

Essays

What are the steps in the writing process?

1. (Assessing the writing situation)
2. Prewriting
3. Organizing/Outlining
4. Drafting
5. (Sharing)
6. Revising
7. Editing/Proofreading
8. Publishing (final form)

*This process is *recursive*, not linear. You constantly *move back and forth between the steps* (except for assessing the writing situation and sharing) as necessary, not simply proceed step-by-step through each one.

Note: Different books and websites will typically list between 4-7 steps, nearly all of which are included in this list above.

What three major parts does an essay consist of?

1. Introduction
2. Body paragraphs
3. Conclusion

What are some organizing patterns for paragraphs and essays?

- ⊙ Process
- ⊙ Narrative
- ⊙ Description
- ⊙ Comparison/Contrast
- ⊙ Cause/Effect
- ⊙ Problem/Solution
- ⊙ Classification
- ⊙ Argumentation/Persuasion
- ⊙ Example

What is the first thing you should do if you are allowed to choose a general topic for an essay?

Limit the subject (e.g. sports > major league baseball salaries)

What are some points you have to address when assessing the writing situation?

- ⊙ Subject (What do you want to write about?)
- ⊙ Writer's attitude toward the subject (How do you really feel about this subject?)
- ⊙ Purpose (Why are you writing?)
- ⊙ Audience (Who are you writing for?)
- ⊙ Sources of available information (Where can you get information to support what you're writing about?)
- ⊙ Writing assignment (Are you clear about what to do?)

What are some common prewriting techniques?

- ⊙ Brainstorming (Listing)
- ⊙ Clustering (Mind-mapping)
- ⊙ Freewriting
- ⊙ Asking the six journalists' questions (who, what, when, where, why, how)
- ⊙ Keeping a journal

What should you do after you generate some ideas through prewriting?

Organize by selecting the information you will use and discarding the rest. Then put the information that you'll use into an outline.

What does an effective introduction do?

Captures the readers' interest and gives them a sense of your topic and purpose

What is the most common type of introduction?

1. General statement
2. Limiting sentences
3. Thesis statement

*Looks like an inverted (upside-down) triangle, moving from general to specific.

What are some ways to capture your readers' interest in the introduction?

- ⊙ Ask a provocative question or a short series of related questions
- ⊙ Use an engaging quotation
- ⊙ Make an unexpected or controversial statement
- ⊙ State a common belief and then declare a contrary view
- ⊙ Offer a striking example or description of something
- ⊙ Provide an unusual fact or statistic
- ⊙ Tell a brief story or anecdote, perhaps involving a personal experience
- ⊙ Pose a hypothetical situation
- ⊙ Define an important term
- ⊙ Make an interesting analogy (comparison between two things of a different kind or quality)

What should writers avoid in an introduction?

- ⊙ Don't blatantly announce your intent
- ⊙ Don't apologize
- ⊙ Don't make a promise that you don't fulfill in the essay
- ⊙ Don't create an introduction that is too long or too short

What is a thesis statement? What are the two parts?

A thesis statement expresses the main idea of the essay and the writer's point of view. It has two parts: topic (subject) and controlling idea (the point you are making about the subject).

What is a thesis statement not?

- ⊙ A title
- ⊙ An announcement of the subject
- ⊙ A statement of absolute fact

What are the characteristics of a good thesis statement?

- ⊙ A good thesis is restricted (bite-size issues easy to support)
- ⊙ A good thesis is unified (expresses one major idea about the subject)
- ⊙ A good thesis is specific (clear, exact, to the point)

What is a topic sentence? Where does it usually appear in a paragraph?

A sentence that clearly states the main idea of the paragraph – which is usually at the beginning of the paragraph

What are 5 characteristics of body paragraphs?

- ⊙ Clarity (main point and supporting details of the paragraph are clear)
- ⊙ Unity (all sentences clearly relate to the main idea of the paragraph and support the topic sentence)
- ⊙ Development (sufficient details – examples, facts, statistics, etc.)
- ⊙ Organization (logical pattern of arrangement – time, space, or order of importance/emphasis)
- ⊙ Coherence (sentences are logically connected to each other and the ideas flow smoothly)

What should you avoid in body paragraphs?

- ⊙ Don't write paragraphs that are overly long or short
- ⊙ Don't include more than one idea in each paragraph
- ⊙ Don't include general statements that are not supported with specific detail
- ⊙ Don't repeat ideas or details unnecessarily in a paragraph

What is the most common type of conclusion?

1. Summary or restatement of main point
2. Major deduction (if any)
3. Final statement(s).

*Looks like a triangle, moving from specific to general.

What are some ways to conclude an essay?

