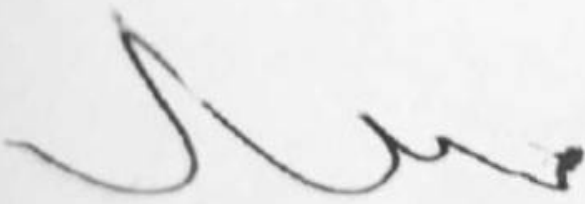


DIKTAT MATA KULIAH

“Academic” Writing

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Kata Pengantar

Puji syukur penulis ucapkan kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa atas rahmat-Nya yang telah tercurah, sehingga penulis bisa menyelesaikan Diktat Kuliah Academic Writing ini. Adapun tujuan dari disusunnya diktat ini adalah supaya para mahasiswa dapat mengetahui bagaimana cara memproduksi tulisan akademik secara benar.

Tersusunnya diktat ini tentu bukan dari usaha penulis seorang. Dukungan moral dan material dari berbagai pihak sangatlah membantu tersusunnya diktat ini. Untuk itu, penulis ucapkan terima kasih kepada keluarga, sahabat, rekan-rekan, dan pihak-pihak lainnya yang membantu secara moral dan material bagi tersusunnya diktat ini.

Diktat yang tersusun sekian lama ini tentu masih jauh dari kata sempurna. Untuk itu, kritik dan saran yang membangun sangat diperlukan agar diktat ini bisa lebih baik nantinya.

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Penulis

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is clear, concise, focussed, structured and backed up by evidence. Its purpose is to aid the reader's understanding. It has a formal tone and style, but it is not complex and does not require the use of long sentences and complicated vocabulary. Each subject discipline will have certain writing conventions, vocabulary and types of discourse that you will become familiar with over the course of your degree. However, there are some general characteristics of academic writing that are relevant across all disciplines.

Characteristics of academic writing

- 1) **Clear and limited focus.** The focus of an academic paper—the argument or research question—is established early by the thesis statement. Every paragraph and sentence of the paper connects back to that primary focus. While the paper may include background or contextual information, all content serves the purpose of supporting the thesis statement.
- 2) **Logical structure.** All academic writing follows a logical, straightforward structure. In its simplest form, academic writing includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The introduction provides background information, lays out the scope and direction of the essay, and states the thesis. The body paragraphs support the thesis statement, with each body paragraph elaborating on one supporting point. The conclusion refers back to the thesis, summarizes the main points, and highlights the implications of the paper's findings. Each sentence and paragraph logically connects to the next in order to present a clear argument.
- 3) **Evidence-based arguments.** Academic writing requires well-informed arguments. Statements must be supported by evidence, whether from scholarly sources (as in a research paper), results of a study or experiment, or quotations from a primary text (as in a literary analysis essay). The use of evidence gives credibility to an argument.

- 4) **Impersonal tone.** The goal of academic writing is to convey a logical argument from an objective standpoint. Academic writing avoids emotional, inflammatory, or otherwise biased language. Whether you personally agree or disagree with an idea, it must be presented accurately and objectively in your paper.

The Importance of Thesis Statements

The thesis statement, found at the end of the first paragraph, is a one-sentence encapsulation of your essay's main idea. It presents an overarching argument and may also identify the main support points for the argument. In essence, the thesis statement is a road map, telling the reader where the paper is going and how it will get there.

The thesis statement plays an important role in the writing process. Once you've written a thesis statement, you've established a clear focus for your paper. Frequently referring back to that thesis statement will prevent you from straying off-topic during the drafting phase. Of course, the thesis statement can (and should) be revised to reflect changes in the content or direction of the paper. Its ultimate goal, after all, is to capture the main ideas of your paper with clarity and specificity.

Structure your writing

Good academic writing is clearly structured. It must have a beginning, middle and an end. These parts are: introduction, main body, and conclusion.

Introduction

The introduction to an academic paper always:

- 1) Gives the background to the topic
- 2) Outlines the content of the paper - its aims (for instance
'This paper will examine ...')

The introduction may also:

- 1) Give a strong relevant quote
- 2) Define key terms

Main body

The main body of your paper is where you do the work. It is where you give your argument, provide your evidence or describe your research and findings.

- Expand on all the topics mentioned in your introduction
- Bring together all the information you have gathered from other sources during your research
- Develop your argument in a logical structure.

Conclusion

The conclusion to an academic paper always:

- Summarises the main points given in the essay
- Draws together the ideas to explain how they connect and relate
- Shows how you have answered the question

The conclusion may also:

- Suggest some further research
- Give a concluding statement
- Pose a further question

CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF THE ACADEMIC ESSAY

A clear sense of argument is essential to all forms of academic writing, for writing is thought made visible. Insights and ideas that occur to us when we encounter the raw material of the world—natural phenomena like the behavior of genes, or cultural phenomena, like texts, photographs and artifacts—must be ordered in some way so others can receive them and respond in turn. This give and take is at the heart of the scholarly enterprise, and makes possible that vast conversation known as civilization. Like all human ventures, the conventions of the academic essay are both logical and playful. They may vary in expression from discipline to discipline, but any good essay should show us a mind developing a thesis, supporting that thesis with evidence, deftly anticipating objections or counterarguments, and maintaining the momentum of discovery.

Motive and Idea

An essay has to have a purpose or motive; the mere existence of an assignment or deadline is not sufficient. When you write an essay or research paper, you are never simply transferring information from one place to another, or showing that you have mastered a certain amount of material. That would be incredibly boring—and besides, it would be adding to the glut of pointless utterance. Instead, you should be trying to make the best possible case for an original idea you have arrived at after a period of research. Depending upon the field, your research may involve reading and rereading a text, performing an experiment, or carefully observing an object or behavior.

By immersing yourself in the material, you begin to discover patterns and generate insights, guided by a series of unfolding questions. From a number of possibilities, one idea emerges as the most promising. You try to make sure it is original and of some importance; there is no point arguing for something already known, trivial, or widely accepted.

Thesis and Development

The essay's thesis is the main point you are trying to make, using the best evidence you can marshal. Your thesis will evolve during the course of writing drafts, but everything that happens in your essay is directed toward establishing its validity. A given assignment may not tell you that you need to come up with a thesis and defend it, but these are the unspoken requirements of any scholarly paper.

Deciding upon a thesis can generate considerable anxiety. Students may think, "How can I have a new idea about a subject scholars have spent their whole lives exploring? I just read a few books in the last few days, and now I'm supposed to be an expert?" But you can be original on different scales. We can't possibly know everything that has been, or is being, thought or written by everyone in the world—even given the vastness and speed of the Internet. What is required is a rigorous, good faith effort to establish originality, given the demands of the assignment and the discipline. It is a good exercise throughout the writing process to stop periodically and reformulate your thesis as succinctly as possible so someone in another field could understand its meaning as well as its importance. A thesis can be relatively complex, but you should be able to distill its essence. This does not mean you have to give the game away right from the start. Guided by a clear understanding of the point you wish to argue, you can spark your reader's curiosity by first asking questions—the very questions that may have guided you in your research—and carefully building a case for the validity of your idea. Or you can start with a provocative observation, inviting your audience to follow your own path of discovery.

The Tension of Argument

Argument implies tension but not combative fireworks. This tension comes from the fundamental asymmetry between the one who wishes to persuade and those who must be persuaded. The common ground they share is reason. Your

objective is to make a case so that any reasonable person would be convinced of the reasonableness of your thesis. The first task, even before you start to write, is gathering and ordering evidence, classifying it by kind and strength. You might decide to move from the smallest piece of evidence to the most impressive. Or you might start with the most convincing, then mention other supporting details afterward. You could hold back a surprising piece of evidence until the very end.

In any case, it is important to review evidence that could be used against your idea and generate responses to anticipated objections. This is the crucial concept of counterargument. If nothing can be said against an idea, it is probably obvious or vacuous. (And if too much can be said against it, it's time for another thesis.) By not indicating an awareness of possible objections, you might seem to be hiding something, and your argument will be weaker as a consequence. You should also become familiar with the various fallacies that can undermine an argument—the "straw man" fallacy, fallacies of causation and of analogy, etc.—and strive to avoid them.

The Structure of Argument

The heart of the academic essay is persuasion, and the structure of your argument plays a vital role in this. To persuade, you must set the stage, provide a context, and decide how to reveal your evidence. Of course, if you are addressing a community of specialists, some aspects of a shared context can be taken for granted. But clarity is always a virtue. The essay's objective should be described swiftly, by posing a question that will lead to your thesis, or making a thesis statement. There is considerable flexibility about when and where this happens, but within the first page or two, we should know where we are going, even if some welcome suspense is preserved. In the body of the paper, merely listing evidence without any discernible logic of presentation is a common mistake. What might suffice in conversation is too informal for an essay. If the point being made is lost in a welter of specifics, the argument falters.

The most common argumentative structure in English prose is deductive: starting off with a generalization or assertion, and then providing support for it. This pattern can be used to order a paragraph as well as an entire essay. Another possible structure is inductive: facts, instances or observations can be reviewed, and the conclusion to be drawn from them follows. There is no blueprint for a successful essay; the best ones show us a focused mind making sense of some manageable aspect of the world, a mind where insightfulness, reason, and clarity are joined. (Duffin, Kathy. 1998)

CHAPTER III

HOW TO WRITE A PERFECT ESSAY OUTLINE

An essay outline is a plan of your academic paper, where you structure it and organize the main points into paragraphs so it would be easier for you to write an essay.

What is an Essay Outline?

As you've already guessed it, an essay outline is a short plan of your research paper. Here you write down the main idea of your essay and structure all arguments into paragraphs to make sure you won't miss anything while writing.

Sure enough, you can write an essay without outlining it. But it will be challenging to do. Outlining is an essential part of the writing process, and all authors do it for their works to impress readers.

Here's why you need an essay outline:

- It will help you organize thoughts: when you research the data for your essay, you get tons of information that's hard to remember.
- You'll understand the information flow and will be able to structure it accordingly.
- It will help you not to miss anything while writing your essay because you'll have a ready manuscript of your paper.

That said, an outline will help you write academic works better and faster. And while our writers are always here to help, it can't hurt to learn how to write an outline for an essay by your own, right?

How to Write an Essay Outline

While college essay types are many, the common structure for most of them is five-paragraph. Each essay needs Introduction, Body (paragraphs with

arguments), and Conclusion; so, a general format of your essay outline will include all these components.

