

Exposition

1. Introduction

The expository essay is a genre of essay that requires the student to investigate an idea, evaluate evidence, expound on the idea, and set forth an argument concerning that idea in a clear and concise manner. This can be accomplished through comparison and contrast, definition, example, the analysis of cause and effect, etc.

2. Definition

Expose means to uncover or lay something bare, or to discover something in a way that others know what it is. Expository is derived from exposition, which is a noun of 'expose.' An expository essay is a genre of writing which tends to explain, illustrate, clarify, or explicate something in a way that it becomes clear for readers. Therefore, it could be an investigation, evaluation, or even argumentation about an idea for clarification.

3. Structure of the Expository Essay

The structure of the expository essay is held together by the following.

- A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.

It is essential that this thesis statement be appropriately narrowed to follow the guidelines set forth in the assignment. If the student does not master this portion of the essay, it will be quite difficult to compose an effective or persuasive essay.

- Clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Transitions are the mortar that holds the foundation of the essay together. Without logical progression of thought, the reader is unable to follow the essay's argument, and the structure will collapse.

- Body paragraphs that include evidential support.

Each paragraph should be limited to the exposition of one general idea. This will allow for clarity and direction throughout the essay. What is more, such conciseness creates an ease of readability for one's audience. It is important to note that each paragraph in the body of the essay must have some logical connection to the thesis statement in the opening paragraph.

- Evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).

Often times, students are required to write expository essays with little or no preparation; therefore, such essays do not typically allow for a great deal of statistical or factual evidence.

- A bit of creativity!

Though creativity and artfulness are not always associated with essay writing, it is an art form nonetheless. Try not to get stuck on the formulaic nature of expository writing at the expense of writing something interesting. Remember, though you may not be crafting the next great novel, you are attempting to leave a lasting impression on the people evaluating your essay.

- A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided.

It is at this point of the essay that students will inevitably begin to struggle. This is the portion of the essay that will leave the most immediate impression on the mind of the reader. Therefore, it must be effective and logical. Do not introduce any new information into the conclusion; rather, synthesize and come to a conclusion concerning the information presented in the body of the essay.

4. Types of the Expository Essay

In this lesson we'll deal with five fundamental types of the expository essay; they are organized according to the degree of difficulty and the level of cognitive ability involved.

4. Types of the Expository Essay

4.1. Definition Essay

A definition essay is a type of essay that defines a term, a concept, or an idea. The difference, however, in a simple definition and a definition essay is that a simple definition is a literal definition, while a definition essay covers all the connotative and denotative definitions of a term. A definition essay introduces the term, concept, or idea being defined, presents clear and specific information about the term, and uses examples to clarify it.

• **Writing an Effective Thesis Statement for a Definition Essay**

A thesis statement is the heart of an essay. The same is the case with a definition essay in which a thesis statement plays a key role in defining the term. The introduction just gives a good hook and background information. It is the thesis statement which presents the major points of the definition. Like all thesis statements of five-paragraph essays, the thesis statement of a definition essay has three major evidences that relate to the definition of the term, idea, or concept being defined. However, it just keeps the topic limited to the definition by structure, by function, or by analysis.

• **Difference Between a Definition and a Definition Essay**

Words, ideas, and concepts have various connotative meanings in different contexts. One concept in one text could be entirely different from the same concept used in another text. In order to explain in meticulous detail, various definitions are collected and analyzed. Definitions are also based on structure and analysis as well as functions. When these definitions are discussed according to their roles in different contexts, it is called a definition essay. A definition is just a simple statement about a term, but a definition essay is a discussion of several definitions of the same term.

4. Types of the Expository Essay

4.2. Process Essay

The process essay is, in simple terms, a HOW-TO essay. This type of paper serves to inform the reader on how something is done, i.e. teach him the steps for reaching a certain goal. The goal can be everything – starting from how something is built or manufactured, to how you cook a delicious meal.

A proper process essay should serve to lead its reader through the task and ensure certain success. In most cases, it is used to inform people who are new or inexperienced in the task.

In order to write a brilliant essay, you need to follow the traditional essay structure:

• **1.Introduction**

In the introduction the writer reveals the aim of the paper, leaving out the specific details for later. This part is much shorter than the body of the essay, providing the reader with basic background information, as well as the meaning of the discussed process and its life application. Basically, the introduction of an essay serves to showcase why the reader needs this knowledge and what he should expect from the remaining of the paper.

• **2.Body Paragraphs**

How many body paragraphs you will have depends on the process stages? However, make sure that this part is not too lengthy or complex to understand. Each of the stages should be presented in a previously planned order, listing one stage in one paragraph.

In addition to this, the stages of your essay's body should include the details that are necessary for the procedure to be completed properly, including the equipment and tools that need to be used, as well as the main difficulties and possible troubles the reader may experience in the process.

3. Conclusion

The conclusion paragraph is the shortest part of all three and serves to reveal the results of the process. In addition to this, the conclusion serves to summarize the idea of the guide, as well as provide the reader with a thesis restatement that reinforces the procedure's significance.

4. Types of the Expository Essay

4.3. Classification Essay

Definition:

It is a formal piece of writing designed to showcase your skills in categorizing and generalization. You will be required to organize things into groups and offer up examples that fit into each. It is up to you to decide on the criteria for classification, but you must be able to explain your reasoning.

