers to buy the advertised product. “(This thesis is likely to produce an essay that is simply a shopping list of examples, dull both for the writer and

reader.) • A sharper thesis: “ Commercials sell their products by suggesting that those who buy them will instantly enter an ideal world where they are attractive. ” • Too limited: “ Molson Canadian commercials are offensive. ”

Topic: Problems in fighting the medieval fire-breathing dragon • A thesis that

is a truism: “ Fighting fire-breathing dragons was hell. • A thesis that is too

broad: “ The flames of passion in courtly love claimed more knights’ lives than all the fire-breathing dragons in medieval Europe. ” (The topic is

unwieldy because it involves two areas of research, courtly love and fire-breathing dragons.) • A sharper thesis: “ Fewer knights would have been

broiled in their armour if the medieval world had known of fire-extinguishers.

” • Too limited: “ ‘ Puff the Magic Dragon’ is a sweet song. ” PART III:


Introductions It is often a wise decision to begin work on the introduction after you have completed a rough draft of the body of your paper.


Many find the task of writing an introduction perplexing, wondering why they should write something once if they are planning to say it again in the next paragraph. After all, novels do not have ponderous opening paragraphs which explain what is going to happen in advance. But the introduction is not a disposable redundancy; it is a crucial component of the essay. An essay is an exploration of an idea which needs to be defined before it is developed. Because the material in an essay always relates to this central thesis, it is necessary for the writer to introduce that thesis and make the reader aware of its importance and relevance.

The introduction is the place where the essay has to make a good impression, informing the reader what is to come and encouraging him or her to read further (but without rendering the succeeding paragraphs repetitious). If the introduction is tedious or fails to make the rest of the essay sound interesting, the reader will not wish to continue. Of course, when you are writing a class assignment, you can assume it will be read no matter how bad the introduction. But your introduction serves the same purpose as it would if the reader were coming to it voluntarily. You must convince the reader that your essay is worth reading.

The Structure of an Introduction A simple model for the relationship between the introduction, the body, and the conclusion is the old newspaper maxim: “ You tell ‘em what you’re gonna tell ‘em you tell ‘em, and then you tell ‘em what you told ‘em. ” In an introduction, you lay out a plan for what will follow. However, there is more to writing an introduction than merely summarizing the points of your essay; you must find a way to open discussion of the topic. There are several ways to do this, but a simple and

<https://assignbuster.com/on-writing-process-assignment/>

effective method uses the analogy of a triangle. Imagine an inverted triangle, thus:  In this model, your introduction begins with the general and moves toward the specific, as the sides of the triangle narrow toward a point. Ask yourself how the specific question you are addressing in the essay relates to a greater issue or field. For example, if you are writing about how *Waiting For Godot* subverts traditional notions of plot, you might want to begin by explaining what a traditional notion of plot is, or by discussing the characteristics of Beckett's work in general. The question you take up in your essay does not exist in a vacuum; it arises out of a greater set of concerns.

Your introduction can provide this background so that the reader is not coming to the discussion cold: ask yourself what your audience knows already, and what it needs to know in order to understand the context for your thesis. By the time you reach the end of your introductory paragraph, you should be ready to state the thesis of your essay. The introduction need not give away all your opinions and conclusions but you should give your reader a clear idea of what you will be discussing. The Coffee Filter Approach 

Here's an example that demonstrates how the "Coffee Filter" Formula can be applied to an essay introduction: Why can't a machine be more like a man? " In almost every episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, the android Data wonders what makes a person a person. In the original *Star Trek*, similar questions were raised by the half-Vulcan Mr. Spock. . . . The same question has been raised by and about creatures ranging from Frankenstein's monster to *Terminator II*. (BACKGROUND / CONTEXT) But the

real question is why characters who struggle to be persons are always white and male.

As cultural interpreters, do they tacitly reinforce destructive stereotypes of what it is about a person that we must think of as “normal”? (TOPIC / ISSUE / QUESTION) The model to which we all must aspire, at least if we want to be real people, seems in fact to be defined by Western criteria that exclude most of the people in the world. (THESIS) PART IV: The Body Paragraphs The Body is the lengthiest part of any essay. It is also the most important part. All this stems from its one and only function, namely, the development of the essay’s thesis and its justification or proof by means of evidence.

To create a solid essay body, all you really need to master is the art of writing a set of connected quality paragraphs. The structure of an essay’s paragraphs should mirror that of the essay as a whole. Each paragraph should contain beginning or topic sentences to introduce its main point, middle or body sentences to provide supporting details, and ending sentences, which relate the evidence discussed in the paragraph to the essay’s thesis and provide a logical transition to the theme of the next paragraph. Clear topic sentences obviate the need to use headings and sub-headings in your essay.