When outlining your essay, keep them in mind so you wouldn't miss any arguments, evidence, and examples while writing.

Key Parts of an Essay

Put them all into your essay outline:

- **Introduction.** Here you'll mention the topic of your essay and its thesis. As you know, essays can't live without a thesis; so, a thesis statement in your outline will help you support it in each paragraph of your essay body.
- **Body paragraphs.** There will be a minimum three paragraphs in your essay's body, so make sure to include each one in the outline. For each paragraph, write down a topic sentence with an argument relating to your thesis and mention all the support: data, facts, examples, and other evidence you'll use to prove the topic sentence of this paragraph.
- **Conclusion.** Wrap up your essay here. Restate your thesis and summarize the goal of your paper.

In general, your essay outline will look like this:

Essay Outline: General

I. Introduction

- a) Introduce a topic
- b) State a thesis

II. Body. Paragraph-1

- a) Write a topic sentence (the argument for your thesis)
- b) Support this argument: data, facts, examples
- c) Explain how they relate to your thesis

III. Body. Paragraph-2

- a) Write a topic sentence (another argument for your thesis)
- b) Support this argument: data, facts, examples
- c) Explain how they relate to your thesis

IV. Body. Paragraph-3

- a) Write a topic sentence (another argument for your thesis, or a counterargument)
- b) **Support** this argument, or explain why the counterargument doesn't work: data, facts, examples
- c) Explain how they relate to your thesis

V. Conclusion

- a) Summarize all main points
- b) Restate your thesis
- c) Add a call to action: what you want readers to do after reading your essay

Outline Format

As a rule, students use the linear style when formatting their essay outlines. It means they rank arguments in order of their importance – from major to minor ones.

Remember: your research essay outline doesn't have to include the complete sentences. It's only an outline, so feel free to format arguments and evidence the way it seems most comfortable and understandable for you. Just make sure it's visually clear and allows you to see if some sections are repetitive or redundant. It will help to avoid duplications in your essay.

Another point to consider:

While you are familiar with a given essay topic, it doesn't mean your readers are. So format your outline accordingly: assume that some people know nothing about it when preparing arguments and arranging them in a logical order.

Essay Outline Template

Templates can help you get a better idea of essay outlining. It's a great way to organize thoughts and determine the order in which you'll represent them to readers. So, make a list of the sections in your paper and fill in the corresponding example, depending on your essay type.

How to Make an Outline: the Process

As a rule, the only detail bothering those asking how to make an outline for an essay is the process itself. Students understand that an essay outline needs to specify all the main points and arguments of their future paper, but they still find it challenging to create.

More than that, professors may ask you to submit an essay outline for their review. That's why the skills of planning your papers will come in handy anyway. To learn the secrets of effective outline writing, you'll need to know what to do before outlining, what essay outline structure to choose for your work, and how to organize your outline so it would be as informative as possible.

Here's how to outline an essay:

What to do before outlining

First and foremost, **read your writing assignment** carefully. Make sure you understand what essay type you need to write, how many arguments to use (except as noted), and how long your essay needs to be.

Answer the question, "*What's the purpose of your essay?*" Do you want to inform readers, persuade, or just entertain them? Depending on the goal, you'll know what thesis to consider, what writing techniques to use, and how to visualize research in your paper.

Identify the audience. Yes, it's a teacher who reads and evaluates your work; but whom do you want to read your essay? Do you write for classmates?

Strangers? What do they know about your topic? Would they agree with your thesis? How might they react to your information?

Depending on that, you'll understand what arguments might work for your essay. It will also help you decide on resources to use for research and evidence to choose for your arguments. Consider credible sources such as *Google Scholar* or *Oxford Academic* to find references for your essay; **take notes** of them to use in your outline.

State your thesis so you could see what topic sentences to outline for your essay. A thesis needs to be arguable and provide enough details to hook readers so they would get them emotionally involved in your writing.

Organize Your Outline

For all others, **start with outlining your introduction**. Write a sentence about your topic and introduce your thesis. You can also mention an essay hook here – a sentence you'll use to make the audience interested in reading your work.

Outline your essay body: write down a topic sentence for each paragraph, provide supporting evidence you'll use when writing, and mention how they'll relate to the topic and your thesis. The more details you outline, the easier it will be to organize all the thoughts while writing.

Also, you can write a transition sentence for each paragraph so it would be faster to structure and band all arguments.

Finally, **outline your essay conclusion**. Restate your thesis and write a concluding statement, *aka* a sentence addressing the importance of your thesis and proposing solutions to the problem you addressed in the essay.

Simple Argumentative Essay Outline Template

When writing an argumentative essay outline, it's important to have all of your facts straight. More than any other type of essay, you need to have solid and verifiable sources from which you can draw your information. Using the simple

formula below, you'll be able to organize your assertions and craft a moving argument on almost any essay topic.

Simple Argumentative Essay Outline

A simple argument essay outline begins with a hot button topic. Pick a stance you'll feel confident and passionate about. If you're unsure of the best topic, try viewing argumentative essay examples. Something listed there might spark a fire in you.

Once you have your topic, you'll want to use these four simple steps to start writing.

I. Introductory Paragraph

This is where you'll introduce your topic. The intro has three main elements.

- **Hook:** Your opening lines are known as your hook. Knowing how to write a hook is what will draw your reader to the end.
- **Body:** You can expand this type of generalized "setup" with another sentence or two.
- **Thesis Statement:** The end of your introductory paragraph contains one very important element: your thesis statement. This will close the first paragraph on a strong point and set up the body of the essay. Every point you make within the body of your essay must relate back to your thesis statement. Thesis statement examples can give you inspiration, too.

Thesis Statement Examples

A thesis statement is one sentence that expresses the main idea of a research paper or essay, such as an expository essay or argumentative essay. It makes a claim, directly answering a question.

As you can see in the thesis statement examples below, you must be very specific, summarizing points that are about to be made in your paper, and

supported by specific evidence. Generally, your thesis statement can be the last line of the first paragraph in your research paper or essay.

Thesis Statement : Bad vs Good

It's worth reiterating that a strong thesis statement is specific. If you find yourself using general words like "good," then you're not digging deep enough.

For example, saying

"European travel is a good way to spend your summer," is not specific enough. Why is European travel good? Further examine the heart of your topic and focus on very specific areas of European travel that you can realistically cover and support with solid evidence.

"Solo European travel requires independence which, in the end, bolsters personal confidence." This is much more specific and targeted. Now, you can hone in your research on solo travel through Europe, the need for independence, and its positive effect on personal confidence.

Here are six more thesis statement examples for you to consider:

- **Bad:** Everyone should exercise.
 - Why should I? What's in it for me?

Good: Americans should add exercise to their daily morning routine because it not only keeps their bodies at a healthy weight but also reduces the risk of high blood pressure.

 - Here, we've made several specifications i.e. Americans (not everyone), the morning routine (not the evening), weight maintenance, and high blood pressure prevention. Your research actually becomes easier when you have very specific objectives.
- **Bad:** High levels of alcohol consumption are bad for you.
 - This is too broad. What are the specific detriments of alcohol consumption that you would like to discuss?

Good: High levels of alcohol consumption have detrimental effects on your personal health, such as weight gain, heart disease, and liver

complications.

- Notice we got very specific in our reasons why. In your thesis statement, you don't need to state every single detriment you're going to lay out (in fact, you shouldn't as it will risk becoming a run-on sentence) but you can point to the main areas you will explore.

- **Bad:** Reading can develop a child's analytical mind.

- Words like "can," aren't strong enough. This thesis statement begs the question of how? If you're about to write several paragraphs (or pages) about a topic make sure you can confidently defend every point you make.

Good: Reading develops a child's mind by fostering comprehension skills, increasing vocabulary, and exposing them to new worlds they might not otherwise encounter.

- Now, we've not just stated that reading is good, we've provided a sampling of all the benefits we're about to bring to light in our paper.

- **Bad:** All retirees should relocate to Florida.

- Your research paper or essay will need to delve into numerous supporting claims. This broad thesis statement runs the risk of allowing you to go off on several tangents.

Good: Retirees should relocate to Florida, where 75% of Americans choose to settle, because you will afford yourself the opportunity to develop a wide array of friendships.

- From here, you can introduce a paragraph on the importance of friendship and then cite studies or testimonials describing how people can discover these important new relationships.

- **Bad:** The internet has improved the lives of many.

- Again, while readers may agree with this and your statement may be true, how has the internet improved people's lives? Also, you should run your thesis statement past the "What's in it for me?" test. Why should readers care?

Good: The internet serves as a means of expediently connecting people across the globe, fostering new friendships and an exchange of ideas that

wouldn't have occurred prior to its inception.

- While the internet offers a host of benefits, we're choosing to hone in on its ability to foster new friendships and exchange ideas. We'd also have to prove how this couldn't have happened prior to the internet's inception - and that is good. The tighter your focus, the better your paper.

- **Bad:** Organ donors should be financially compensated.

- Why? What happens to them that causes you to take this stance?

Good: Given the grueling surgery and lifelong changes they endure, kidney donors should be financially compensated for their act of self-sacrifice.

- There are many forms of living organ donation. As with any good thesis, you want to get as specific as possible. Now, our stance is clear and the reader will understand that we're about to describe the grueling process of kidney donation as well as any forthcoming lifestyle changes.

Finding Your Point of View

A good thesis statement is developed from the point of view of the reader. Be very careful you're not developing a topic that is of interest to you alone. This is a harsh yet necessary question to ask yourself: will my readers have any reason to care about what I'm writing?

In the example about European travel above, readers might be interested in travel around Europe but will they be interested in solo travel, and greater independence and confidence? Hopefully, the answer is yes. Just make sure you examine all viewpoints before investing your valuable time in a well-written piece.

A thesis statement is powerful on two fronts. First, it allows the reader to get excited about what, specifically, is coming their way. Second, it stands as the point of reference for your entire paper.

Think of it as a loving mother steering her children away from danger. Essay writers run the risk of getting off track and wandering into thickly wooded forests of needless tangents. (This is also why a well-planned outline is essential.)

However, a solid thesis statement will help keep you in check. Refer back to it and ask have you wandered off topic?

Always Be Specific

When searching for a new home, realtors will tell you there are three important factors: location, location, and location. When developing your one-sentence thesis statement, it is important for you to be: specific, specific, specific. Write your thesis statement once and then rewrite it again with greater specificity.

