

原力英语全能提升训练营

B2 学术写作训练

学术写作类别和写作形式

ESSAY WRITING

WHAT IS AN ESSAY?

Essays are shorter pieces of writing that often require the student to hone a number of skills such as close reading, analysis, comparison and contrast, persuasion, conciseness, clarity, and exposition. As is evidenced by this list of attributes, there is much to be gained by the student who strives to succeed at essay writing.

GENRES OF ESSAYS

The four genres of essays are common paper assignments:

- Expository essays
- Descriptive essays
- Narrative essays
- Argumentative (Persuasive) essays

GENRES OF ESSAYS

| Essay 的类型 | 所需要的技能 | 示例 |
|---------------|--|-------------------------|
| Argumentative | <ul style="list-style-type: none">√ 通过研究形成一种观点√ 建立基于证据的论点 | 互联网的兴起对教育的影响是积极的还是消极的? |
| Expository | <ul style="list-style-type: none">√ 围绕主题的说明知识√ 将信息表达清楚 | 解释15世纪印刷机的发明是如何改变欧洲社会的。 |
| Narrative | <ul style="list-style-type: none">√ 创造性的使用语言√ 呈现引人注目的叙述 | 写一段让你对自己有所了解的经历。 |
| Descriptive | <ul style="list-style-type: none">√ 创造性的使用语言√ 描述感官细节 | 描述一个对你有感情价值的物品。 |

WRITING ESSAYS FOR EXAMS

WHAT IS A WELL WRITTEN ANSWER TO AN ESSAY QUESTION?

It is...

- **Well Focused**
- Be sure to answer the question completely, that is, answer all parts of the question. Avoid "padding." A lot of rambling and ranting is a sure sign that the writer doesn't really know what the right answer is and hopes that somehow, something in that overgrown jungle of words was the correct answer.

WHAT IS A WELL WRITTEN ANSWER TO AN ESSAY QUESTION?

It is...

- **Well Organized**
- Don't write in a haphazard "think-as-you-go" manner. Do some planning and be sure that what you write has a clearly marked introduction which both states the point(s) you are going to make and also, if possible, how you are going to proceed. In addition, the essay should have a clearly indicated conclusion which summarizes the material covered and emphasizes your thesis or main point.

WHAT IS A WELL WRITTEN ANSWER TO AN ESSAY QUESTION?

It is...

- **Well Supported**
- Do not just assert something is true, prove it. What facts, figures, examples, tests, etc. prove your point?
In many cases, the difference between an A and a B as a grade is due to the effective use of supporting evidence.

WHAT IS A WELL WRITTEN ANSWER TO AN ESSAY QUESTION?

It is...

- **Well Packaged**
- People who do not use conventions of language are thought of by their readers as less competent and less educated.

**SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS
&
USEFUL TRANSITION WORDS**

SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS

- Most essay questions will have one or more "key words" that indicate which organizational pattern you should use in your answer.
- The five most common organizational patterns for essay exams are analysis, cause and effect, comparison/contrast, process analysis, and thesis-support.

ANALYSIS

Typical questions

Analysis involves breaking something down into its components and discovering the parts that make up the whole.

- "Analyze X."
- "What are the components of X?"
- "What are the five different kinds of X?"
- "Discuss the different types of X."

ANALYSIS

Example

Q: "Discuss the different services a junior college offers a community."

A: Thesis: A junior college offers the community at least three main types of educational services: vocational education for young people, continuing education for older people, and personal development for all individuals.

ANALYSIS

Process

Outline for supporting details and examples. For example, if you were answering the example question, an outline might include:

- Vocational education
- Continuing education
- Personal development

ANALYSIS

Write the essay, describing each part or component and making transitions between each of your descriptions.

Some useful transition words include:

- **first, second, third, etc.**
- **next**
- **another**
- **in addition**
- **moreover**

Conclude the essay by emphasizing how each part you have described makes up the whole you have been asked to analyze.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Cause and effect involves tracing probable or known effects of a certain cause or examining one or more effects and discussing the reasonable or known cause(s).

Typical questions:

- "What are the causes of X?"
- "What led to X?"
- "Why did X occur?"
- "Why does X happen?"
- "What would be the effects of X?"

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Example

Q: "Define recession and discuss the probable effects a recession would have on today's society."

A: Thesis: A recession, which is a nationwide lull in business activity, would be detrimental to society in the following ways: it wouldA....., it wouldB....., and it wouldC..... .