Essays are meant to flow; breaking this up not only interrupts the flow, it generally annoys readers. And, never write about more than a single point in a paragraph. Just as an essay is a discussion focused on one basic argument, so a paragraph (maybe 5 or 6 sentences long, on average) must be centered on some small aspect of an essay’s theme. Organizing Your Essay Now that

you have narrowed your topic and formulated a thesis, you know what you are going to write about; organizing your essay will help you determine how to write it.

While a well-formulated, sharpened thesis will give your essay purpose and direction, careful structuring and organization will ensure that every part of your essay works to support and develop that thesis. Ideas as we first conceive them may tumble in an improvised dance, but an essay needs the formality of a beginning, a middle and an end. Organizing before you write gives your ideas a structure to cling to; it allows you to articulate, analyze, and clarify your thoughts. If you devise some structure for your essay before you begin to search for supporting evidence, you will be able to conduct a more effective and directed search.

Organization (or reorganization) is a continuous process; it goes on simultaneously with other activities, such as narrowing your topic, forming your thesis statement, and conducting your research. However, formal organization generally involves two components: determining a method of organization for the essay, and drawing up an outline which applies your ideas to that method. As you begin to plan your essay, give some thought to the methods you will use to organize the evidence that will support your thesis. You will want to choose methods which are most suitable to your subject and the type of essay you have been assigned.

Principles of Organization
Chronological order: Paragraphs separate the process or series of events into major stages
Classification: Paragraphs divide the material into major categories and distinguish between them

Increasing importance: Paragraphs are arranged so that the most important point comes last, thus building the essay's strength. Cause and effect: Indicates causal relationships between things and events. Be careful, however, not to mistake coincidence with causality, nor to disregard other possible causes. See the various pages that deal with logic.

Comparison and contrast: Involves lining up related ideas for a detailed account of similarities and differences. In this kind of essay it is important to decide whether you will be concentrating on similarities or differences. In general, the more similar things are, the more you concentrate on the differences, and vice versa. If you are comparing two works by the same author, or two love poems, for example, what will most interest you will be the differences between them; if you are comparing an Anglo-Saxon riddle with a science fiction novel the differences will be obvious enough that you will want to focus on the similarities.

Although one pattern should serve as the overall organizing framework, your argument can benefit from a combination of these strategies. For example, while the paragraphs may be arranged in ascending order of importance, within the paragraphs it is likely that you will incorporate comparisons, causes, classification or chronology. These principles apply to both the greater structure of the essay and each individual idea. PART V: The Rubuttal Handling Contradictory Evidence Oddly enough, an argument is often more convincing if you cheerfully admit that there are some strong arguments or facts which seem to counter the point you want to make.

You present these arguments—fairly—in such a way that you lead up to a resounding “ however . . . ” as you deliver your counter-argument. And since you are in charge, you will of course make sure that the defense has no right of reply. PART VI: The Conclusion In the process of evaluating all of your sources, you will also be drawing conclusions from them. Although you will be researching from a particular point of view, you should try not to let this view blind you to what your evidence tells you. A good researcher is at all times a skeptic, questioning whether the evidence would support a different conclusion.

If it does, you may need to re-evaluate your thesis or explain why your conclusion is still valid. Conclusions to essays are generally written to remind readers of three points: the writer’s thesis or position, the main findings of his or her investigations, and the implications for research and/or society. As in the appeal stage of a court case or in the final stages of parliamentary-style debate contests, no new information may be introduced into the body of the concluding segment of an essay. The following passage from a literary essay contains concrete illustrations of all three aspects of a model concluding paragraph.

Original Thesis: “ D. H. Lawrence’s explicitly stated views of the place of women contrasts with his literary characterizations of Mrs. Morel and Lady Chatterly. ” The characterizations of Mrs. Morel and Lady Chatterly, therefore, seem to contrast with Lawrence’s directly stated opinions about the relationship between men and women. (MAIN CONCLUSION) Perhaps Lawrence unwittingly is revealing a subconscious dichotomy of belief. He appears to believe philosophically that women have a right to individuality

but, in reality prefers them to maintain a subordinate and inferior position.

THESIS RESTATEMENT) Maybe this goes a long way to explaining the difficulties Lawrence experienced in his real-life relationships with women and his preoccupation with male-female relationships in his novels.