Also, make sure your audience will want to learn these new facts and possibly embrace these new opinions. Now, you have a compass for your entire paper, keeping you safely on course.

II. Body

In the body of your essay, you'll present a series of supporting details to defend your argument. This can include any or all of the following:

- Evidence
- Facts
- Statistics
- brief narratives
- quotations

The best way to visualize the body of your argumentative essay is to commit to three claims and back them up.

Narratives are another nice avenue, in terms of evidence. You can share someone's testimony or even your own.

III. Opposition

Argumentative essays are heftier than other essays. In an informative essay or a persuasive essay, you may choose to stick to one side of the discussion.

In an argumentative essay, you must address the opposing side's opinions on the matter. Believe it or not, this will make your own argument

stronger. It demonstrates you're not blind to the issue and are prepared to stand strong. Here, you'll state an opposing view (or more) and then refute it. You might use pathos, ethos, and logos to do this.

IV. Conclusion

The conclusion is where you'll summarize the main idea of your argument. In a way, it's a mirror of your thesis statement. Of course, you don't want to repeat your thesis statement word-for-word, but it can be similar. Summarize your claims as concisely as possible and then close the essay. You can end with a rhetorical question or thought-provoking statement.

Sample Argumentative Essay Outline

Each essay you write will be slightly different than the last. No matter the format, you can begin to formulate your ideas using the following structure.

INTRODUCTION

Hook: Much of our most important learning takes place *outside* the classroom.

Thesis Statement: Every college-level student must study abroad during their undergraduate years. They will learn more in that semester abroad than any other academic year.

BODY

- **Claim:** Students who study abroad are more likely to be accepted into the graduate degree program of their choice.
- **Evidence:** 90% of students who studied abroad got into their first or second choice of graduate school.
Source: [IES Abroad](#)

- **Claim:** Studying abroad makes a student a more desirable candidate for their dream job.
- **Evidence:** 97% of students who study abroad find employment within 12 months of graduation.
Source: [IES Abroad](#)

- **Claim:** Students who study abroad will be better-equipped to succeed in the workplace, thanks to their broadened worldview.
- **Evidence:** 25% of students abroad have higher starting salaries.
Source: [IES Abroad](#)

Note: It's helpful to keep track of your sources as you formulate your outline so you don't have to look for them later.

OPPOSITION

Opposition: Studying abroad costs too much money.

Refutation: Take a look at your financial aid statement. How much does it cost to be a student at your university for a semester? Include tuition, housing, textbooks, transportation, and meal plan. Compare this with the cost of studying and living elsewhere.

Source: [Diversity Abroad](#)

Summary: Studying abroad will have long-lasting, positive implications on your future as an academic and a professional. New windows of opportunity will be flung open the moment you board the plane. Why not make an appointment with the study abroad center at your university? You have nothing to lose by starting a conversation today.

CHAPTER IV

TYPES OF ACADEMIC WRITING

The four main types of academic writing are descriptive, analytical, persuasive and critical. Each of these types of writing has specific language features and purposes.

In many academic texts you will need to use more than one type. For example, in an empirical thesis:

- you will use critical writing in the literature review to show where there is a gap or opportunity in the existing research
- the methods section will be mostly descriptive to summarise the methods used to collect and analyse information
- the results section will be mostly descriptive and analytical as you report on the data you collected
- the discussion section is more analytical, as you relate your findings back to your research questions, and also persuasive, as you propose your interpretations of the findings.

Descriptive

The simplest type of academic writing is descriptive. Its purpose is to provide facts or information. An example would be a summary of an article or a report of the results of an experiment.

The kinds of instructions for a purely descriptive assignment include: 'identify', 'report', 'record', 'summarise' and 'define'.

Analytical

It's rare for a university-level text to be purely descriptive. Most academic writing is also analytical. Analytical writing includes descriptive writing, but also requires you to re-organise the facts and information you describe into categories, groups, parts, types or relationships.

Sometimes, these categories or relationships are already part of the discipline, while in other cases you will create them specifically for your text. If you're comparing two theories, you might break your comparison into several parts, for example: how each theory deals with social context, how each theory deals with language learning, and how each theory can be used in practice.

The kinds of instructions for an analytical assignment include: 'analyse', 'compare', 'contrast', 'relate', and 'examine'.

To make your writing more analytical:

- spend plenty of time planning. Brainstorm the facts and ideas, and try different ways of grouping them, according to patterns, parts, similarities and differences. You could use colour-coding, flow charts, tree diagrams or tables.
- create a name for the relationships and categories you find. For example, advantages and disadvantages.
- build each section and paragraph around one of the analytical categories.
- make the structure of your paper clear to your reader, by using topic sentences and a clear introduction.

Persuasive

In most academic writing, you are required to go at least one step further than analytical writing, to persuasive writing. Persuasive writing has all the

features of analytical writing (that is, information plus re-organising the information), with the addition of your own point of view. Most essays are persuasive, and there is a persuasive element in at least the discussion and conclusion of a research article.

Points of view in academic writing can include an argument, recommendation, interpretation of findings or evaluation of the work of others. In persuasive writing, each claim you make needs to be supported by some evidence, for example a reference to research findings or published sources.

The kinds of instructions for a persuasive assignment include: 'argue', 'evaluate', 'discuss', and 'take a position'.

To help reach your own point of view on the facts or ideas:

- read some other researchers' points of view on the topic. Who do you feel is the most convincing?
- look for patterns in the data or references. Where is the evidence strongest?
- list several different interpretations. What are the real-life implications of each one? Which ones are likely to be most useful or beneficial? Which ones have some problems?
- discuss the facts and ideas with someone else. Do you agree with their point of view?

To develop your argument:

- list the different reasons for your point of view
- think about the different types and sources of evidence which you can use to support your point of view
- consider different ways that your point of view is similar to, and different from, the points of view of other researchers

- look for various ways to break your point of view into parts. For example, cost effectiveness, environmental sustainability, scope of real-world application.

To present your argument, make sure:

- your text develops a coherent argument where all the individual claims work together to support your overall point of view
- your reasoning for each claim is clear to the reader
- your assumptions are valid
- you have evidence for every claim you make
- you use evidence that is convincing and directly relevant.

Critical

Critical writing is common for research, postgraduate and advanced undergraduate writing. It has all the features of persuasive writing, with the added feature of at least one other point of view. While persuasive writing requires you to have your own point of view on an issue or topic, critical writing requires you to consider at least two points of view, including your own.

For example, you may explain a researcher's interpretation or argument and then evaluate the merits of the argument, or give your own alternative interpretation.

Examples of critical writing assignments include a critique of a journal article, or a literature review that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of existing research. The kinds of instructions for critical writing include: 'critique', 'debate', 'disagree' and 'evaluate'.

You need to:

- accurately summarise all or part of the work. This could include identifying the main interpretations, assumptions or methodology.
- have an opinion about the work. Appropriate types of opinion could include pointing out some problems with it, proposing an alternative approach that would be better, and/or defending the work against the critiques of others.
- provide evidence for your point of view. Depending on the specific assignment and the discipline, different types of evidence may be appropriate, such as logical reasoning, reference to authoritative sources and/or research data.

Critical writing requires strong writing skills. You need to thoroughly understand the topic and the issues. You need to develop an essay structure and paragraph structure that allows you to analyse different interpretations and develop your own argument, supported by evidence.

What Is an Academic Essay?

In a nutshell, an academic essay is a structured form of writing students face in school, college, and university as a part of their curricula. The most common purposes of such writing are to either present some new pieces of information or to use existing facts and knowledge to deliver specific ideas. This type of assignment allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and creativity and encourages them to develop their ideas to communicate a message.

Compared to other types of academic writing, essays are usually shorter in length and present the authors' opinions to support their arguments. Here are some key features of an academic essay for you to keep in mind:

- **Conciseness** — as a rule, essays are short; the length of such papers range from 200 to 500 words.

- **Topic** — due to their short lengths, a perfect topic for an essay should be narrowed-down and not too broad.
- **Well-structured text** — although essays can be considered as one of the least formal types of writing, they still need to have a solid structure and follow the proper academic paper format.
- **Clear central idea** — every academic essay should deliver a specific point that should be clear and powerful (i.e. thesis statement).
- **Personal motivation** — unlike other types of writing, essays often imply that their authors are personally interested in the subjects they are discussing.
- **Supporting facts, evidence, and examples** — although essays may present an author’s personal beliefs and ideas, they should also provide arguments that support those ideas.

It helps to develop your academic writing skills early—as they are skills you will carry forward throughout your studies and lifetime. People who are good at writing academic essays also tend to be able to articulate themselves more clearly, and tend to have more confidence when speaking.

To fully understand how and when to use an academic essay, we need to look at the main types of them.

Types of Academic Essays

Academic writing can be categorized into four main types of essays that serve unique purposes—though some share similar structures. With that being said, the four types of academic papers are narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive.

Narrative Essay

This type of writing requires the author to create a compelling story of practically anything imaginable. In other words, it is a super-condensed version of

a novel. This type of essay requires students to demonstrate their creative abilities. Therefore, it implies the constant use of strong adjectives. Their use will help the author of an essay to create a strong, graphic picture for their story and enhance the audience's perception of the topic. Although telling a compelling story is basically the main purpose of this type of essay, there is much more to it than there seems. A well-written narration should also have a point that is “written between the lines”. Simply put, there should be a clear message delivered through the text. By putting a hidden message between the lines, you motivate the reader to read the paper in its entirety as it sparks their curiosity.

Descriptive Essay

In short, in this type of essay, the author chooses a specific thing, experience, emotion, or idea and describes it for the reader. Just like with narrative writing, this style requires the author to be subjective and creative. And, just like a narrative essay, the author is meant to draw a picture in the audience’s eyes. Another key to success in writing a descriptive essay is carefully selecting words. Such a paper should evoke certain emotions in the reader and connect them to the object of discussion. Finally, the paper should describe the subject in simple terms. When the reader understands the subject well after reading an essay - that’s when you know you have written a stellar descriptive paper.

Expository Essay

Another type of academic writing — an expository essay is used to help readers understand subject matter by providing grounded information and facts. This type of writing requires its author to support all of the information included in the paper with valid evidence. An expository paper is no place for opinions or personal views on a subject. A quality paper should use analysis that consists of factual information on its subject. The author's key goal is to inform and educate the audience through clear logic and facts. Just to give you an example, this “How to Write an Academic Essay” article can be considered as expository writing.