- ⊙ Summarize the main points of the essay
- ⊙ Discuss the broader implications of your topic and encourage your readers to consider your topic from a new perspective
- ⊙ Make a prediction
- ⊙ Offer a recommendation or suggest a course of action
- ⊙ Use an engaging quotation that reinforces your main point
- ⊙ Ask a provocative question or short series of related questions
- ⊙ End with a brief anecdote that reflects your main point
- ⊙ State your personal opinion or position on the topic
- ⊙ Invite your readers to relate the topic to their own lives
- ⊙ Refer back to an anecdote, quotation, question, etc. in your introduction

What should writers avoid in a conclusion?

- ⊙ Don't simply repeat or restate your thesis
- ⊙ Don't introduce a new idea that needs further development
- ⊙ Don't announce what you have done
- ⊙ Don't apologize
- ⊙ Don't create a conclusion that is too long or too short
- ⊙ Don't end in an abrupt manner

When you revise, what do you need to check?

- ⊙ Content
- ⊙ Audience
- ⊙ Purpose
- ⊙ Tone
- ⊙ Title
- ⊙ Clarity
- ⊙ Unity
- ⊙ Coherence
- ⊙ Development
- ⊙ Organization

When you edit, what do you need to check?

- ⊙ Word choice
- ⊙ Sentence structure
- ⊙ Grammar
- ⊙ Usage
- ⊙ Citation of sources
- ⊙ Essay format

Essay Structure

The following is a model for the standard five paragraph essay.

introductory paragraph

introduction
thesis statement
plan of development:
points 1, 2, 3

The *introduction* attracts the reader's attention and interest.

The *thesis statement* states the main idea advanced in the paper.

The *plan of development* briefly summarizes or lists the points that support the thesis. Here the points are presented in the order in which they will be developed in the paper.

first supporting paragraph

topic sentence (point #1)
specific evidence or support

The *topic sentence* advances the first supporting point for the thesis, and the *specific evidence* in the rest of the paragraph develops that first point.

second supporting paragraph

topic sentence (point #2)
specific evidence or support

The *topic sentence* advances the second supporting point for the thesis, and the *specific evidence* in the rest of the paragraph develops that second point.

third supporting paragraph

topic sentence (point #3)
specific evidence or support

The *topic sentence* advances the third supporting point for the thesis, and the *specific evidence* in the rest of the paragraph develops that third point.

concluding paragraph

summary, conclusion, or both.

A *summary* is a *brief restatement* of the thesis and its main points. A *conclusion* is a final thought(s) stemming from the subject of the paper.

Arial black
Capitalized, 12 point, centered

Indent five spaces

Cats Make Excellent House Pets

2 spaces

"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 house pets 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.

2 spaces after each period

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 pets.

Introduction

1. How does the writer capture the reader's interest in the first line?
How does the writer limit the subject?
2. What is the thesis statement? What is the topic? What is the controlling idea?

Body paragraphs

1. What three transition signals are used to introduce the body paragraphs?
2. What is the topic sentence of the first body paragraph?
3. How many supporting points does the first body paragraph have?
How many supporting details for each one?
4. What is the topic sentence of the second paragraph?
5. How many supporting points does the second body paragraph have?
How many supporting details for each one?
6. What is the topic sentence of the third body paragraph?
7. How many supporting points does the third body paragraph have?
How many supporting details for each one?
8. Are all of the three body paragraphs clear, unified, developed, organized, and coherent?

Conclusion

How does the writer conclude the essay?

Essay

What type of essay is this? What organizing pattern is used?

Arial, 12 point, left-aligned, double-space. (This example is single-spaced so the questions will fit on the page).

Paragraph to Essay Organizer

Paragraph

Hook/Topic sentence:

Essay

Introduction: Hook, Connecting Sentences (these help link the hook to the thesis):

Thesis (contains your topic, what you think about it and an essay map (3 points):

Paragraph - 1st Supporting Sentence

Supporting Sentence 1:

Essay - 1st Body Paragraph

Topic sentence (contains topic and controlling idea for 2nd essay map point) and support:

Paragraph - 2nd Supporting Sentence

Supporting Sentence 2:

Essay - 2nd Body Paragraph

Topic sentence (contains topic and controlling idea for second essay map point) and support:

Paragraph - 3rd Supporting Sentence

Supporting Sentence 3:

Essay - 3rd Body Paragraph

Topic sentence (contains topic and controlling idea for second essay map point) and support:

Paragraph – Concluding Sentence

Concluding sentence:

Essay - Concluding paragraph

Restate Thesis:

Review main points (repeat in a new way; do not repeat the thesis/essay map word-for-word):

Concluding Sentence (leave your reader with something to think about – use prediction, suggestion or a revelation):