(IMPLICATIONS) PART VII: Writing an Exam Essay Bereft of the luxury of revision, students often lose control of their writing skills during examinations. Writing an exam essay is essentially a two-part process: outline and first draft. There is no time for rewriting, so it is incumbent upon the student to make that first draft as coherent as possible under the circumstances.

Because the student has a limited amount of time and only a nervous and fallible memory to work with, instructors are much more lenient on exam essays than they would be on papers written at home. However, the principles of organization that govern any piece of written work still operate in an exam. You must still develop a thesis and stick to it. Some students panic in exam situations and produce garbled streams of information that demonstrate their capacity for memorization but fail to develop any kind of logical thought. Writing a very brief outline will help you avoid this pitfall. Never lose sight of the question being asked.

It is a good practice to include some of the key words from the question in your opening paragraph, and to return to it in your conclusion. The effect will be to make clear that you have indeed kept your answer on the topic.

Question the question: • Why is it being asked? • Is it a multi-layered question, one that can be answered on more than one level? • Does it invite a largely factual response? • Is it looking for a specific critical stance? The

<https://assignbuster.com/on-writing-process-assignment/>

professor wants to see that you know the material well enough to make a critical judgment upon it, not that you can throw out a collection of unrelated details.

The more information you are able to recall and use effectively the better, but always relate what you write to the thesis. A good question will allow you not only to demonstrate what you know but also to make an observation about it. Many exam questions include a quotation that you are asked to discuss. “Discuss” does not mean “make sure that you agree with the quotation”; rather it opens the topic for exploration. It is likely that your thesis in response to the quotation will be to suggest a modification of it, rather than a slavish agreement with it. Whether you agree or disagree, be sure to support your position.

PART VIII: Stylistic Considerations RHETORIC: The Art of Written and Oral Persuasion Structure of Classical Oration Exordium: Establish a positive chemistry with the audience and evoke their goodwill. v Narratio: Briefly present the background of the issue. v Divisio: Present the division of the essay i. e. the table of contents. v Confirmatio: Present the main arguments defending your position. v Confutatio: Present the confutations of the opposition. v Peroratio (short for peroration – summation): The peroratio has two parts: Enumeratio: The listing and recapping of the main arguments

Affectus: The dramatic, usually emotional closing Appeals Logos—appeal to logic Pathos—appeal to emotion Ethos—appeal to authority Schemes

Parallelism: Making pairs or series of related words, phrases or clauses similar structure. e. g. . . . for the support of this declaration, with a firm

reliance on the protection of Divine Protection, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor. e. g. It was the beginning of wisdom, the end of fear, and the center of her being.

Apposition: Placing two coordinate elements side by side, the second one explaining or modifying the first. . g. Men of this kind – soldiers of fortune, pool-hall habitués, gigolos, beach-combers – expend their talents on trivialities. (Student paper) Asyndeton: Deliberately leaving out conjunctions between a series of related clauses. e. g. I came, I saw, I conquered. (Julius Caesar) e. g. . . and that the government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. (Abraham Lincoln) Anaphora: Repeating the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses. e. g. Why should white people be running all the stores in our community?

Why should white people be running the banks of our community? Why should the economy of our community be in the hands of the white man? (Malcolm X) e. g. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing-grounds, we shall fight . . . (Winston Churchill) Epistrophe: Repeating the same word or group of words at the ends of successive clauses. e. g. As long as the white man sent you to Korea, you bled. He sent you to Germany, you bled. He sent you to the South Pacific to fight the Japanese, you bled. (Malcolm X) Anadiplosis: Repeating the last word of one clause at the beginning of the following clause. e. . The laughter had to be gross or it would turn to sobs, and to sob would be to realize, and to realize would be to despair. (John Howard Griffin, Black Like Me) e. g. Queeg: “ Aboard my ship, excellent performance is standard. Standard performance is sub-standard.

Sub-standard performance is not permitted to exist. ” (Herman Wouk, *The Gaine Mutiny*) Tropes Hyperbole: Using exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect. e. g. It’s really ironical . . . I have gray hair. I really do. The one side of my head – the right side – is full of millions of gray hairs. (Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*) e. g.

She was perfection. Seriously. I was broken, dead. Then she taught my demons to dance in the moonlight and laugh at the day. Litotes: Using understatement to enhance the impressiveness of what we say. e. g. It isn’t very serious. I have this tiny little tumor on the brain. (Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*) e. g. Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her appearance for the worse. (Jonathan Swift)

Rhetorical Question: Asking a question to assert or deny something obliquely. No answer expected. e. g. A good student-body is perhaps the most important factor in a great university.

