

# 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（二）

# GENRES OF ESSAYS

The four genres of essays are common paper assignments:

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

# **NARRATIVE ESSAYS**

## WHAT IS A NARRATIVE ESSAY?

- A narrative essay(记叙文) is a type of essay that has a single **motif**, or a central point, around which the whole narrative revolves. All incidents, happenings, and characters revolve around a single motif presented in the narrative.
- When writing a narrative essay, one might think of it as telling a story. These essays are often anecdotal, experiential, and personal—allowing students to express themselves in a creative and, quite often, moving ways.

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A NARRATIVE ESSAY AND A SHORT STORY

- A narrative essay has a specific format, specific aspect to discover, and a specific motif. It revolves around that motif set by the writer prior to writing the essay.
- A short story, however, is different from a narrative essay in that it does not revolve around a pre-set motif, and that it does not have a specific format. Also, a short story always leaves readers at a critical juncture with the desire to discover more. In contrast, a narrative essay ends when the readers are fully satisfied. They do not wish to read any more or do not want to discover anymore.

## ELEMENTS OF A NARRATIVE ESSAY

### Character

- Characters are an important part of a narrative essay. Even if the essay is autobiographical in nature, the person writing the essay is a character involving some other characters who act, behave, and do like all other characters presented in stories and novels.

## ELEMENTS OF A NARRATIVE ESSAY

### Theme or Motif

- A narrative essay revolves around a theme or a motif. This theme or motif is presented in its thesis statement, which breaks it down into three distinct evidences. These three distinct evidences are then further elaborated through characters in body paragraphs.

## ELEMENTS OF A NARRATIVE ESSAY

### Dialogue

- Dialogue is used to capture the conversation between characters. In a narrative essay, dialogue is the third important element, without which the characters lose their worth and liveliness.



## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A NARRATIVE ESSAY

- **If written as a story, the essay should include all the parts of a story.**
- This means that you must include an introduction, plot, characters, setting, climax, and conclusion.
  
- **When would a narrative essay not be written as a story?**
- A good example of this is when an instructor asks a student to write a book report. Obviously, this would not necessarily follow the pattern of a story and would focus on providing an informative narrative for the reader.

## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A NARRATIVE ESSAY

- **The essay should have a purpose.**
- Make a point! Think of this as the thesis of your story. If there is no point to what you are narrating, why narrate it at all?
- **The essay should be written from a clear point of view.**
- It is quite common for narrative essays to be written from the standpoint of the author; however, this is not the sole perspective to be considered. Creativity in narrative essays oftentimes manifests itself in the form of authorial perspective.

## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A NARRATIVE ESSAY

- **Use clear and concise language throughout the essay.**
- Much like the descriptive essay, narrative essays are effective when the language is carefully, particularly, and artfully chosen. Use specific language to evoke specific emotions and senses in the reader.
- **The use of the first person pronoun ‘I’ is welcomed.**
- Do not abuse this guideline! Though it is welcomed it is not necessary—nor should it be overused for lack of clearer diction.

# **EXAMPLES OF NARRATIVE ESSAYS IN LITERATURE**

## EXAMPLE 1: *NEW DIRECTIONS* (BY MAYA ANGELOU)

Annie, over six feet tall, big-boned, decided that she would not go to work as a domestic and leave her “precious babes” to anyone else’s care. There was no possibility of being hired at the town’s cotton gin or lumber mill, but maybe there was a way to make the two factories work for her. In her words, “I looked up the road I was going and back the way I come, and since I wasn’t satisfied, I decided to step off the road and cut me a new path.” She told herself that she wasn’t a fancy cook but that she could “mix groceries well enough to scare hungry away and keep from starving a man.

- This paragraph is an example from a narrative essay of Maya Angelou. She has described how a girl looks, and how she behaves. She has also written direct dialogues to show that it is a narrative.

## EXAMPLE 2: *SATURDAY EVENING POST* (BY RUSSELL BAKER)

When I burst in that afternoon she was in conference with an executive of the Curtis Publishing Company. She introduced me. He bent low from the waist and shook my hand. Was it true as my mother had told him, he asked, that I longed for the opportunity to conquer the world of business?

My Mother replied that I was blessed with a rare determination to make something of myself.

‘That’s right,’ I whispered.

‘But have you got the grit, the character, the never-say-quit spirit it takes to succeed in business?’

My Mother said I certainly did.

- In this piece from a narrative essay by Russell Baker of the famed *Saturday Evening Post*, the author has fully described the efforts of his mother by her dialogue. Both character and dialogue are very clear.

## EXAMPLE 3: *ONLY DAUGHTER* (BY SANDRA CISNEROS)

Once several years ago, when I was just starting out my writing career, I was asked to write my own contributor's note for an anthology I was part of, I wrote: 'I am the only daughter in a family of six sons. That explains everything.'

