

# What is an essay?



What is an Essay? An essay is a long piece of writing and it is written in paragraphs. An essay consists of three major parts: The introduction The main body The conclusion The introduction and the conclusion, although very important, are often relatively short. The bulk of an essay, both in form and substance, is contained in the main body. The introduction is intended to lead the reader into the topic and clarify what the essay will specifically deal with. It usually consists of one paragraph, but this depends on the length of the essay and the amount of background information the context requires. The introduction will contain a key sentence (or, if necessary, more than one). The main body deals with the major ideas that support the statement. Each main idea is presented in a separate paragraph and developed with supporting ideas in the form of explanations, definitions, or similar, and illustrated with examples where appropriate or necessary. The conclusion brings the reader back to the purpose of the essay and draws all the points together before making a final comment on the result of the discussion/argument. Often this final comment will point towards some consequence the discussion may have for the future. Ultimately an essay will show a progression from a general level (in the introduction) down to the specific (the statement and body) and back up to the general level again (conclusion). The reader will be expecting this so it gives your essay a sense of completion.

How to write an Essay Understanding the task Understanding the task Essay writing is a process and needs to be done in various stages. Review First draft Review First draft Write final draft Write final draft Deadline Deadline Write first draft Write first draft Plan and prepare Plan and prepare

1. Understanding the task: Types of Essays a) Descriptive - Usually specific e. g. describe a method, describe what happened, describe the main

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features or functions, or Summarizing the main points of a theory or article

E. g. - Does your house smell like fresh baked chocolate chip cookies? b)

Argumentative/analytical - What? Why? - Different opinions; for, against -

These need to be supported by examples or evidence (use Journals, Internet, Text books, your own views — some departments like to see personal

opinion backed by fact) E. g. - Should everyone go to university? c)

Evaluative (Compare and Contrast) - Find similar points and show awareness of minor differences. - Using different points bring out the differences. - A

comparison shows how two things are alike. - A contrast shows how two

things are different. E. g. - Write an essay comparing the weather in London

and Barcelona. d) Personal - These are not usually used as academic writing.

It is based entirely on personal experiences. - Involves a description of your

personal experience - Analysis of your experience and its relation to your

work, study, a theory etc. E. g. - How did you find your placement, discuss

how it relates to your field of study. 2. Plan and Prepare: It is important to

research your essay question and prepare a clear plan of what you are going

to cover. Sources of information to help you plan your essay: Internet,

textbooks, journals, questionnaires, lab work, lectures, friends, experience 3.

The First Draft: Essay Structures The Introduction - Does the essay have a

good opening/introductory paragraph? - Is the topic clear? - Is the thesis

statement clear? Do you know where the essay is going? The Body - Is the

body of the essay orderly? Are ideas in the best order? - Does the writer

present strong arguments/evidence? - Are the writer's arguments

convincing? - Does the writer give enough evidence? The Conclusion - Is the

conclusion clear? - Does the conclusion restate the thesis? - Does the

conclusion give the reader closure? 4. Review the essay: Overall Essay -

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Does the essay follow essay format? Grammar - Are there run-ons, fragments, comma splices, endless sentences, or spelling errors? - Does the writer have any problems with wordiness? - Does everything sound right?

Tips: - Read it aloud — does it make sense? - Look for typing and spelling errors — be aware that some may not be picked up by spellcheckers e. g. from and form.

4. Review first draft: Some people may need to rewrite and re-review the essay, this is perfectly acceptable.

5. Write final draft Use feedback to help you with your next essay.

Summary - Don't leave starting until the last minute - Make an essay plan - Don't lose yourself in research/reading — stay focused on what you need - Answer the question - Make sure the final result looks good

Definition The word 'essay' originally meant 'an attempt' or try at something, but now it usually means a short piece of writing on a specific subject. It is a complete piece of writing that can stand alone — it must make sense to the reader 'in itself'. You are given an essay title or question, which sets out the issues you need to address, and a word limit of around one or two thousand words — possibly a bit shorter to begin with.