Persuasive Essay

Writing a persuasive paper requires one to embrace the role of a salesman (or saleswoman). You can state an opinion, project, or idea which you then have to sell to your reader(s). The logic behind how you supply the reader(s) with information should be impenetrable, leaving them with no doubt that what you are expressing is the only truth they need to know. Cater your points carefully to avoid being pushy, and hide your sales tactic behind well-thought-out sentences. When it comes to defending an argument, you can use logical tactics, emotional tactics, or a mix of both; this depends on what you are attempting to argue.

Good Academic Essay Topics

Logically, topics will vary based on the style of writing you are creating. Sometimes you can find the same topic within separate academic essay categories, but the main content will always vary depending on the category of paper you write about. That being said, here are some good academic essay topics for high school and college students:

Narrative Essay Topics

- Describe how you and your family survived the quarantine. Explain how it affected you.
- Talk about your experience of being engaged in remote learning. How did it affect your grades and overall performance? Do you think that remote education is better or worse than the traditional alternative?
- Write a story that explains the importance of technology in the modern person's life.
- Write a story that explains the value of every person's contribution to the process of solving the global problem of climate change.

Descriptive Essay Topics

- Describe a person who has had the biggest impact on your life.
- What is the most significant recent event in global history?
- Describe the experience of falling in love. How does it affect one's personality?
- Describe the most impactful piece of art or music you have ever seen. What traits do you think define powerful art?

Expository Essay Topics

- Why does the rate of teen suicides keep increasing? What forces youth to commit suicide?
- What can each individual do to contribute to the prevention of climate change and reduce the threats it brings with it?
- What strategies can our society adopt to recover after the global pandemic as quickly and painlessly as possible?
- George Floyd's death and the police's abuse of authority: What can we do to prevent future cases?

Persuasive/Argumentative Essay Topics

- Should the government make relevant amendments to the constitution to restrict the actions permitted by police officers during arrests?
- Should we keep on following self-distancing rules even now since the danger has diminished?
- Gun control: Provide arguments for stricter gun control in the US.
- Should technology (apart from those devices used for educational purposes) be banned in colleges?

Proper Format for Your Academic Writing

Usually, an academic essay follows the standard 5-paragraph structure: an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Moreover, each section will have its own unique internal structure. The introduction's main goal is to

introduce the topic and to reveal the essay's main message (a.k.a. the thesis statement). The body paragraphs' primary tasks are to defend the thesis with 3 sub arguments—1 per paragraph. Lastly, the conclusion is there to wrap up the entire argument and to leave a lasting impression in the form of an overall concluding statement. Down below we have presented a graphic organizer that illustrates the breakdown.

Start Off the Writing Process by Creating an Outline

Before commencing any academic writing, you need to create four essential components that need to be answered beforehand. They are the thesis statement, subpoints, a connection, and the summary.

- **Thesis Statement:** This is the focal point of your writing and one of your introductory paragraphs' key elements. It is the main message the author is trying to deliver.
- **Body Points (Subpoints):** These are the key points or statements that you will use to support your thesis.
- **Connection:** When writing an academic essay, it is important to tie it directly or indirectly to the real world. Provide a reason why it is important to you or why it is relevant to society. This will fill your paper with new meaning and showcase your unique way of thinking.
- **Summary:** This is a short and strong statement that briefly explains your given points.

To help you get a better idea of how to shape a perfect outline for your essay, here is a sample outline for a paper written about “Police Brutality and Its Impact on the Society”:

1. Introduction

- **Hook:** Statistics show that in 2019 alone, almost two thousand people were killed due to police brutality.

- Background information and explanation of key terms: The term “police brutality” refers to the excessive, unwarranted, and often illegal use of force by the policemen. Throughout the US, and throughout global history, there have been plenty of cases of fatal force that range from assault to torture, and even murder. Moreover, statistical data indicates that the levels of violent crime in the United State do not determine the rates of police violence. That is why, recently, police brutality has become a real and prevalent issue that is being widely discussed and spotlighted in the media.
- Thesis statement: The unwarranted use of force is a real problem that has a significant impact on how people view their society, and it has to be addressed appropriately to prevent further growth of discontent and violence.

2. Main Body

- Point 1 + example/evidence
- Point 2 + example/evidence
- Point 3 + example/evidence

3. Conclusion

- Summary of the key points discussed in the main body.
- Restatement of the thesis statement.
- A final sentence that leaves readers with more to consider.

Once you have created a proper outline, listed your main points, and collected evidence to support your ideas, it is time to start writing your paper. A lot of people choose to come up with a title before the writing process as it helps them set the mood for their work. Others prefer writing first and then creating a title based on their written information. The second option is more suitable for writing a narrative or descriptive essays, as the title’s meaning could be abstract. However, when it comes to expository and persuasive papers, it is important to set a specific essay title and to follow its general theme.

The Introduction

The academic essay format we are talking about in this article is pretty basic. It has been widely used to create high-quality essay examples for university for years. The main reason students still use it is that it is considered to be the most effective in terms of delivering information to the reader.

Where to start: When writing any academic writing assignment, a student should begin by shaping a solid introduction.

Quick tip: If you are not too experienced in writing academic papers, don't hesitate to find a good academic paper example to give you an idea about how to make a good introduction. Looking at good samples can help to get you going.

A reader's attention span is at its peak at the very beginning of a paper, when they just start reading, so your introductory paragraph will basically set the tone for the entire academic paper. Luckily, EssayPro can share a few handy and highly effective techniques to help you build a compelling introduction!

First of all, you should begin with a powerful hook. The term "hook" is used to refer to the first sentence of the introduction paragraph—the main purpose of which is to grab the reader's attention and encourage them to read on. To help you get on the right track, here are some of the best tactics for creating a hook that works:

- **Quote:** Starting an introduction with a creative and meaningful quote is one of the most popular techniques for introducing a paper. When the quote is chosen right, it can make a powerful impact on a reader and set the right tone for the entire essay. Therefore, quotes often serve as good openers. However, it is vital to pick the right quote that will directly relate to your topic and does not distract your reader from your topic's main point.

- **Fact:** Another common opening technique is to begin an essay with a factual statement or statistic. This is most helpful when writing an expository or persuasive essay, as, in this case, such an opener will add credibility to your paper. Also, starting with a fact will demonstrate that you have researched your topic well.
- **Rhetorical Question:** Finally, another way to begin your essay is to start with a rhetorical question. This technique will help you to connect more with your reader(s). A good rhetorical question will stick in your reader's mind as they go through the rest of the paper. However, it is important that you answer the rhetorical question from the introduction in your essay's body or, at least, guide your audience towards a relevant observation.

Bad Hook Example: “Police brutality must stop.” – This is not intriguing and does not grab the reader’s attention, though it gives the reader an idea of what the essay will be about.

Good Hook Example: “I don’t have a gun. Stop shooting.” – This hook will have a stronger impact on a reader because it is a famous quote from a police-brutality victim. Consequently, it hints on the topic of the essay, but keeps the intrigue.

When you have a powerful hook, it is time to give your readers an insight into the essay's main topic. Since the main theme of the paper may not yet be evidently clear at this point, you need to narrow down your paper’s focus by introducing some valuable contextual background information. Outlining the background data will help readers understand how the topic will unfold throughout the paper. Finally, after you provide the background, it is time to shape your golden sentence (a.k.a. thesis statement).

In a nutshell, the thesis statement is the key theme, idea, or argument of your essay. In other words, it summarizes the entire message you are going to deliver in a single sentence.

Bonus tip: When shaping your thesis statement, do not overload it with unnecessary information. Keep it straight to the point and concise. Remember that the main purposes of this sentence are to lay out the focus of the paper and to introduce the readers to the main ideas you will cover within the body paragraphs.

Bad Thesis Statement Example: “Police violence is bad for society.” – This is too short and does not indicate a solid opinion from the author.

Good Thesis Statement Example: “The unwarranted use of force is a real problem that has a significant influence on society and has to be addressed appropriately to prevent the growth of discontent and violence further.” – This is concise, but detailed enough to let the readers understand the purpose of the writing. It is logical and states the clear position the author supports.

The Main Body

The body paragraphs of your essay will be the source of information for your audience. The main body is always the biggest part of a 5 paragraph assignment and requires the most attention. When writing your body paragraphs, your main points should be stated according to the order of your outline and should support your thesis statement with valid arguments and facts. If you deviate from that, it’s going to confuse the audience, especially those who are very attentive to your essay’s flow.

Here are the main requirements for writing a strong body section:

- **Accuracy:** Be cautious with information and do not contradict yourself. Include the relevant subpoints (based on the body paragraphs) you presented in your thesis.

Bad Example: Due to the rapid growth of atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, we can assume that climate change is a real issue. (Point 1) However, according to some sources, Antarctica is now gaining back ice, which indicates that the problem is being resolved. (Point 2)

Good Example: Due to the rapid growth of atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, we can assume that climate change is a real issue. (Point 1) Also, according to scientists and the reports from statistics taken from satellites, Antarctica keeps losing its land ice rapidly, which also indicates continued global warming. (Point 2)

- **Evidence:** Every topic or idea you present should be defended with sufficient evidence to accredit your words. Provide details such as facts, statistics, and references.

Bad Example: Global warming is a real threat because of the increase in the carbon footprint left by people.

Good Example: According to the official Nasa report, the atmospheric carbon dioxide levels have now almost reached the point of 420 parts per million. This indicator is considerably larger compared to the level of the atmospheric carbon dioxide reported in 1950, which barely reached 320 parts per million. These facts let us conclude that the issue of climate change is now indisputable.

- **Word Choice:** Mind your vocabulary, especially when it comes to persuasive or descriptive papers. The words you use should accurately represent your information. Use vivid adjectives and strong adverbs. Some things you want to avoid in terms of word choice are misused words, jargon or technical terms that confuse readers, slang or inappropriate language, cliches, wordiness, etc.

Bad Example: Last but not least, police brutality cases cause society discontent that leads to mass riots and generates even more violence.

Good Example: Lastly, police brutality causes discontent that leads to mass riots and generates even more violence.

- **Keep It Consistent:** A body paragraph should be between 5-7 sentences. Logically, they should all follow a similar structure, with the main difference revolving around the presentation of the subpoint. We always

recommend students check out a quality academic writing sample to get a good idea of how the whole piece should look like.