Well, I've thought about that ever since, and yes, it explains a lot to me, but for the reader's sake I should have written: 'I am the only daughter in a Mexican family of six sons.' Or even: 'I am the only daughter of a Mexican father and a Mexican-American mother.' Or: 'I am the only daughter of a working-class family of nine.' All of these had everything to do with who I am today.

- In this essay, the author has given full description of a daughter.

## FUNCTION OF NARRATIVE ESSAY

A narrative essay describes people, presents their conversation, and narrates their experiences to teach lessons to readers. In fact, it is like a story, but different in that it is weaved around a motif. A motif is given before the incidents of the essay. Readers become aware of this single theme, central idea, or motif once they go through the essay. Its major aim is to provide information about life experiences and lessons learned from those experiences.



# **NARRATIVE ESSAY EXAMPLE**

**He Left So I Could Learn**

## He Left So I Could Learn

It was my second day on the job. I was sitting in my seemingly gilded cubicle, overlooking Manhattan, and pinching my right arm to make sure it was real. I landed an internship at Condé Nast Traveler. Every aspiring writer I've ever known secretly dreamt of an Anthony Bourdain(美国作家、主厨) lifestyle. Travel the world and write about its most colorful pockets.

When my phone rang, and it was Mom telling me Dad had a heart attack. He didn't make it. I felt as though the perfectly carpeted floors had dropped out from under me. Now that I've come out the other side, I realize Dad left me with a hefty stack of teachings. Here are three ideals I know he would've liked for me to embrace.

First, you have to stand on your own two feet. As much as our parents love and support us, they can't go to our school and confess to the principal that we stole a candy bar from Sara. We have to do that. Neither can they walk into the Condé Nast office and nail a job interview for us. At some point, we have to put on our "big girl pants" and be brave, even if we're not.

Also, there's a difference between love and co-dependence. Being grateful to have someone to turn to for love and support is not the same as needing someone to turn to for love and support. With the loss of my father, I've also lost my sounding board. All I can glean from that is it's time to look within myself and make proper assessments. If I can't make sound decisions with the tools already in my kit, then I risk falling for anything.

Finally, memories are, perhaps, the only item that cannot be taken away from us. Will I miss my father? Every single day. What can I do in those times? I can open up our suitcase of memories, pick out my favorite one, and dream about it, talk about it, or write about it. Maybe I can't pick up the phone and call him anymore, but that doesn't mean he's gone.

Next week, I'm off to Istanbul to explore their art scene. As soon as I read the email from my editor, I picked up my phone to call Dad. Then, I realized he'll never answer my calls again. I fought back the tears, got up to make a cup of peppermint tea, and added a new note to my iPhone titled, "Istanbul Packing List."

In the end, life goes on. I'm not sure why he had to leave during the single most poignant chapter in my life. So, I won't dwell on that. Instead, I'll hold tightly to these three ideals and write about Karaköy in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district. Dad will be with me every step of the way.

# **ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS**

## WHAT IS AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY?

- The argumentative essay(议论文) is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner.
- An argumentative essay is a piece of writing that takes a stance on an issue. In a good argumentative essay, a writer attempts to persuade readers to understand and support their point of view about a topic by stating their reasoning and providing evidence to back it up.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

- **A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.**
- In the first paragraph of an argument essay, students should set the context by reviewing the topic in a general way. Next the author should explain why the topic is important or why readers should care about the issue. Lastly, students should present the thesis statement. 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.



## THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENTATIVE 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. Transitions should wrap up the idea from the previous section and introduce the idea that is to follow in the next section.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

- **Body paragraphs that include evidential support.**
- Each paragraph should be limited to the discussion of one general idea. This will allow for clarity and direction throughout the essay. In addition, 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. Some paragraphs will directly support the thesis statement with evidence collected during research. It is also important to explain how and why the evidence supports the thesis.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

- **Body paragraphs that include evidential support.**
- However, argumentative essays should also consider and explain differing points of view regarding the topic. Depending on the length of the assignment, students should dedicate one or two paragraphs of an argumentative essay to discussing conflicting opinions on the topic. Rather than explaining how these differing opinions are wrong outright, students should note how opinions that do not align with their thesis might not be well informed or how they might be out of date.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

- **Evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).**
- The argumentative essay requires well-researched, accurate, detailed, and current information to support the thesis statement and consider other points of view. Some factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal evidence should support the thesis. However, students must consider multiple points of view when collecting evidence. As noted in the paragraph above, a successful and well-rounded argumentative essay will also discuss opinions not aligning with the thesis. It is unethical to exclude evidence that may not support the thesis. It is not the student's job to point out how other positions are wrong outright, but rather to explain how other positions may not be well informed or up to date on the topic.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENTATIVE 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 may 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 the information presented in the body of the essay. Restate why the topic is important, review the main points, and review your thesis. You may also want to include a short discussion of more research that should be completed in light of your work.

# **ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY EXAMPLE**

As online learning becomes more common and more and more resources are converted to digital form, some people have suggested that public libraries should be shut down and, in their place, everyone should be given an iPad with an e-reader subscription.

