



1. Introduction:

An essay is "a short piece of writing about a particular subject by a student as part of a course of study".¹ It can also be a piece of writing giving someone's ideas about politics, society etc.. According to the New Encyclopedia Britannica an essay is "an analytic or interpretative literary composition which deals with its subject usually from a limited or personal point of view".²

There are four types of essays.

- A narrative essay - tells a story by relating a sequence of events.
- A descriptive essay - focuses on an event, person or object by describing details
- An explanatory essay - analyzes, explains or interprets an issue
- An argumentative essay - usually tries to persuade readers to take some action or to discuss an issue by giving arguments in favor or against some theory, opinion or common facts.

2. Preparing a composition

Before you actually start writing your essay you should know what you want to write about. First of all you should

- Define the topic clearly. TIP: WRITE DOWN YOUR TOPIC IN ONE SENTENCE!
- Brainstorm ideas and write down what you know about the topic in a mind map, diagram or table.
- Find information from various sources (books, articles, internet, if necessary)
- Formulate your opinion on the topic.
- Arrange your material in a logical order (ex: start with general ideas and then go on to talk about details) or chronological order.

Start with general ideas and then go on to talk about details. Put things into chronological order. Use examples to support your point of view.

3. Writing your composition

An essay or composition is normally divided into three parts.

- An introduction - one or two sentences to introduce the topic to the reader and tries to catch the reader's interest³
- The main body - includes several paragraphs with your arguments according to the order you have decided beforehand. Start each new idea, arguments, thesis in a new paragraph. Start by giving all the arguments

¹ Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2003, 531. Ex: *An essay on/about Bernard Shaw.*

² The Encyclopedia Britannica 2002, Standard Edition, entry: essay.

³ A good way is to start with a question, a provocative statement, a quotation or an small anecdote.

in favour and then all the counter arguments. (Alternative: follow each argument with a counter argument)

- The ending - summarizes your main points again and gives your conclusion, your final opinion or your call for action.⁴

TIP: DO NOT INTRODUCE NEW ARGUMENTS HERE!

4. Check your essay

Read all your sentences and check whether they are complete and whether they make sense. Check also your for grammar, spelling and punctuation mistakes.

5. Language for Composition

Here are some phrases you can use to brush up your style.

Introducing the topic

- *Let me begin by stating that ...*
- *Let us start by pointing out that ...*
- *It is important/useful to begin by saying that/by asking whether ...*
- *There are two/several/many points of view/issues/questions to consider/to think about/ to mention here/in dealing with/in discussing*

Arranging your material by using Connectives⁵

- To express a certain order
 - *to begin with - initially - first of all - first(ly)..., (second(ly)..., thirdly..., etc.) - next - then - later - finally - lastly*
- To add ideas
 - *also - as well - in addition - additionally - too - moreover - furthermore - what is more - Another point to consider is... - a further problem to note is that....*
- To give examples
 - *for example - for instance - by way of illustration*
- To generalize
 - *as a rule - generally - in general - by and large - on the whole*
- To state exceptions
 - *except for - apart from*
- To State alternatives
 - *alternatively - on the one hand, on the other (hand) - though - however - although - even though - despite - in spite of*
- To express certainty
 - *clearly - evidently - obviously - undoubtedly*

⁴ You can include again an interesting anecdote and/or a quotation

⁵ Connectives are words and phrases which you use to link sentences and paragraphs. Using connectives helps readers to follow your ideas more easily because they give your text a clear structure.

- To give a reason
 - o *consequently - that is why - therefore - this is the reason why - as a result - because...because - as...as - since..since - the reason foris that ... - the reason why...., is that*
- To give an opinion
 - o *in my opinion - to my mind - the way I see it - in my view*
- To compare or give an opposing opinion
 - o *in the same way - similarly - likewise - equally - on the one hand ... on the other hand - in contrast - on the contrary*

Conclusion

- To state results
 - o *because of this - as a result - as a consequence - consequently - therefore - the effect of this is to (infinitive clause)/ that (clause)*
- To conclude
 - o *finally - in conclusion - to conclude - in summary - to sum up - in short, therefore - in general - on the whole - then - it is clear that - it seems safe to say that....*