The rest of the answer would explain, in some detail, the three effects: A, B, and C.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Useful transition words:

- **because**
- **consequently**
- **therefore**
- **for this reason**
- **as a result**

COMPARISON-CONTRAST

Typical questions:

- "How does X differ from Y?"
- "Compare X and Y."
- "What are the advantages and disadvantages of X and Y?"

COMPARISON-CONTRAST

Example:

Q: "Which would you rather own—a compact car or a full-sized car?"

A: Thesis: I would own a compact car rather than a full-sized car for the following reasons:A.....,B.....,C....., andD..... .

COMPARISON-CONTRAST

Two patterns of development:

Pattern I

- Full-sized car
- Advantages
- Disadvantages

- Compact car
- Advantages
- Disadvantages

COMPARISON-CONTRAST

Two patterns of development:

Pattern 2

- Advantages
 - Full-sized car
 - Compact car
- Disadvantages
 - Full-sized car
 - Compact car

COMPARISON-CONTRAST

Useful transition words

- **on the other hand**
- **similarly**
- **yet**
- **unlike A, B ...**
- **in the same way**
- **but**
- **while both A and B are ..., only B ..**
- **nevertheless**
- **on the contrary**
- **though**
- **despite**
- **however**
- **conversely**
- **while A is ..., B is ...**

THESIS AND SUPPORT

Thesis and support involves stating a clearly worded opinion or interpretation and then defending it with all the data, examples, facts, and so on that you can draw from the material you have studied.

Typical questions:

- "Discuss X."
- "A noted authority has said X. Do you agree or disagree?"
- "Defend or refute X."
- "Do you think that X is valid? Defend your position."

THESIS AND SUPPORT

Example:

Q: "Despite criticism, television is useful because it aids in the socializing process of our children."

A: Television hinders rather than helps in the socializing process of our children becauseA.....,B....., andC..... .

The rest of the answer is devoted to developing arguments A, B, and C.

THESIS AND SUPPORT

Useful transition words:

- **therefore**
- **for this reason**
- **it follows that**
- **as a result**
- **because**
- **however**
- **consequently**

EXPOSITORY ESSAYS

EXPOSITORY ESSAYS

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.

EXPOSITORY ESSAYS

- 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.

EXPOSITORY ESSAYS

- **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.

EXPOSITORY ESSAYS

- **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.

EXPOSITORY ESSAYS

- **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.

EXPOSITORY ESSAYS

- **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.

EXPOSITORY ESSAYS

- **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.

EXPOSITORY ESSAY EXAMPLE

Harry and Draco: Not As Different as They Seem

Harry and Draco: Not As Different as They Seem

Whether you're sorted into Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, or Slytherin, your background and behavior tells a lot about who you are. Harry Potter and Draco Malfoy from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* are in opposite houses, and at times they seem like opposite characters. Even though Harry and Draco appear different in every way, readers can see how alike these two rivals really are.

The first difference between Harry and Draco is their upbringing. Harry was raised by Muggles (non-magical people), while Draco comes from an elite wizarding family that hates Muggles. When the boys meet for the first time, Draco talks about whether Muggle-born wizards should even attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry:

“I really don’t think they should let the other sort in, do you? They’re just not the same, they’ve never been brought up to know our ways. Some of them have never even heard of Hogwarts until they get the letter, imagine. I think they should keep it in the old wizarding families.”

(Rowling 61)

Harry doesn't respond to Draco's comment. Even though Harry is from an "old wizarding family" like Draco's, he is one of those people who had not heard of Hogwarts because of his Muggle upbringing. Draco's negative opinion about families he believes to be "lower" than his family creates his first conflict with Harry.

The way that Draco and Harry treat people from other backgrounds is another difference between them. On the Hogwarts Express, Harry and Draco meet again, this time with Ron Weasley. Harry makes friends with Ron, while Draco immediately insults him.

“You’ll soon find out some wizarding families are much better than others, Potter. You don’t want to go making friends with the wrong sort. I can help you there.”

[Draco] held out his hand to shake Harry’s, but Harry didn’t take it.

“I think I can tell who the wrong sort are for myself, thanks,” he said coolly. (Rowling 81)

Harry won’t join in with Draco’s put-down and even refuses to shake his hand. Harry is the kind of person who stands up for people, while Draco tears them down. But even though Harry and Draco are early enemies, their character traits can be quite similar, too.

They are both competitive and passionate about their houses. Both boys are even willing to break Hogwarts rules for their own purposes. When Hagrid, the school groundskeeper, has an illegal dragon that is about to hatch, Harry convinces his friends to break the rules and see it.

“Hermione, how many times in our lives are we going to see a dragon hatching?” (said Harry.)