Proponents of this idea state that it will save local cities and towns money because libraries are expensive to maintain. They also believe it will encourage more people to read because they won't have to travel to a library to get a book; they can simply click on what they want to read and read it from wherever they are. They could also access more materials because libraries won't have to buy physical copies of books; they can simply rent out as many digital copies as they need.



However, it would be a serious mistake to replace libraries with tablets. First, digital books and resources are associated with less learning and more problems than print resources. A study done on tablet vs book reading found that people read 20-30% slower on tablets, retain 20% less information, and understand 10% less of what they read compared to people who read the same information in print. Additionally, staring too long at a screen has been shown to cause numerous health problems, including blurred vision, dizziness, dry eyes, headaches, and eye strain, at much higher instances than reading print does. People who use tablets and mobile devices excessively also have a higher incidence of more serious health issues such as fibromyalgia, shoulder and back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and muscle strain. I know that whenever I read from my e-reader for too long, my eyes begin to feel tired and my neck hurts. We should not add to these problems by giving people, especially young people, more reasons to look at screens.

Second, it is incredibly narrow-minded to assume that the only service libraries offer is book lending. Libraries have a multitude of benefits, and many are only available if the library has a physical location. Some of these benefits include acting as a quiet study space, giving people a way to converse with their neighbors, holding classes on a variety of topics, providing jobs, answering patron questions, and keeping the community connected. One neighborhood found that, after a local library instituted community events such as play times for toddlers and parents, job fairs for teenagers, and meeting spaces for senior citizens, over a third of residents reported feeling more connected to their community. Similarly, a Pew survey conducted in 2015 found that nearly two-thirds of American adults feel that closing their local library would have a major impact on their community. People see libraries as a way to connect with others and get their questions answered, benefits tablets can't offer nearly as well or as easily.

While replacing libraries with tablets may seem like a simple solution, it would encourage people to spend even more time looking at digital screens, despite the myriad issues surrounding them. It would also end access to many of the benefits of libraries that people have come to rely on. In many areas, libraries are such an important part of the community network that they could never be replaced by a simple object.

## ANALYSIS

- The author begins by giving an overview of the counter-argument, then the thesis appears as the first sentence in the third paragraph. The essay then spends the rest of the paper dismantling the counter argument and showing why readers should believe the other side.

## ANALYSIS

- **What this essay does well:**

- Although it's a bit unusual to have the thesis appear fairly far into the essay, it works because, **once the thesis is stated, the rest of the essay focuses on supporting it** since the counter-argument has already been discussed earlier in the paper.
- This essay includes numerous facts and cites studies to support its case. By having specific data to rely on, the author's argument is stronger and readers will be more inclined to agree with it.
- For every argument the other side makes, the author makes sure to refute it and follow up with why her opinion is the stronger one. In order to make a strong argument, it's important to dismantle the other side, which this essay does this by making the author's view appear stronger.

# ANALYSIS

- **How this essay could be improved:**

- This is a shorter paper, and if it needed to be expanded to meet length requirements, it could include more examples and go more into depth with them, such as by explaining specific cases where people benefited from local libraries.
- Additionally, while the paper uses lots of data, the author also mentions their own experience with using tablets. This should be removed since argumentative essays focus on facts and data to support an argument, **not the author's own opinion or experiences**. Replacing that with more data on health issues associated with screen time would strengthen the essay.
- **Some of the points made aren't completely accurate**, particularly the one about digital books being cheaper. It actually often costs a library more money to rent out numerous digital copies of a book compared to buying a single physical copy. Make sure in your own essay you thoroughly research each of the points and rebuttals you make, otherwise you'll look like you don't know the issue that well.

# **3 TIPS FOR WRITING A GOOD ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY**

## I: MAKE YOUR THESIS CRYSTAL CLEAR

- The thesis is the key to your argumentative essay; if it isn't clear or readers can't find it easily, your entire essay will be weak as a result. Always make sure that your thesis statement is easy to find. The typical spot for it is the final sentence of the introduction paragraph, but if it doesn't fit in that spot for your essay, **try to at least put it as the first or last sentence of a different paragraph so it stands out more.**



## 2: SHOW WHY THE OTHER SIDE IS WEAK

- When writing your essay, you may be tempted to ignore the other side of the argument and just focus on your side, but don't do this. The best argumentative essays really tear apart the other side to show why readers shouldn't believe it. Before you begin writing your essay, research what the other side believes, and what their strongest points are. Then, in your essay, be sure to mention each of these and use evidence to explain why they're incorrect/weak arguments. That'll make your essay much more effective than if you only focused on your side of the argument.

### 3: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR SIDE

- Remember, an essay can't be an argumentative essay if it doesn't support its argument with evidence. For every point you make, make sure you have facts to back it up. **Some examples are previous studies done on the topic, surveys of large groups of people, data points, etc.** There should be lots of numbers in your argumentative essay that support your side of the argument. This will make your essay much stronger compared to only relying on your own opinions to support your argument.