How can you possibly make good wine from poor grapes? (Student writing) e. g. How can the uneducated have faith in a system which says that it will take advantage of them in every possible way? (Senator E. Kennedy) PART

IX: Sentence and Paragraph Structure Loose Style and Periodic Style:

Examples in English The periodic style is not at home in present-day American English. Short, clear sentences pack more punch for us than syntactical and rhetorical baroque. Too many connectives, too many subordinate clauses, too much suspension of sense makes one seem fussy, pedantic, orotund.

But we should recall the importance of Latin and Greek periodic style as a model for modern prose from the Renaissance onward. Here are examples in English of both styles. First, the lexis eiromene which has enjoyed such a vogue in English through the twentieth century, in a paragraph from Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*: The bus climbed steadily up the road. The country was barren and rocks stuck up through the clay. There was no grass beside the road. Looking back we could see the country spread out below. Far back the fields were squares of green and brown on the hillsides.

Making the horizon were the brown mountains. They were strangely shaped. As we climbed higher the horizon kept changing. As the bus ground slowly up the road we could see other mountains coming up in the south. Then the road came over the crest, flattened out, and went into a forest. It was a forest of cork oaks, and the sun came through the trees in patches, and there were cattle grazing back in the trees. We went through the forest and the road came out and turned along a rise of land, and out ahead of us was a rolling green plain, with dark mountains beyond it.

These were not like the brown, heat-baked mountains we had left behind. These were wooded and there were clouds coming down from them. The green plain stretched off. It was cut by fences and the white of the road showed through the trunks of a double line of trees that crossed the plain toward the north. As we came to the edge of the rise we saw the red roofs and white houses of Burguete ahead strung out on the plain, and away off on the shoulder of the first dark mountain was the gray metal-sheathed roof of the monastery of Roncesvalles. (Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, New York 1926, repr. 954, chapter 3, p. 108) As an example of periodic style here <https://assignbuster.com/on-writing-process-assignment/>

is Samuel Johnson in the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare: That praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox, or those who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard which is yet denied by envy will be at last bestowed by time. . . . To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientific, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour.

As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep or a mountain high without the knowledge of many mountains and many rivers, so, in the productions of genius, nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. . . . The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted arises, therefore, not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood. Samuel Johnson, *Selected Writings*, ed. R. T. Davies, Evanston 1965, pp. 262-263)

PART X: Sample Essays SAMPLE: An Informal Essay—“ Minding Your P’S And Q’S” by John Allemang The essay which follows is an opinion piece that was written for The Globe and Mail. The style is therefore journalistic but aimed at a fairly sophisticated readership. Paragraphs are short, as is normal in a newspaper with its narrow columns, and the tone is more conversational than would be appropriate for a formal essay.

Notice the clear statement of the thesis, the concrete illustrations in the body of the essay, and the way the conclusion leads to a more general statement of what is perhaps to come in the future. It is included here both because it is a good example of the essay form and because it explores the kind of problem you will come up against as you try to punctuate your essays correctly. “ Minding Your P’S And Q’S” by John Allemang I hereby call this meeting of Nit-pickers Anonymous to order. Today we will deal with the apostrophe, which you might say at first glance is as small a nit as can be picked.

But let me suggest to you that even though the apostrophe is a tiny little mark on the page, it’s use and misuse—make that its use and misuse—can lead to much head-scratching and irritation. You say this problem doesn’t concern you. You say you know the in’s and out’s, the why’s and wherefore’s, of apostrophic etiquette. Or should that be ins, outs, whys, wherefores? Yes I think it should, although ins looks pretty strange on the page. And if ins looks strange, what about yeses and noes or hes and shes or ps and qs? Or should that be p’s and q’s? Yes, it should, according to the style I’m forced to follow at The Globe and Mail.

Caught your attention? I didn't think so. It's—right one, this time—hard to interest anyone in apostrophes. They're easy, people say, or they don't matter. You'd've thought folks're smarter than that. It's thinking like this that has given us ads proclaiming “ Potatoe's49c's a kilo” or signs warning “ Auto's parked illegally may be tagged and towed” or rock critics plugging Guns ' n Roses. Nits these may be, but the world is lousy with them. The problem with explaining apostrophes—apart from the fact that nobody takes them too seriously—is that they cannot be made systematic.

We say Tom's and his the same way, and by that final s we mean the same thing, possession or belonging. But one carries an apostrophe and the other doesn't. The word his is the older form, and shows us the possessive as our ancestors used to deal with it. His is the genitive, or possessive, form of the pronoun he, and nouns in English that indicated this grammatical relationship took this form. The apostrophe was originally added to show that letter e had been left out of the genitive, but by the 18th century the apostrophe was being used in almost all possessives, even those without an e.