The main body's goal is to answer any questions that have appeared in the reader's mind after the introduction. Every new point should get the audience closer to understanding the complete concept you deliver throughout your essay. Ideally, your goal is to bring them to the same level of knowledge on the subject as you have in your capacity. After doing so successfully, it is time to transition to the conclusion.

The Conclusion

In any assignment you write, you have to start strong and finish even stronger. As you move towards the end of your paper, your reader might not even remember what the first paragraph you wrote was about. Therefore, you have to remind them. Overall, a good essay conclusion is going to include:

- **Summary:** A condensed paraphrasing of the information stated in the thesis and the subpoints. (Only if you are writing an expository, descriptive, or persuasive paper)
- **Personal or Social Connection:** In other words, why this information is relevant to society. Stating such a connection showcases the general importance of the subject and its modern-day relevance.
- **Overall Concluding Statement:** This will normally be the last sentence that serves the purpose of tying a knot around your work. If you have initially started with a rhetorical question, a nice touch would be to give the audience an answer to it here. If you have written a quote, rephrase it in your own words. It is important to leave the audience with a strong statement that will stay in their minds.

Writing Process

Drafting

The drafting process takes you from a compilation of information to the structured delivery of your idea within your essay. No excellent-quality paper has ever been written in a single draft. The process begins with a rough draft – a stage where you use all of the information you have acquired from your relative outline. From there, you narrow down this information to the most relevant parts that add actual value to your academic essay topic. Every new draft must also rid itself of content problems, structural flaws, or simple typos. The final draft of an essay might end up being drastically smaller than its original draft.

Word Choice

Word choice is one of the factors that define the quality of an academic essay. It is also often overseeded or neglected. It is no secret that some words are better at communicating ideas than others. It is also no secret that vocabulary plays a big role in the writing process. Focusing on word choice is especially significant in descriptive essay writing when your goal is to paint a picture in a reader's mind. If you are writing a paper on a specific area of study, it is crucial to use words related to that field and avoid simple neutral words that offer no contribution to the text.

Finalizing the Submission

At this stage of writing, your content should be well polished. After taking your essay through a peer review and/or red pen edits, make sure to:

- Fix all grammatical mistakes and punctuational errors
- Finalize your title
- Add a bibliography if needed (basically, a “references” or “works cited” page that also includes the sources you have used, but weren't referenced within the text)
- Make sure your paper meets its specified academic paper formatting requirements.

To Sum Up

We hope we've given you a good head start at becoming an expert academic essay writer. Remember, the purpose of an academic essay is to develop your ideas to deliver a message. As a result of getting better at academic essay writing, you will be able to articulate yourselves clearly and be able to write and speak more confidently. Good luck with your assignment!

CHAPTER V

ESSAY STRUCTURE

Writing an academic essay means fashioning a coherent set of ideas into an argument. Because essays are essentially linear—they offer one idea at a time—they must present their ideas in the order that makes most sense to a reader. Successfully structuring an essay means attending to a reader's logic.

The focus of such an essay predicts its structure. It dictates the information readers need to know and the order in which they need to receive it. Thus your essay's structure is necessarily unique to the main claim you're making. Although there are guidelines for constructing certain classic essay types (e.g., comparative analysis), there are no set formula.

Answering Questions: The Parts of an Essay

A typical essay contains many different kinds of information, often located in specialized parts or sections. Even short essays perform several different operations: introducing the argument, analyzing data, raising counterarguments, concluding. Introductions and conclusions have fixed places, but other parts don't. Counterargument, for example, may appear within a paragraph, as a free-standing section, as part of the beginning, or before the ending. Background material (historical context or biographical information, a summary of relevant theory or criticism, the definition of a key term) often appears at the beginning of the essay, between the introduction and the first analytical section, but might also appear near the beginning of the specific section to which it's relevant.

It's helpful to think of the different essay sections as answering a series of questions your reader might ask when encountering your thesis. (Readers should have questions. If they don't, your thesis is most likely simply an observation of fact, not an arguable claim.)

"What?" The first question to anticipate from a reader is "what": What evidence shows that the phenomenon described by your thesis is true? To answer

the question you must examine your evidence, thus demonstrating the truth of your claim. This "what" or "demonstration" section comes early in the essay, often directly after the introduction. Since you're essentially reporting what you've observed, this is the part you might have most to say about when you first start writing. But be forewarned: it shouldn't take up much more than a third (often much less) of your finished essay. If it does, the essay will lack balance and may read as mere summary or description.

"How?" A reader will also want to know whether the claims of the thesis are true in all cases. The corresponding question is "how": How does the thesis stand up to the challenge of a counterargument? How does the introduction of new material—a new way of looking at the evidence, another set of sources—affect the claims you're making? Typically, an essay will include at least one "how" section. (Call it "complication" since you're responding to a reader's complicating questions.) This section usually comes after the "what," but keep in mind that an essay may complicate its argument several times depending on its length, and that counterargument alone may appear just about anywhere in an essay.

"Why?" Your reader will also want to know what's at stake in your claim: Why does your interpretation of a phenomenon matter to anyone beside you? This question addresses the larger implications of your thesis. It allows your readers to understand your essay within a larger context. In answering "why", your essay explains its own significance. Although you might gesture at this question in your introduction, the fullest answer to it properly belongs at your essay's end. If you leave it out, your readers will experience your essay as unfinished—or, worse, as pointless or insular.

Mapping an Essay

Structuring your essay according to a reader's logic means examining your thesis and anticipating what a reader needs to know, and in what sequence, in order to grasp and be convinced by your argument as it unfolds. The easiest way to do this is to map the essay's ideas via a written narrative. Such an account will

give you a preliminary record of your ideas, and will allow you to remind yourself at every turn of the reader's needs in understanding your idea.

Essay maps ask you to predict where your reader will expect background information, counterargument, close analysis of a primary source, or a turn to secondary source material. Essay maps are not concerned with paragraphs so much as with sections of an essay. They anticipate the major argumentative moves you expect your essay to make. Try making your map like this:

- State your thesis in a sentence or two, then write another sentence saying why it's important to make that claim. Indicate, in other words, what a reader might learn by exploring the claim with you. Here you're anticipating your answer to the "why" question that you'll eventually flesh out in your conclusion.
- Begin your next sentence like this: "To be convinced by my claim, the first thing a reader needs to know is . . ." Then say why that's the first thing a reader needs to know, and name one or two items of evidence you think will make the case. This will start you off on answering the "what" question. (Alternately, you may find that the first thing your reader needs to know is some background information.)
- Begin each of the following sentences like this: "The next thing my reader needs to know is . . ." Once again, say why, and name some evidence. Continue until you've mapped out your essay.

Your map should naturally take you through some preliminary answers to the basic questions of what, how, and why. It is not a contract, though—the order in which the ideas appear is not a rigid one. Essay maps are flexible; they evolve with your ideas.

Signs of Trouble

A common structural flaw in college essays is the "walk-through" (also labeled "summary" or "description"). Walk-through essays follow the structure of their sources rather than establishing their own. Such essays generally have a

descriptive thesis rather than an argumentative one. Be wary of paragraph openers that lead off with "time" words ("first," "next," "after," "then") or "listing" words ("also," "another," "in addition"). Although they don't always signal trouble, these paragraph openers often indicate that an essay's thesis and structure need work: they suggest that the essay simply reproduces the chronology of the source text (in the case of time words: first this happens, then that, and afterwards another thing . . .) or simply lists example after example ("In addition, the use of color indicates another way that the painting differentiates between good and evil"). (Abrams, Elizabeth. 2000)

Beginning The Academic Essay

The writer of the academic essay aims to persuade readers of an idea based on evidence. The beginning of the essay is a crucial first step in this process. In order to engage readers and establish your authority, the beginning of your essay has to accomplish certain business. Your beginning should introduce the essay, focus it, and orient readers.

Introduce the Essay. The beginning lets your readers know what the essay is about, the *topic*. The essay's topic does not exist in a vacuum, however; part of letting readers know what your essay is about means establishing the essay's *context*, the frame within which you will approach your topic. For instance, in an essay about the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech, the context may be a particular legal theory about the speech right; it may be historical information concerning the writing of the amendment; it may be a contemporary dispute over flag burning; or it may be a question raised by the text itself. The point here is that, in establishing the essay's context, you are also limiting your topic. That is, you are framing an approach to your topic that necessarily eliminates other approaches. Thus, when you determine your context, you simultaneously narrow your topic and take a big step toward focusing your essay. Here's an example.

When Kate Chopin's novel The Awakening was published in 1899, critics condemned the book as immoral. One typical critic, writing in the Providence Journal, feared that the novel might "fall into the hands of youth, leading them to dwell on things that only matured persons can understand, and promoting unholy imaginations and unclean desires" (150). A reviewer in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch wrote that "there is much that is very improper in it, not to say positively unseemly."

The paragraph goes on. But as you can see, Chopin's novel (the topic) is introduced in the context of the critical and moral controversy its publication engendered.

Focus the Essay. Beyond introducing your topic, your beginning must also let readers know what the central issue is. What question or problem will you be thinking about? You can pose a question that will lead to your idea (in which case, your idea will be the answer to your question), or you can make a thesis statement. Or you can do both: you can ask a question and immediately suggest the answer that your essay will argue. Here's an example from an essay about Memorial Hall.

Further analysis of Memorial Hall, and of the archival sources that describe the process of building it, suggests that the past may not be the central subject of the hall but only a medium. What message, then, does the building convey, and why are the fallen soldiers of such importance to the alumni who built it? Part of the answer, it seems, is that Memorial Hall is an educational tool, an attempt by the Harvard community of the 1870s to influence the future by shaping our memory of their times. The commemoration of those students and graduates who died for the Union during the Civil War is one aspect of this alumni message to the future, but it may not be the central idea.

The fullness of your idea will not emerge until your conclusion, but your beginning must clearly indicate the direction your idea will take, must set your essay on that road. And whether you focus your essay by posing a question, stating a thesis, or combining these approaches, by the end of your beginning, readers should know what you're writing about, and *why*—and why they might want to read on.