Structure:

One of the first things to think about when learning how to write a classification essay is the structure. For the purpose of this guide we will go with the popular 'five paragraphs' method, but when you come to actually write your assignment you can add in additional paragraphs as appropriate;

1. Introductory Paragraph

As with any type of essay, your starting point is the introduction. You will want to clearly identify your subject, so explain what you are going to be categorizing. It is also a good idea to offer readers an explanation of the purpose of your essay. Why are you categorizing these items? Finally, you will want to close your introduction with your thesis statement. This will identify your groups and perhaps offer a brief explanation of the criteria for each of them

2. Body Paragraphs

The body of your essay will be 3 or more paragraphs. Each paragraph should deal with a different category. Start by explaining the criteria for each of them and perhaps discuss the strengths or weaknesses. You should also offer relevant examples. Depending on the length of your paragraphs you may wish to break them down into shorter ones. This is fine, but you will need to make sure you have clear transitions when moving to a new category.

3. Conclusion

The final paragraph is where you will pull together the various categories that you have examined in the body of your classification essay. It is usual to offer a brief summary on each of them. Depending on the subject matter, you may also decide to recommend the particular one over the others, but if you do so make sure you emphasize why you have come to that conclusion.

4.4. Cause/Effect Essay

Definition:

A cause and effect essay looks at the reasons (or causes) for something, then discusses the results (or effects). For this reason, cause and effect essays are sometimes referred to as reason and result essays. They are one of the most common forms of organisation in academic writing. Sometimes the whole essay will be cause and effect, though sometimes this may be only part of the whole essay. It is also possible, especially for short exam essays, that only the causes or the effects, not both, are discussed. See the examples below.

- Discuss the causes and effects of global warming ['cause and effect' essay]
- Explain the high death rate in Chernobyl ['causes' only essay]
- Discuss the WTO and its effects on the Chinese economy ['effects' only essay]

Structure:

There are two main ways to structure a cause and effect essay. These are similar to the ways to structure problem-solution essays, namely using a *block* or a *chain* structure. For the *block* structure, all of the causes are listed first, and all of the effects are listed afterwards. For the *chain* structure, each cause is followed immediately by the effect. Usually that effect will then be the cause of the next effect, which is why this structure is called 'chain'. Both types of structure have their merits. The former is generally clearer, especially for shorter essays, while the latter ensures that any effects you present relate directly to the causes you have given.

Conclusion:

In cause/effect essays, the writer tries to explain for their reader either the causal relationship between two ideas, concepts or phenomena, or present the consequences of one thing on another. They may as well do the two; show how one cause or a set of causes leads to one or multiple consequences.

4.5. Compare and Contrast Essay

Definition:

Compare and contrast essays are multi-paragraph compositions that explain ways in which two (or occasionally more) subjects are similar and different. In these essays, compare means describing similarities between the subjects. The essay on farmlife versus city would provide at least one paragraph on how people's lives in the city are like the lives of the people that live on a farm. Basically, the comparison tells what they have in common.

When a writer contrasts two things, he or she explains ways in which they are different. After completing a unit of study on where people live, students should be able to provide several details about how life on a farm can be vastly different from life in a city.

Structure of a Compare and Contrast Essay:

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Generally, this essay type is characterized by points of comparison and analogies and usually arranged in the emphatic way. It is a great method to help a person progress in his critical thinking, as well as his writing skills. Basically, the structure of compare and contrast essay includes three components: the introduction, body and conclusion.

1. **Introduction.** Here the author states what he's comparing. This part may include the main differences and similarities, advantages and disadvantages, or an explanation of the two opposing sides.
2. **Body.** The body paragraphs can be arranged in several ways. For example, one paragraph may discuss similarities and another differences, or the paragraphs may express different positions on an issue. The more complex structure is when there are passages about each aspect of the elements that are being compared.

3. **Conclusion.** The conclusion is a generalization of the thesis stated in the introduction. It gives a brief summary of the most important similarities and differences, often putting the comparison and contrast into a larger context with a personal statement and/or some kind of prediction.

The simplest format for the compare and contrast passage devotes one body paragraph or section to each element. Two is the most popular (and natural) number, but the author may compare and contrast any number of elements. The essay may also divide according to qualities of the latter. Another possible structure devotes one body paragraph to differences and one to similarities discussed objects.

These are the general standards to succeed in writing a compare and contrast essay:

- Your essay must be arranged in a logical way with an introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion;
- The essay must deal with each of the two or several selections;
- It must relate one selection to the other, comparing and contrasting them in a consistent way;
- The author must support his assertions with solid evidence (figures, quotations, references, etc.);
- The essay must have good grammar and spelling and mature writing style.

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Conclusion:

Again, compare and contrast essays can cover almost any topic and may pop up in a variety of subject areas. In order to make decisions about what to include, writers need to keep one thing in mind: relevance. Relevance helps determine which characteristics are worth comparing and contrasting. Your thesis will help you determine the relevance, or irrelevance, of facts. That means writers need a strong thesis statement.

This is a sentence that lets the reader know the topic and the argument the writer is making. Something like: While city life and farm life have few similarities, city life provides the hustle and bustle of many people, distinct noises, and social opportunities that are different from that of farm life. If this is the writer's thesis statement, then the essay should focus on details that are relevant to the hustle and bustle of city life, noises, and social activities available in the city versus on a farm. The thesis statement will help keep the writing focused on just a few ideas that are based on the overall topic.

5. Conclusion

Expository essay writing is the most common type of essay writing. It tends to explain and illustrate a particular idea in a clear and appropriate manner. It is in fact a type of writing that you find in all the other genres since writers always need to explain their ideas to the audience.