

How to Write:

An Expository Essay

The function of the expository essay is to **explain**, or to acquaint your reader with a body of knowledge. By explaining a topic to the reader, you are demonstrating your own knowledge. This is also known as a “**How To**” essay, and is one of the most common essays written in schools. Go figure!!

A well-written exposition remains **focused on its topic and lists events in chronological/sequential order**. That means starting from the very beginning and working through, step-by-step, until the end.

One important point to keep in mind is to try to use words that clearly show what you are talking about rather than blatantly telling the reader what is being discussed.

Key words such as first, after, next, then, last, before that, and usually signal sequential writing. Second-person instructions with "you" are acceptable. However, the use of first-person pronouns should be avoided (For example, I, I think, I believe etc...). **Expository essays should not reveal the opinion of the author or writer.** You are simply giving the reader the road-map, the facts.

Opinion



Since clarity requires strong organization, one of the most important mechanisms that can be used to improve the writer's skills in exposition is to provide directions to improve the organization of the text. It tells readers about the information in the selection. Information in this format relates to the reader as a whole with details that describe importance.

This practice is not "just for students."

Accurate analysis is a fundamental professional activity in almost all careers. Like any other fundamental skill, it must be constantly practiced in order to maintain and improve it. Other goals, such as learning "time management" and note-taking, are also developed by this activity.



Expository essays also have a distinct format.

- ❖ The thesis statement must be defined and narrow enough to be supported within the essay.
- ❖ Each paragraph of the body of the expository essay must have a dominant point that directly relates to the essay thesis. All supporting sentences within each body paragraph must have a direct and factual relationship to the dominant point.
- ❖ Appropriate use of transitions is also crucial to a good expository essay. Transitions confirm the organization and the logic of your composition as they allow the reader to move smoothly from point to point of your essay.
- ❖ Keep sentence structures simple and clear in anticipation of potential misunderstandings. Stay away from slang and colloquialisms. Be sure to use technical terms in context and accurately. Explain acronyms and those terms that may be unfamiliar to your reader.
- ❖ Conclude your expository essay by restating your thesis and summarizing the points that lead to your conclusion. The conclusions in an expository essay should never be a surprise for the reader as they need to be easily traced throughout the essay.

Concluding the Expository Essay:

- ❖ After you've finished your first draft, along with checking for mechanical errors, check your essay to see if you have explained your topic thoroughly.
- ❖ Be sure that your thesis relates to every paragraph and that supporting sentences directly relate to your dominant points.
- ❖ Reorganize your essay as needed to keep your logic clear and your information in an appropriate sequence.
- ❖ The real conclusion of your expository essay is when your composition is a well-ordered, easy-to-understand analysis of your topic.



Revisions:

Do not be afraid to revise your essay! In fact, you will probably want to change it at least once; this is called "thinking through a 'problem'" or "learning."

The revisions will consist of the following:

- ✓ finding the precise words to express your thoughts
 - ✓ correcting typographical, spelling, and grammatical errors
 - ✓ making sure that your paragraphs are "tight" and sequenced properly
 - ✓ making sure that the transition ("segue") from one major topic to another makes sense
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Outline of the Expository Essay:

Surprise, surprise!! An expository essay is written in the format of a 5 paragraph essay.

1) *The Introductory Paragraph:*

- Topic Sentence
- First Example/Statement
- Second Example/Statement
- Third Example/Statement
- Conclusion

2) *Second Paragraph:*

- Introduce first example as topic sentence
- Justify your topic sentence
- Concluding Sentence

3) *Third Paragraph:*

- Follow the same pattern as in second paragraph.

4) *Fourth Paragraph:*

- Follow the same pattern as in second paragraph.

5) *Concluding Paragraph:*

- In the conclusion paragraph, you actually give the recap of the introductory and body paragraphs.