Orient Readers. Orienting readers, locating them in your discussion, means providing information and explanations wherever necessary for your readers' understanding. Orienting is important throughout your essay, but it is crucial in the beginning. Readers who don't have the information they need to follow your discussion will get lost and quit reading. (Your teachers, of course, will trudge on.) Supplying the necessary information to orient your readers may be as simple as answering the journalist's questions of who, what, where, when, how, and why. It may mean providing a brief overview of events or a summary of the text you'll be analyzing. If the source text is brief, such as the First Amendment, you might just quote it. If the text is well known, your summary, for most audiences, won't need to be more than an identifying phrase or two:

In Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare's tragedy of `star-crossed lovers' destroyed by the blood feud between their two families, the minor characters . . .

Often, however, you will want to summarize your source more fully so that readers can follow your analysis of it.

Questions of Length and Order. How long should the beginning be? The length should be proportionate to the length and complexity of the whole essay. For instance, if you're writing a five-page essay analyzing a single text, your

beginning should be brief, no more than one or two paragraphs. On the other hand, it may take a couple of pages to set up a ten-page essay.

Does the business of the beginning have to be addressed in a particular order? No, but the order should be logical. Usually, for instance, the question or statement that focuses the essay comes at the end of the beginning, where it serves as the jumping-off point for the middle, or main body, of the essay. Topic and context are often intertwined, but the context may be established before the particular topic is introduced. In other words, the order in which you accomplish the business of the beginning is flexible and should be determined by your purpose.

Opening Strategies. There is still the further question of how to start. What makes a good opening? You can start with specific facts and information, a keynote quotation, a question, an anecdote, or an image. But whatever sort of opening you choose, it should be directly related to your focus. A snappy quotation that doesn't help establish the context for your essay or that later plays no part in your thinking will only mislead readers and blur your focus. Be as direct and specific as you can be. This means you should avoid two types of openings:

- The history-of-the-world (or long-distance) opening, which aims to establish a context for the essay by getting a long running start: "Ever since the dawn of civilized life, societies have struggled to reconcile the need for change with the need for order." What are we talking about here, political revolution or a new brand of soft drink? Get to it.
- The funnel opening (a variation on the same theme), which starts with something broad and general and "funnels" its way down to a specific topic. If your essay is an argument about state-mandated prayer in public schools, don't start by generalizing about religion; start with the specific topic at hand.

Remember. After working your way through the whole draft, testing your thinking against the evidence, perhaps changing direction or modifying the idea you started with, go back to your beginning and make sure it still provides a clear focus for the essay. Then clarify and sharpen your focus as needed. Clear, direct beginnings rarely present themselves ready-made; they must be written, and rewritten, into the sort of sharp-eyed clarity that engages readers and establishes your authority. (Kain, Patricia. 1999)

CHAPTER VI

OUTLINING

Trying to devise a structure for your essay can be one of the most difficult parts of the writing process. Making a detailed outline before you begin writing is a good way to make sure your ideas come across in a clear and logical order. A good outline will also save you time in the revision process, reducing the possibility that your ideas will need to be rearranged once you've written them.

The First Steps

Before you can begin outlining, you need to have a sense of what you will argue in the essay. From your analysis and close readings of primary and/or secondary sources you should have notes, ideas, and possible quotes to cite as evidence. Let's say you are writing about the 1999 Republican Primary and you want to prove that each candidate's financial resources were the most important element in the race. At this point, your notes probably lack much coherent order. Most likely, your ideas are still in the order in which they occurred to you; your notes and possible quotes probably still adhere to the chronology of the sources you've examined. Your goal is to rearrange your ideas, notes, and quotes—the raw material of your essay—into an order that best supports your argument, not the arguments you've read in other people's works. To do this, you have to group your notes into categories and then arrange these categories in a logical order.

Generalizing

The first step is to look over each individual piece of information that you've written and assign it to a general category. Ask yourself, "If I were to file this in a database, what would I file it under?" If, using the example of the Republican Primary, you wrote down an observation about John McCain's views on health care, you might list it under the general category of "Health care

policy." As you go through your notes, try to reuse categories whenever possible. Your goal is to reduce your notes to no more than a page of category listings.

Now examine your category headings. Do any seem repetitive? Do any go together? "McCain's expenditure on ads" and "Bush's expenditure on ads," while not exactly repetitive, could easily combine into a more general category like "Candidates' expenditures on ads." Also, keep an eye out for categories that no longer seem to relate to your argument. Individual pieces of information that at first seemed important can begin to appear irrelevant when grouped into a general category.

Now it's time to generalize again. Examine all your categories and look for common themes. Go through each category and ask yourself, "If I were to place this piece of information in a file cabinet, what would I label that cabinet?" Again, try to reuse labels as often as possible: "Health Care," "Foreign Policy," and "Immigration" can all be contained under "Policy Initiatives." Make these larger categories as general as possible so that there are no more than three or four for a 7-10 page paper.

Ordering

With your notes grouped into generalized categories, the process of ordering them should be easier. To begin, look at your most general categories. With your thesis in mind, try to find a way that the labels might be arranged in a sentence or two that supports your argument. Let's say your thesis is that financial resources played the most important role in the 1999 Republican Primary. Your four most general categories are "Policy Initiatives," "Financial Resources," "Voters' Concerns," and "Voters' Loyalty." You might come up with the following sentence: "Although McCain's policy initiatives were closest to the voters' concerns, Bush's financial resources won the voters' loyalty." This sentence should reveal the order of your most general categories. You will begin with an examination of McCain's and Bush's views on important issues and compare them to the voters' top concerns. Then you'll look at both candidates' financial resources

and show how Bush could win voters' loyalty through effective use of his resources, despite his less popular policy ideas.

With your most general categories in order, you now must order the smaller categories. To do so, arrange each smaller category into a sentence or two that will support the more general sentence you've just devised. Under the category of "Financial Resources," for instance, you might have the smaller categories of "Ad Expenditure," "Campaign Contributions" and "Fundraising." A sentence that supports your general argument might read: "Bush's early emphasis on fundraising led to greater campaign contributions, allowing him to have a greater ad expenditure than McCain."

The final step of the outlining process is to repeat this procedure on the smallest level, with the original notes that you took for your essay. To order what probably was an unwieldy and disorganized set of information at the beginning of this process, you need now only think of a sentence or two to support your general argument. Under the category "Fundraising," for example, you might have quotes about each candidate's estimation of its importance, statistics about the amount of time each candidate spent fundraising, and an idea about how the importance of fundraising never can be overestimated. Sentences to support your general argument might read: "No candidate has ever raised too much money [your idea]. While both McCain and Bush acknowledged the importance of fundraising [your quotes], the numbers clearly point to Bush as the superior fundraiser [your statistics]." The arrangement of your ideas, quotes, and statistics now should come naturally.

Putting It All Together

With these sentences, you have essentially constructed an outline for your essay. The most general ideas, which you organized in your first sentence, constitute the essay's sections. They follow the order in which you placed them in your sentence. The order of the smaller categories within each larger category (determined by your secondary sentences) indicates the order of the paragraphs

within each section. Finally, your last set of sentences about your specific notes should show the order of the sentences within each paragraph. An outline for the essay about the 1999 Republican Primary (showing only the sections worked out here) would look something like this:

I. POLICY INITIATIVES

II. VOTERS' CONCERNS

III. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

a) Fundraising

i. Original Idea

ii. McCain Quote/Bush Quote

iii. McCain Statistics/Bush Statistic

b) Campaign Contribution

c) Ad Expenditure

IV. VOTERS' LOYALTY

(Kornhaber, David. 2000)

CHAPTER VII

TOPIC SENTENCES AND SIGNPOSTING

Topic sentences and signposts make an essay's claims clear to a reader. Good essays contain both. *Topic sentences* reveal the main point of a paragraph. They show the relationship of each paragraph to the essay's thesis, telegraph the point of a paragraph, and tell your reader what to expect in the paragraph that follows. Topic sentences also establish their relevance right away, making clear why the points they're making are important to the essay's main ideas. They argue rather than report. *Signposts*, as their name suggests, prepare the reader for a change in the argument's direction. They show how far the essay's argument has progressed vis-[^]-vis the claims of the thesis.

Topic sentences and signposts occupy a middle ground in the writing process. They are neither the first thing a writer needs to address (thesis and the broad strokes of an essay's structure are); nor are they the last (that's when you attend to sentence-level editing and polishing). Topic sentences and signposts deliver an essay's structure and meaning to a reader, so they are useful diagnostic tools to the writer—they let you know if your thesis is arguable—and essential guides to the reader

Forms of Topic Sentences

Sometimes topic sentences are actually two or even three sentences long. If the first makes a claim, the second might reflect on that claim, explaining it further. Think of these sentences as asking and answering two critical questions: How does the phenomenon you're discussing operate? Why does it operate as it does?

There's no set formula for writing a topic sentence. Rather, you should work to vary the form your topic sentences take. Repeated too often, any method grows wearisome. Here are a few approaches.

Complex sentences. Topic sentences at the beginning of a paragraph frequently combine with a transition from the previous paragraph. This might be done by writing a sentence that contains both subordinate and independent clauses, as in the example below.

Although Young Woman with a Water Pitcher depicts an unknown, middle-class woman at an ordinary task, the image is more than "realistic"; the painter (Vermeer) has imposed his own order upon it to strengthen it.

This sentence employs a useful principle of transitions: always move from old to new information. The subordinate clause (from "although" to "task") recaps information from previous paragraphs; the independent clauses (starting with "the image" and "the painter") introduce the new information—a claim about how the image works ("more than \hat{O} realistic") and why it works as it does (Vermeer "strengthens" the image by "imposing order").

Questions. Questions, sometimes in pairs, also make good topic sentences (and signposts). Consider the following: "Does the promise of stability justify this unchanging hierarchy?" We may fairly assume that the paragraph or section that follows will answer the question. Questions are by definition a form of inquiry, and thus demand an answer. Good essays strive for this forward momentum.

Bridge sentences. Like questions, "bridge sentences" (the term is John Trimble's) make an excellent substitute for more formal topic sentences. Bridge sentences indicate both what came before and what comes next (they "bridge" paragraphs) without the formal trappings of multiple clauses: "But there is a clue to this puzzle."

Pivots. Topic sentences don't always appear at the beginning of a paragraph. When they come in the middle, they indicate that the paragraph will change direction, or "pivot." This strategy is particularly useful for dealing with counter-evidence: a paragraph starts out conceding a point or stating a fact ("Psychologist

Sharon Hymer uses the term 'narcissistic friendship' to describe the early stage of a friendship like the one between Celie and Shug"); after following up on this initial statement with evidence, it then reverses direction and establishes a claim ("Yet ... this narcissistic stage of Celie and Shug's relationship is merely a transitory one. Hymer herself concedes . . . "). The pivot always needs a signal, a word like "but," "yet," or "however," or a longer phrase or sentence that indicates an about-face. It often needs more than one sentence to make its point.