“We’ve got lessons, we’ll get into trouble, and that’s nothing to what Hagrid’s going to be in when someone finds out what he’s doing.” (Rowling 171)

Harry and his friends end up sneaking out to see the dragon. But, as they are about to leave, they find out that another student has also broken the rules to see the dragon: Draco.

Harry bolted to the door and looked out. Even at a distance there was no mistaking him. Malfoy had seen the dragon. (Rowling 172)

Harry broke the rules to protect Hagrid, and Draco broke the rules to get Harry in trouble. Their motivations are different, but neither character seems to care too much about Hogwarts rules. Later on, they both get detention at Hogwarts for different reasons, demonstrating that their behavior is treated the same way.

Even though Harry and Draco are enemies throughout the book, they are not completely different. Their similarities help them grow, and their differences help them make choices that are right for their character. Their houses may be opposites, but their characters certainly aren't.

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS

The descriptive essay is a genre of essay that asks the student to describe something—object, person, place, experience, emotion, situation, etc. This genre encourages the student’s ability to create a written account of a particular experience. What is more, this genre allows for a great deal of artistic freedom (the goal of which is to paint an image that is vivid and moving in the mind of the reader).

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS

Guidelines for writing a descriptive essay.

- **Take time to brainstorm**
- If your instructor asks you to describe your favorite food, make sure that you jot down some ideas before you begin describing it. For instance, if you choose pizza, you might start by writing down a few words: sauce, cheese, crust, pepperoni, sausage, spices, hot, melted, etc. Once you have written down some words, you can begin by compiling descriptive lists for each one.

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS

- **Use clear and concise language.**
- This means that words are chosen carefully, particularly for their relevancy in relation to that which you are intending to describe.
- **Choose vivid language.**
- Why use *horse* when you can choose *stallion*? Why not use *tempestuous* instead of *violent*? Or why not *miserly* in place of *cheap*? Such choices form a firmer image in the mind of the reader and often times offer nuanced meanings that serve better one's purpose.

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS

- **Use your senses!**
- Remember, if you are describing something, you need to be appealing to the senses of the reader. Explain how the thing smelled, felt, sounded, tasted, or looked. Embellish the moment with senses.
- **What were you thinking?!**
- If you can describe emotions or feelings related to your topic, you will connect with the reader on a deeper level. Many have felt crushing loss in their lives, or ecstatic joy, or mild complacency. Tap into this emotional reservoir in order to achieve your full descriptive potential.

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS

- **Leave the reader with a clear impression.**
- One of your goals is to evoke a strong sense of familiarity and appreciation in the reader. If your reader can walk away from the essay craving the very pizza you just described, you are on your way to writing effective descriptive essays.
- **Be organized!**
- It is easy to fall into an incoherent rambling of emotions and senses when writing a descriptive essay. However, you must strive to present an organized and logical description if the reader is to come away from the essay with a cogent sense of what it is you are attempting to describe.

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY EXAMPLE

Why Moving North is The Best Decision of my Life

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Moving up to our north cabin and spending time there had always been something that I enjoyed and looked up to. It was a nice, beautiful, and serene place. It offered a lot in terms of peace and serenity that you will not find in cities.

We used to look forward to our summer vacations. So that we can go up north and experience things that we cannot do in the city. Even though the time has changed and things are not as they used to be, the memory is still fresh.

The atmosphere up north was quite different than in the city. When in the cabin, I used to marvel at how different the atmosphere and life here is than the city. Life in the city is full of noise and tension. You have to get up for work, and the noise of traffic would never let you relax and enjoy nature.

Only if you are lucky to have it around. Things up north were different, you can enjoy the sunshine and greenery, and there is no hustle-bustle. The air was fresh, healthy, and clean. The nights are quiet, and you can hear the animals coming out to hunt for food.

Cities are filled with polluted air. This abundance of polluted air is mainly due to the heavy traffic and factories. The air is thick due to smoke, smog, and other types of air contaminants that no one wants to breathe in. Getting clean air in a city is next to impossible.

Unlikely, the air in up north is fresh and clean. There is a big difference that you will notice between the air that you will find up north. The smell is fresh, and you cannot help but just breathe in it constantly. It cleansed the lungs and filled me with freshness and a sense of cleanliness.

Now that things have changed and those experiences have become memories, I made a decision. A decision of moving up north and raising my family there. Moving here, I have the satisfaction that my family has a clean and healthy environment.

Clean air to breathe in and safe surroundings. I believe that this is the best decision of my life. And, I am happy that my kids will have the same experiences as I had as a kid.