That may sound reasonably systematic, but the system is once again collapsing. That wouldn't be a bad thing if we could collapse in unison, and get rid of the apostrophe altogether and write dont instead of don't. But instead all is flux and we seem to be at sixes and sevens (six's and seven's? 6's and 7's? 6s and 7s?). Look at how we deal with periods of time. At The Globe, the decade of rampant materialism and Gorbymania was called the 1980s, but at The New York Times they say the 1980's. Since there is

nothing omitted here and no suggestion of possession, I can't see why The Times carries on in this way.

The reasoning of The Times' word columnist, William Safire, is that the apostrophe is used to form the plurals of numbers and letters, and so there. Mr. Safire compares p's and q's, and the phrase dressed to the nine's, but to my mind the truth is not quite so self-evident. If one rule of writing is to keep punctuation to a minimum, then I think that 1980s, a natural looking plural, is much nicer than 1980's. Accept 1980's and you start referring to The Smith's or the delegation of MP's. But what about p's and q's?

The reason we don't mind them at The Globe is that individual letters are easier to see as individual letters, uncluttered by a neighbouring s. And here's where we get unsystematic. Turn those letters into capitals and suddenly they're As and Bs and MPs and VIPs, comprehensible and a little more elegant without the apostrophe. This kind of plural is made easier when you have left out the periods between letters, as is more and more the case with modern style. But still there is confusion. For every St. Andrew's, there is a St. Andrews, where long use has banished the apostrophe and made the s part of the name.

St. Catharines, St. Marys, St. Davids, Canada is full of slights to punctuation. The Canadian Teachers' Federation is doing its best to keep the apostrophe alive, but what can they do against the massed forces of the Canadian Swine Breeders Association and the Teamsters union? We are turning away from the apostrophe. (The Globe and Mail, March 23, 1991.) SAMPLE: The Expository Essay—" In Pursuit of Thinness" by Susan Chisolm Throughout

history and through a cross-section of cultures, women have transformed their appearance to conform to a beauty ideal.

Ancient Chinese aristocrats bound their feet as a show of femininity; American and European women in the 1800s cinched in their waists so tightly, some suffered internal damage; in some African cultures women continue to wear plates in their lower lips, continually stretching the skin to receive plates of larger size. The North American ideal of beauty has continually focussed on women's bodies: the tiny waist of the Victorian period, the boyish figure in vogue during the flapper era, and the voluptuous curves that were the measure of beauty between the 1930s and 1950s.

Current standards emphasize a toned, slender look, one that exudes fitness, youth, and health. According to psychologist Eva Szekely, “ Having to be attractive at this time . . . means unequivocally having to be thin. In North America today, thinness is a precondition for being perceived by others and oneself as healthy” (19). However, this relentless pursuit of thinness is not just an example of women trying to look their best, it is also a struggle for control, acceptance and success.

In attempting to mould their appearance to meet the current ideal, numerous women are literally starving themselves to death. The incidence of eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia, has “ doubled during the last two decades” (Comerci 1294). This increase is no longer limited to women in their teens and twenties, but is increasingly diagnosed in patients in their thirties and forties. “ No doubt, the current sociocultural emphasis on

thinness and physical fitness as a symbol of beauty and success has contributed to this age distribution” (Comerci 1294).

One of the negative psychological side effects associated with eating disorders is the patient’s distortion of their own body image, body image being defined as “ the picture a person has in his mind of his own body, that is, the way his body appears to him” (Murray 602). For the anorexic this distortion is exaggerated, the patient feels fat even while emaciated, however, many women who are caught up in the relentless pursuit of thinness also experience some degree of disturbed body image. The experiences and practices of women who “ simply diet” are not radically different from those who are diagnosed with eating disorders.

For some women, achieving the “ perfect” body form becomes the most important goal in life. Feelings about body are closely related to a woman’s sense of self; the “ body is perceived as acceptable or unacceptable, providing a foundation for self-concept” (Orbach 78). It is alarming, then, that almost 80% of women think they’re overweight (Kilbourne). Body image has very little to do with the way a person actually looks; many women who appear to fit the ideal body type are actually dissatisfied with their appearance (Freedman).

Women with perfectly normal bodies see themselves as being heavy; so that the definition of “ normal” becomes inaccurate and this perceived normalcy is represented by a very small percentage of women. It follows that if body image is so closely linked to self-image, it is important for women to learn to feel comfortable with the body they live in, despite any “ imperfections”.