Signposts

Signposts operate as topic sentences for whole sections in an essay. (In longer essays, sections often contain more than a single paragraph.) They inform a reader that the essay is taking a turn in its argument: delving into a related topic such as a counter-argument, stepping up its claims with a complication, or pausing to give essential historical or scholarly background. Because they reveal the architecture of the essay itself, signposts remind readers of what the essay's stakes are: what it's about, and why it's being written.

Signposting can be accomplished in a sentence or two at the beginning of a paragraph or in whole paragraphs that serve as transitions between one part of the argument and the next. The following example comes from an essay examining how a painting by Monet, *The Gare Saint-Lazare: Arrival of a Train*, challenges Zola's declarations about Impressionist art. The student writer wonders whether Monet's Impressionism is really as devoted to avoiding "ideas" in favor of direct sense impressions as Zola's claims would seem to suggest. This is the start of the essay's third section:

It is evident in this painting that Monet found his Gare Saint-Lazare motif fascinating at the most fundamental level of the play of light as well as the loftiest level of social relevance. Arrival of a Train explores both extremes of expression. At the fundamental extreme, Monet satisfies the Impressionist objective of capturing the full-spectrum effects of light on a scene.

The writer signposts this section in the first sentence, reminding readers of the stakes of the essay itself with the simultaneous references to sense impression ("play of light") and intellectual content ("social relevance"). The second sentence follows up on this idea, while the third serves as a topic sentence for the paragraph. The paragraph after that starts off with a topic sentence about the "cultural message" of the painting, something that the signposting sentence predicts by not only reminding readers of the essay's stakes but also, and quite clearly, indicating what the section itself will contain. (Abrams, Elizabeth. 2000)

CHAPTER VIII

HOW TO WRITE A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Throughout your academic career, you'll be asked to write papers in which you compare and contrast two things: two texts, two theories, two historical figures, two scientific processes, and so on. "Classic" compare-and-contrast papers, in which you weight A and B equally, may be about two similar things that have crucial differences (two pesticides with different effects on the environment) or two similar things that have crucial differences, yet turn out to have surprising commonalities (two politicians with vastly different world views who voice unexpectedly similar perspectives on sexual harassment).

In the "lens" (or "keyhole") comparison, in which you weight A less heavily than B, you use A as a lens through which to view B. Just as looking through a pair of glasses changes the way you see an object, using A as a framework for understanding B changes the way you see B. Lens comparisons are useful for illuminating, critiquing, or challenging the stability of a thing that, before the analysis, seemed perfectly understood. Often, lens comparisons take time into account: earlier texts, events, or historical figures may illuminate later ones, and vice versa.

Faced with a daunting list of seemingly unrelated similarities and differences, you may feel confused about how to construct a paper that isn't just a mechanical exercise in which you first state all the features that A and B have in common, and then state all the ways in which A and B are different. Predictably, the thesis of such a paper is usually an assertion that A and B are very similar yet not so similar after all. To write a good compare-and-contrast paper, you must take your raw data—the similarities and differences you've observed—and make them cohere into a meaningful argument. Here are the five elements required.

Frame of Reference. This is the context within which you place the two things you plan to compare and contrast; it is the umbrella under which you have grouped them. The frame of reference may consist of an idea, theme, question,

problem, or theory; a group of similar things from which you extract two for special attention; biographical or historical information. The best frames of reference are constructed from specific sources rather than your own thoughts or observations. Thus, in a paper comparing how two writers redefine social norms of masculinity, you would be better off quoting a sociologist on the topic of masculinity than spinning out potentially banal-sounding theories of your own. Most assignments tell you exactly what the frame of reference should be, and most courses supply sources for constructing it. *If you encounter an assignment that fails to provide a frame of reference, you must come up with one on your own.* A paper without such a context would have no angle on the material, no focus or frame for the writer to propose a meaningful argument.

Grounds for Comparison. Let's say you're writing a paper on global food distribution, and you've chosen to compare apples and oranges. Why these particular fruits? Why not pears and bananas? The rationale behind your choice, the *grounds for comparison*, lets your reader know why your choice is deliberate and meaningful, not random. For instance, in a paper asking how the "discourse of domesticity" has been used in the abortion debate, the grounds for comparison are obvious; the issue has two conflicting sides, pro-choice and pro-life. In a paper comparing the effects of acid rain on two forest sites, your choice of sites is less obvious. A paper focusing on similarly aged forest stands in Maine and the Catskills will be set up differently from one comparing a new forest stand in the White Mountains with an old forest in the same region. You need to indicate the reasoning behind your choice.

Thesis. The grounds for comparison anticipates the comparative nature of your thesis. As in any argumentative paper, your thesis statement will convey the gist of your argument, which necessarily follows from your frame of reference. But in a compare-and-contrast, the thesis depends on how the two things you've chosen to compare actually relate to one another. Do they extend, corroborate, complicate, contradict, correct, or debate one another? In the most common compare-and-

contrast paper—one focusing on differences—you can indicate the precise relationship between A and B by using the word "whereas" in your thesis:

Whereas Camus perceives ideology as secondary to the need to address a specific historical moment of colonialism, Fanon perceives a revolutionary ideology as the impetus to reshape Algeria's history in a direction toward independence.

Whether your paper focuses primarily on difference or similarity, you need to make the relationship between A and B clear in your thesis. This relationship is at the heart of any compare-and-contrast paper.

Organizational Scheme. Your introduction will include your frame of reference, grounds for comparison, and thesis. There are two basic ways to organize the body of your paper.

- In *text-by-text*, you discuss all of A, then all of B.
- In *point-by-point*, you alternate points about A with comparable points about B.

If you think that B extends A, you'll probably use a text-by-text scheme; if you see A and B engaged in debate, a point-by-point scheme will draw attention to the conflict. Be aware, however, that the point-by-point scheme can come off as a ping-pong game. You can avoid this effect by grouping more than one point together, thereby cutting down on the number of times you alternate from A to B. But no matter which organizational scheme you choose, you need not give equal time to similarities and differences. In fact, your paper will be more interesting if you get to the heart of your argument as quickly as possible. Thus, a paper on two evolutionary theorists' different interpretations of specific archaeological findings might have as few as two or three sentences in the introduction on similarities and at most a paragraph or two to set up the contrast between the theorists' positions. The rest of the paper, whether organized text-by-text or point-by-point, will treat the two theorists' differences.

You can organize a classic compare-and-contrast paper either text-by-text or point-by-point. But in a "lens" comparison, in which you spend significantly less time on A (the lens) than on B (the focal text), you almost always organize text-by-text. That's because A and B are not strictly comparable: A is merely a tool for helping you discover whether or not B's nature is actually what expectations have led you to believe it is.

Linking of A and B. All argumentative papers require you to link each point in the argument back to the thesis. Without such links, your reader will be unable to see how new sections logically and systematically advance your argument. In a compare-and contrast, you also need to make links between A and B in the body of your essay if you want your paper to hold together. To make these links, use transitional expressions of comparison and contrast (*similarly, moreover, likewise, on the contrary, conversely, on the other hand*) and contrastive vocabulary (in the example below, *Southerner/Northerner*).

As a girl raised in the faded glory of the Old South, amid mystical tales of magnolias and moonlight, the mother remains part of a dying generation. Surrounded by hard times, racial conflict, and limited opportunities, Julian, on the other hand, feels repelled by the provincial nature of home, and represents a new Southerner, one who sees his native land through a condescending Northerner's eyes.

(Walk, Kerry. 1998)

CHAPTER IX

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ESSAYS

Most students meet certain problems when it comes to essay writing. The main reason for this is that they don't fully understand what it should be like.

- An essay is aimed to show your personal opinion about the subject.
- It should also contain a message to convey, and it is to have a purpose.
- You have to consider different points of view and write your essay with the sense of full understanding of the topic.

Our service provides professionals that are ready to help you with your essay. All your requirements will be taken into account so you can save your time and nerves for something more interesting.

There are 10 basic types of essay that are widespread in the world of academic writing. They are:

1. descriptive essay
2. definition essay
3. compare and contrast essay
4. cause and effect essay
5. narrative essay
6. process essay
7. argumentative essay
8. critical essay
9. expository essay
10. persuasive essay

These are just patterns that you have to fill with certain information and viewpoints. You are to understand the subject as well as be direct in expressing your ideas.

1. Descriptive Essay

This type of essay is designed for describing details of the subject. It can be written about any object and its features. You are to describe the way it looks, smells or works. It can be compared with a detailed overview of the things you write about. In this type of essay, every detail counts.

In this type of essay, you're painting a word picture. You can certainly include some facts, but you'll focus on the experience, what it feels like, looks like, smells or sounds like. Your aim is to draw the reader in so he or she can experience what you are writing about in the same way you experienced it.

2. Definition Essay

The ultimate goal of the definition essay is to focus on the definition of the subject. It may focus on different things or various origins.

The point of this type of essay is to explain something on a higher level than dictionaries do.

A definition tells you what something is. Although a definition is short, a definition essay discusses a complex concept in much greater depth than you would get from a few lines. They're most often used to discuss philosophical or abstract topics.

3. Compare & Contrast Essay

This type of essay is aimed to dwell upon on differences and similarities between two objects, events, things, etc. The reader should receive a clear understanding of what certain things have in common and what is different about

them. The writer has to be well informed about both subjects in order to provide the reader with a clear comparison of the two subjects.

You'll be given two similar-seeming yet different things to compare. To write this essay, I suggest that you prepare carefully. Which elements are the same? Which ones are different? Once you are sure you know what information you want to include, you're ready to go.

4. Cause & Effect Essay

This type of essay is destined to focus on the sequence of an event and the result of it. It reminds some a study where you are to show what cause has led to a particular result. In case there are more causes than results or fewer causes than results the writer has to explore them separately. The cause & effect essay requires the writer to draw a logical connection between the reasons of a certain event. To write a good essay of that type it is necessary to study the works on the similar topics to have a better understanding of how such research is done.

Although the name seems self-explanatory, we need to remember several causes can contribute to a single effect, and conversely, one cause could result in several effects. For example, several factors contributed to the US involvement in the First World War (multiple causes, single effect). However, being in the war had several effects on the US (single cause multiple effects).

