

How to write an Essay

Writing an essay is a process in order to give your opinion about something. Introduce your opinion and your reasons for holding it. You must offer evidence as to why your opinion is valid. Then you must show your scope of your opinion, and how it fits with other opinions. Conclude your essay with a look at other people's ideas to show how your opinion fits with theirs.

There are a few simple steps to follow for writing a good essay. When you supply ideas in the right order, you will see how easy it is to create an essay.

What is a part of an essay?

The Introduction:

Getting the opening statement right is perhaps the most important factor in the essay writing process.

- Write the thesis statement. The main idea of the essay is stated in a single sentence called the thesis statement.
- The first goal in your introduction is to grab the reader's attention with an interesting fact, a description, a question, an exciting quotation or with a provocative question.
- Your introduction should be in one paragraph, and it can be long as 500 or 600 words in a 2000 word essay.
- Keep the introduction brief, but mention all your main ideas.

The Body (Supporting paragraphs):

- The Body paragraphs develop the main idea of your essay.
- Develop each supporting point with facts, details, and examples.
- Each paragraph should contain a topic sentence (or main idea sentence), supporting sentences, and a summary sentence.
- Each paragraph should have an identical structure.
- The first paragraph of the body should include the strongest argument.

The Concluding:

This paragraph should include the following:

- Relate it back to your main ideas or points and reiterate your answer to the question.
- A restatement of the thesis statement, using some of the original language.
- A summary of the three main points from the body of the essay.
- A final statement that gives the reader signals that the discussion has come to an end.
- Don't introduce new information in your conclusion.
- The conclusion should move from specific to general.

Types of Essays

Cause/Effect Essay: Focuses on a condition or situation and asks either why? (Cause) or what is the result? (Effect).

Expository Essay: Gives directions or instructions about how to complete a task, or how something is done.

Definition Essay: Defines a topic both concretely (dictionary def.) and abstractly (extended def.). A dictionary often defines a word three ways: the term, the class to which it belongs, the characteristics that distinguish it.

Comparison/Contrast Essay: Shows the differences and/or similarities between two persons, places, things, ideas, etc.

Argumentative or Pro/Con Essay: Your opinion on a subject is argued based on reasoning and understanding. You present objections and refute them.

Character Analysis Essay: Focuses on your observations about a character in literature. Your evaluation of the character is based on what that character says, does, and/or what other characters say about him/her.

Literary Analysis Essay: Focuses on your observations about a book, story, poem, or play.

Use this Sample Basic Essay as a Model

"The essay below demonstrates the principles of writing a basic essay. The different parts of the essay have been labeled. The thesis statement is in bold, the topic sentences are in italics, and each main point is underlined. When you write your own essay, of course, you will not need to mark these parts of the essay unless your teacher has asked you to do so. They are marked here just so that you can more easily identify them.

"A dog is man's best friend." That common saying may contain some truth, but dogs are not the only animal friend whose companionship people enjoy. For many people, a cat is their best friend. **Despite what dog lovers may believe, cats make excellent housepets as they are good companions, they are civilized members of the household, and they are easy to care for.**

In the first place, people enjoy the companionship of cats. Many cats are affectionate. They will snuggle up and ask to be petted, or scratched under the chin. Who can resist a purring cat? *If they're not feeling affectionate, cats are generally quite playful.* They love to chase balls and feathers, or just about anything dangling from a string. They especially enjoy playing when their owners are participating in the game. *Contrary to popular opinion, cats can be trained.* Using rewards and punishments, just like with a dog, a cat can be trained to avoid unwanted behavior or perform tricks. Cats will even fetch!

In the second place, cats are civilized members of the household. Unlike dogs, cats do not bark or make other loud noises. Most cats don't even meow very often. They generally lead a quiet existence. *Cats also don't often have "accidents."* Mother cats train their kittens to use the litter box, and most cats will use it without fail from that time on. Even stray cats usually understand the concept when shown the box and will use it regularly. *Cats do have claws, and owners must make provision for this.* A tall scratching post in a favorite cat area of the house will often keep the cat content to leave the furniture alone. As a last resort, of course, cats can be declawed.

Lastly, one of the most attractive features of cats as house pets is their ease of care. Cats do not have to be walked. They get plenty of exercise in the house as they play, and they do their business in the litter box. Cleaning a litter box is a quick, painless procedure. *Cats also take care of their own grooming.* Bathing a cat is almost never necessary because under ordinary circumstances cats clean themselves. Cats are more particular about personal cleanliness than people are. *In addition, cats can be left home alone for a few hours without fear.* Unlike some pets, most cats will not destroy the furnishings when left alone. They are content to go about their usual activities until their owners return.

Cats are low maintenance, civilized companions. People who have small living quarters or less time for pet care should appreciate these characteristics of cats. However, many people who have plenty of space and time still opt to have a cat because they love the cat personality. In many ways, cats are the ideal house pet."

Additional Resources

<http://www1.aucegypt.edu/academic/writers/>
<http://www.essay.org/>
<http://members.tripod.com/~lklivingston/essay/>
<http://essayinfo.com/>
<http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/MasterToc.html>

Work Cited

"The Essay Organization" <<http://www.essay.org/>>
Sample essay was taken from < <http://members.tripod.com/~lklivingston/essay/index.html>> created by Kathy Livingston Last Updated: 22-Feb-2009
Meriwether, Nell W. Strategies for Writing Successful Essays. Chicago: NTC Publishing Group, 1998.
Sebranek, Patrick , Verne Meyer, and Dave Kemper. Writers INC: A Student Handbook for Writing & Learning. Wilmington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996.