Consistently aiming for perfection is a “ self-defeating goal that only sets you up for failure” (Freedman 218).

All evidence indicates that “ our sense of our bodies develops in the process of learning, and these are social processes, not psychobiological ones given at birth” (Szekely 42). So why is it that during this process of development so many women become dissatisfied, self-critical, and judgmental about their own bodies? One of the reasons may have to do with the media and various forms of advertising. Ads sell more than just products; they present an idea of normalcy, who we are and who we should be (Kilbourne). Advertising is a major vehicle for presenting images and forming attitudes.

The majority of ads incorporate young, beautiful, slender models to present their products and services. While individual ads may not be seen as a big issue, it is the cumulative, unconscious impact that has an effect on attitudes toward women, and in women’s attitudes toward themselves. As women are consistently exposed to these feminine forms thorough both print and television, it becomes difficult to distinguish what is normal, and even more difficult not to compare themselves to this form. It is not just women who judge themselves, but also men who begin to liken these models to the women in their own lives and then make comparisons.

Advertising creates an “ ultimate standard of worth, so that women are judged against this standard all the time, whether we choose to be or not” (Kilbourne). Throughout the media, there seems to be a “ particular contempt these days for women who are fat or are in any way overweight . . . above all, we’re supposed to be very thin” (Kilbourne). This

notion of the ideal body that is propagated by the popular media can be linked with economic organizations whose profit is solely gained through products that enhance this image (Szekely 103).

The images that are presented in advertising are designed to create an illusion, a fantasy ideal that will keep women continually consuming.

Advertisers are well aware of the insecurities that most women feel about their own bodies. The influential power of the diet, fashion, cosmetic and beauty industries?? and their advertising strategies?? target this, their “ profits are sustained on the enormity of the body insecurity” (Orbach 79).

The effect of many current advertising methods is that the “ body is turned into a thing, an object, a package” (Kilbourne).

In many ads, bodies are separated into individual parts: legs, breasts, thighs, waists; the result is that the body becomes separated from the woman. It then becomes acceptable for the woman’s body to be scrutinized. Women’s bodies receive large amounts of attention and comment and are a “ vehicle for the expression of a wide range of statements” (Orbach 13). Judgements may be made and opinions may be formed about a woman by her appearance alone. A woman who is judged as overweight is often thought of as a woman with little self-control, and from this premise further assumptions may be made.

This type of generalization occurs on a daily basis, by both men and women, and it affects the way we behave towards one another. Our preoccupation with appearance affects much more than the image that is presented on the outside. Feelings toward our own appearance affect the choices we make

and the goals we pursue; “ more than ever, it seems we are constricted by beauty standards . . . ” (Freedman 3). The recent emphasis on fitness, youth, beauty and thinness has caused many women to try harder than ever to attain the current body ideal.

The tremendous increase in plastic surgery operations—liposuction, breast implants, tummy tucks, and face-lifts, to name a few—attest to the extreme adjustments that many women feel they must make in order to attain the body ideal, in turn making positive adjustments to their own self-esteem. “ One object of women’s hard work which, potentially is also a means of their success, is the body . . . women have been given the message that their efforts in improving and perfecting their bodies would be rewarded by success” (Szekely 191), on both a social and professional level.

With that thought in mind, women have come to relate to their bodies “ as their objects/tools/weapons in the marketplace of social relations” (Orbach). Perhaps a woman’s ability to control her own body size and weight can be seen as a metaphor, a substitution for control that may be lacking in other areas of her life. While women continue to struggle for equality on an economic scale and within their relationships, they still maintain control over their own bodies. It is important that women begin to accept themselves for who they are, regardless of their body type, and to feel comfortable with the body they live in.

If women continue to pursue the “ elusive, eternally youthful body beautiful” (Orbach 13) they’ll only be setting themselves up for failure. Works Cited
Comerci, George D. Medical Complications of Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia

Nervosa. *The Medical Clinics of North America*. Volume 74, No. 5. September, 1990. Freedman, Rita. *Bodylove: Learning to Like Our Looks—And Ourselves*. New York: Harper, 1988. Horne, R. Lynn et al. “ Disturbed Body Image in Patients with Eating Disorders. ” *American Journal of Psychiatry*. 148: 2, February 1991: 211-215. Kilbourne, Jean.

Still Killing Us Softly: Advertising’s Image of Women. [Video] Cambridge Documentary Films, 1987. Murray, Ruth L. E. *The Concept of Body Image*. *The Nursing Clinics of North America*, Volume 7, No. 4. December, 1972. Orbach, Suzie. *Hunger Strike: The Anorectic’s Struggle as a Metaphor for Our Age*. New York: Avon, 1986. Szekely, Eva. *Never Too Thin*. Toronto: The Women’s Press, 1988. SAMPLE: *The Literary Essay—“ Hedda Gabler’s Last Dance”* by Steve Lyne One of the social issues dealt with in Ibsen’s problem plays is the oppression of women by conventions limiting them to a domestic life.

In *Hedda Gabler* the heroine struggles to satisfy her ambitious and independent intellect within the narrow role society allows her. Unable to be creative in the way she desires, Hedda’s passions become destructive both to others and herself. Raised by a general (Ibsen 1444), Hedda has the character of a leader and is wholly unsuited to the role of “ suburban housewife” (1461). Since she is unable to have the authority she craves, she exercises power by manipulating her husband George. She tells Thea, “ I want the power to shape a man’s destiny” (1483).

Hedda’s unsuitability for her domestic role is also shown by her impatience and evasiveness at any reference to her pregnancy. She confides to Judge

Brack, “ I’ve no leanings in that direction” (1471). Hedda desires intellectual creativity, not just the procreative power that binds her to a limited social function. But because her only means of exercising power is through a “ credulous” husband (1490), Hedda envies Thea’s rich intellectual partnership with Eilert Loevborg (1484), which produces as their creative “ child” a bold treatise on the future of society (1473-74, 1494).

Hedda’s rivalry with Thea for power over Eilert is a conflict between Hedda’s dominating intellect (symbolized by her pistols) and the traditionally feminine power of beauty and love (symbolized by Thea’s long hair). Because Hedda lacks Thea’s courage to leave her husband and risk ostracism, she tries to satisfy her intellect within society’s constraints. First she seeks power through wealth and social status, marrying George on the condition she can “ keep open house” and have “ a liveried footman” (1464).

But George’s small means leave her frustrated by “ wretched poverty” (1471), while her social aspirations oppress her with the fear of scandal. Secondly, Hedda achieves a balance of security and independence by marrying a dull academic, who is easily dominated and occupies himself “ rooting around in libraries” (1466). But in doing so she shuts herself within a passionless marriage as tedious as a long train ride with a dull companion (1467-68). Finally, Hedda alleviates her boredom by turning to Judge Brack as a confidant: someone with whom she can flirt and speak openly as an equal. But Brack is not “ a loyal friend” (1461); rather, just as Thea’s husband “ finds [her] useful” to take care of him (1458), Brack exploits Hedda’s isolation and powerlessness for his own pleasure. Hedda’s oppressed desires become destructive, first to Eilert and Thea, and then to herself. In addition

to envying Thea for her creative union with Eilert, Hedda hates her for taming a man she idealizes as a rebel for his past licentiousness, defying social mores. After taunting the reformed Eilert into a night of debauchery, Hedda imagines him returning as a Dionysian hero: “ I can see him. With a crown of vine-leaves in his hair. Burning and unashamed! . . . Then he’ll be himself again! He’ll be a free man for the rest of his days (1483). ” However, Eilert’s night of carousing ends sordidly in a brawl that ruins his reputation once again. Hedda then modifies her first ideal and urges him to defy life itself by suicide (1495). Her destructiveness to both Eilert’s and Thea’s creative potential is symbolized by her destruction of their manuscript: “ I’m burning your child, Thea! You with your beautiful wavy hair! The child Eilert Loevborg gave you” (1496). But Hedda’s actions ultimately destroy her own limited freedoms and creative potential, symbolized by her unwanted pregnancy.

Brack disillusioned Hedda about the beauty of Eilert’s death, revealing that her hero died meanly in another brothel fight rather than bravely defying a frustrated life (1504). Moreover, as a result of Eilert’s death, Hedda loses her few cherished freedoms. Her power over her husband is usurped, as Thea and George devote their lives to resurrecting Eilert’s manuscript from jumbled notes (1502-03); and Thea hopes to inspire George as she inspired Eilert (1506). Then Brack establishes power over Hedda through her fear of scandal, knowing that Eilert was shot with her pistol.

With neither limited power nor illusions to sustain her, Hedda bows to Thea’s beautiful hair and, after playing a last dance on the piano, admits defeat: “ Not free. Still not free! . . . From now on I’ll be quiet” (1506-07). Hedda’s

tragedy is that she is denied the freedom to realize her creative potential, and so have the self-esteem that comes from personal achievement. Her attempt to retain her independence within society prevents her, through fear of scandal, from marrying the man with whom she might have had a relationship both individually satisfying and mutually supportive.

In Hedda's suicide are seen the stifling of intellect and the emotional isolation caused by oppression, even within a commonplace bourgeois family where " People don't do such things! " (1507). Work Cited Ibsen, Henrik.

Hedda Gabler. The Norton Introduction to Literature. Trans. Michael Meyer.

Third Edition. New York: Norton, 1981. 1443-1507. PART XI: Correct Use of

Quotations (MLA) There are basically two ways to use quotations correctly in

an essay. Read over the rules and examples below carefully and be sure to

follow them when you write. . Short Quotations – fewer than four lines in

length (as printed on your own essay page) Rule: A quotation cannot stand

alone and " float" beside one of your own sentences. All short quotations

must be grammatically joined to or contained within your own sentence.

INCORRECT: As a boy, Jonathan was unhappy living at home. " I'd fly out of

here in a second if I could get out of this cage" (20). CORRECT: As a boy,

Jonathan was unhappy living at home: " I'd fly out of here in a second if I

could get out of this cage" (20).

INCORRECT: " I'm always the one who's in trouble! " (20). Jonathan feels that

he is singled out more than any other child in his family. CORRECT: Unhappy

that he is singled out more than other children, Jonathan complains, " I'm

always the one who's in trouble! " (20). There are two ways to set up a

quotation within your own sentence. Set up a quotation with a full sentence

<https://assignbuster.com/on-writing-process-assignment/>

of your own followed by a colon, then provide the quotation. INCORRECT:

Susan asks herself many questions, such as: “ How old was I when I learned to hide what I felt? (Baxter 43). CORRECT: Susan asks herself many questions, but one is especially revealing: “ How old was I when I learned to hide what I felt? ” (Baxter 43). The second way to integrate quotations into your own sentence is to use them in a way that reads like one normal, complete sentence. Imagine there are no quotation marks and then check how the sentence reads. INCORRECT: Susan was a young girl when she first learned to hide her feelings “ a very small girl” and she comes to believe that hiding is necessary “ that view I have always accepted” (85).

CORRECT: Susan was “ a very small girl” when she first learned to hide her feelings, and she has “ always accepted” the necessity of this (85).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Punctuation is always placed inside the quotation marks except at the very end of the sentence, where your period follows the page citation. When you end your sentence with a page or author and page citation, the period always follows the last bracket. INCORRECT: The narrator of the poem, though “ not quarrelsome”, feels “ tired now” and fed up about always serving others. (Smith 15)

CORRECT: The narrator of the poem, though “ not quarrelsome,” feels “ tired now” and fed up about always serving others (Smith 15).

2. Long Quotations
– Four lines or more in length (as printed on your essay page) Rule: Long quotations of four lines or more are set off by indentation and are NOT enclosed in quotation marks. You must introduce the quotation in some appropriate manner, usually with a full sentence followed by a colon.

INCORRECT: At the conclusion of *The Lord of the Flies*, Ralph and the other

<https://assignbuster.com/on-writing-process-assignment/>

boys realize the horror of their actions. “ The tears began to flow and sobs shook him.

He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. ”

(186) Ralph’s sorrow is infectious, just as before his brutality was copied by all the boys. INCORRECT: At the conclusion of *The Lord of the Flies*, Ralph and the other boys realize the horror of their actions. “ The tears began to flow and sobs shook him.

He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. ”

(186) Ralph’s sorrow is infectious, just as before his brutality was copied by all the boys. CORRECT: At the conclusion of *The Lord of the Flies*, Ralph and the other boys realize the horror of their actions: The tears began to flow and sobs shook him.

He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too

(186). Ralph’s sorrow is infectious, just as before his brutality was copied by all the boys. PART XII: Sample Essay Outline Template | Topic/Guiding

Question: | | Purpose/Audience/Essay Type: | Introduction I: Background Information/Context (Exordium, Narratio) | | Introduction II: Statement of Topic Issue/Question | | Introduction III: Alternative Theories/Positions | | Introduction IV: Thesis Statement (Divisio) | | Body I: Topic Sentence (Confirmatio) | | Body I: Supporting Evidence | | Body I: Identification of Significance | | Body I: Transition to Body II | | Body II: Topic Sentence | | Body II: Supporting Evidence | | Body II: Identification of Significance | | Body II: Transition to Body III | | Body III: Topic Sentence | | Body III: Supporting Evidence | | Body III: Identification of Significance | | Body IV: Rubuttal (Confutatio) | | Conclusion I: Main Conclusion (Peroratio) | | Conclusion II: Thesis Restatement/Paraphrase (Enumeratio) | | Conclusion III: Implications or Further Questions (Affectus) |