5. Narrative Essay

This type of essay is aimed at telling a story about a certain event in a person's life. It may be a funny festival or a watching a good movie in the cinema, everyday activity or visiting another country. In such essay, you are free to express your personal attitude towards things that affected you, places that you liked or people you were with. It is usually written in the 1st person with a frequent usage of "I."

If you like creative writing, these will be among your favorite essays. In a narrative essay, you tell a story. Remember, it has a beginning followed by a number of events that lead up to an ending. Plan carefully!

6. Process Essay

When it comes to a process essay, one may find certain similarities with a cause and effect essay. This type of paper required the same level of understanding of the subject and how it works. It sometimes resembles a manual where the instructions to do something are given. To write this essay better, you are to perform the described process if possible as it is easier to tell about something you know well and good at.

This type of essay involves a step by step explanation of how something happens or is done. Getting your steps in the correct order is important if you don't want to turn your process into a muddle. Write your process essay in chronological order.

7. Argumentative Essay

When it comes to this type of essay, it should be noted that it is quite useful for any student on any level of education. The ultimate goal of this essay is to persuade the reader to take the author's viewpoint. It is not an easy thing to do as this paper is aimed at manipulating the other people's thoughts to change their attitude towards something.

For this writing, you are to use firm language, proved facts and accurate and vivid illustrations as an evidence of your argument should be flawless. Stripped of these items your argumentative essay won't be persuasive enough and your influence on the reader will be minimal. Skilled writers are to be completely sure about every word they write and every fact they give. There is no room for mistakes and uncertainty. What makes this type of essay more difficult is that you

have to be ready to fight against opposing ideas, and your paper should contain the antidote to the critics of your viewpoint.

Are you opinionated? Good! The argumentative essay explains your opinions and the reasons why you believe they're right. You can even look at some possible counter-arguments and why you believe they're wrong. Ultimately, you're trying to get your reader to agree with you, so the more facts you can present to support your points, the better.

8. Critical Essay

This type of essay focuses on weak and strong features of something. It is aimed at giving a characteristic of the subject to make reader aware of what you consider to be good or bad about it. These papers usually dwell upon how something is done or written. Did the author manage to do it correctly or not? Was his work persuasive? Was he successful in delivering his message to the audience? These are the questions you will have to answer in your essay.

The difficulty of this essay lies in the fact that you have to be well informed and have a deep understanding of the essence of the subject you criticize.

You don't have to criticize the thing you're writing about unless you think there is reason for it, but you'll be evaluating it critically. You'll provide reasons why you think something was well done or badly done. If you think it was great, why did you think so? Are there any faults that bothered you? Why did they bother you? What evidence can you present to support your opinion?

9. Expository Essay

When it comes to an expository essay, keep in mind that it is aimed at an estimation of the subject from your point of view. That is why it requires research to be carried out. It is not an easy type of essay as your knowledge of the subject

has to be based not only on the information you get from someone else but mostly on your own experience.

This type of essay can give you skills in organizing and manner of doing your own research. This practice is by no means very important as it can lead you to results that can be groundbreaking. It may take lots of time, but it is worth doing. Surprisingly, this feature makes this paper easier at the same time. In fact, it is more comfortable to write about something you know well and something you are sure about than digging into the information that was received from someone else. Perhaps you could contribute something new to the subject and show something that was never seen before.

Don't forget that your opinion is the foundation of your essay. Though, your paper should be long extensive and well written.

You could sum this type of essay up as follows, “Get all the facts, and then interpret them!” You must reach a conclusion, and this has to be supported by your research or personal experience. In higher education, you have to show your ability to research your topic, and you’ll probably be citing experts along the way. In the end, you give your own opinion, but you’ll point out how several sources contribute to it. As long as there is logic in that, your answer can’t be wrong. These essays are exciting because even when you use existing knowledge, you may find yourself obtaining a new perspective or reaching a novel conclusion.

10. Persuasive Essay

This type of essay is opposite to an argumentative essay. It is aimed at changing the readers' point of view completely, taking the author's one as an axiom. It is a stronger and more difficult type of essay as it requires a better understanding of the subject and good skills in criticizing the opponents.

In most cases, persuasive essays deal with topics that are relevant here and today. A persuasive essay should be very tough and influential. By writing it, you

show that you are really good at something and that you are sure that your opinion is ultimately correct. You may lose your audience the very moment you lose your integrity.

Remember that your essay has to be solid as a wall because your personal traits have no influence on a reader. It doesn't matter how you look, speak or wear. The only weapons of yours are words. Your audience should want to accept your viewpoint as the only one that makes sense.

It is not an easy task to do. That is why it requires much practice. It is a long way to master your language to influence other people with it, but this skill is highly important in many aspects of life. Don't worry if your first results will not be good enough. The more you try, the better you become.

These are the most common types of essays that are widespread in academic life. Each of them requires certain skills and talents. But don't be scared in case you find yourself unable to write them. Our service is a perfect helper for those who are in need. Our [essay writers](#) can cope with any essay, on any topic, of any length. Our reputation is undisputed, so any trouble with academic writing of yours is our job!

In a way, these are similar to argumentative essays, but they're not quite the same. An argumentative essay will hit people with the facts, while a persuasive essay has a softer touch and may appeal to moral values or emotions. See it as the difference between winning a debate and winning someone over to support a cause. There are differences, but also similarities.

CHAPTER X

CAUSE & EFFECT ESSAY

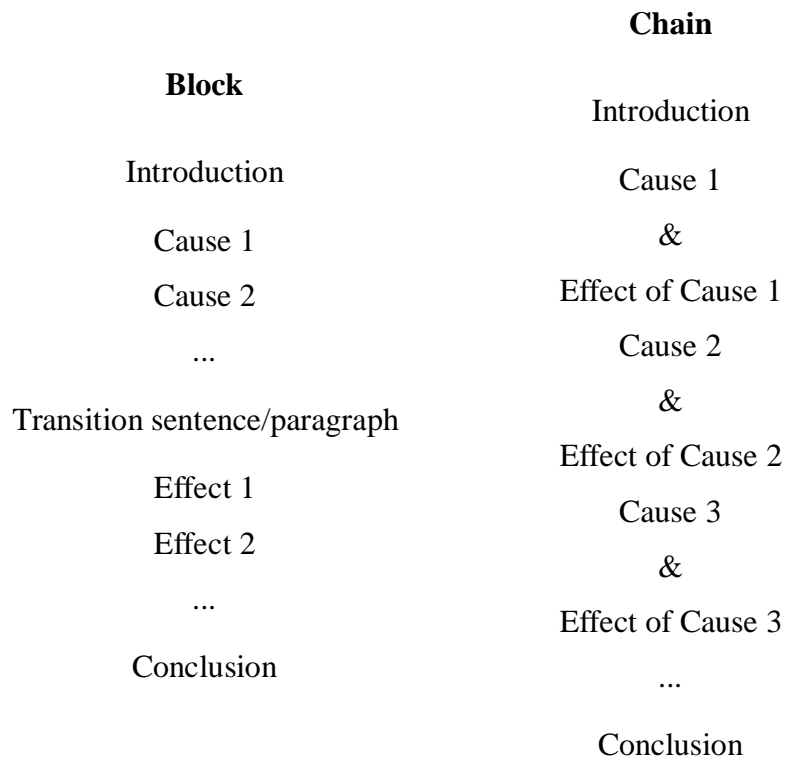
A cause and effect essay looks at the reasons (or causes) for something, then discusses the results (or effects). For this reason, cause and effect essays are sometimes referred to as reason and result essays. They are one of the most common forms of organisation in academic writing. Sometimes the whole essay will be cause and effect, though sometimes this may be only part of the whole essay. It is also possible, especially for short exam essays, that only the causes or the effects, not both, are discussed. See the examples below.

- Discuss the causes and effects of global warming ('cause and effect' essay)
- Explain the high death rate in Chernobyl ('causes' only essay)
- Discuss the WTO and its effects on the Chinese economy ('effects' only essay)

Structure

There are two main ways to structure a cause and effect essay. These are similar to the ways to structure **problem-solution essays**, namely using a *block* or a *chain* structure. For the *block* structure, all of the causes are listed first, and all of the effects are listed afterwards. For the *chain* structure, each cause is followed immediately by the effect. Usually that effect will then be the cause of the next effect, which is why this structure is called 'chain'. Both types of structure have their merits. The former is generally clearer, especially for shorter essays, while the latter ensures that any effects you present relate directly to the causes you have given.

The two types of structure, *block* and *chain*, are shown in the diagram below.



Cause and Effect Structure Words

Cause and effect structure words are transition signals which show the cause and effect relationships. It is important to be clear which is the cause (or reason) and which is the effect (or result), and to use the correct transition word or phrase. Remember that a cause happens *first*, and the effect happens *later*.

Example essay

Below is a cause and effect essay. This essay uses the *block structure*. The different areas to highlight the different structural aspects in this essay, i.e. Causes, Effects, and structure words.

Title: *More and more women are now going out to work and some women are now the major salary earner in the family. What are the causes of this, and what effect is this having on families and society?*

In the past, most women stayed at home to take care of domestic chores such as cooking or cleaning. Women's liberation and feminism have meant that this situation has been transformed and in contemporary society women are playing an almost equal role to men in terms of work. This has had significant consequences, both in terms of the family, for example by improving quality of life and increasing children's sense of independence, and also for society itself with greater gender equality.

The main reasons behind the increase of women in the workplace are women's liberation and feminism. The women's liberation movement originated in the 1960s and was popularised by authors such as Simone de Beauvoir. As a consequence of this, new legislation emerged, granting women equal rights to men in many fields, in particular employment. Because of feminist ideas, men have taken up roles which were previously seen as being for women only, most importantly those related to child rearing. As a result of this, women have more time to pursue their own careers and interests.

These have led to some significant effects, both to family life and to society as a whole.

Although the earning capacity of a woman in her lifetime is generally much less than that of a man, she can nevertheless make a significant contribution to the

family income. The most important consequence of this is an improved quality of life. By helping to maintain a steady income for the family, the pressure on the husband is considerably reduced, hence improving both the husband's and the wife's emotional wellbeing. Additionally, the purchasing power of the family will also be raised. This means that the family can afford more luxuries such as foreign travel and a family car.

A further effect on the family is the promotion of independence in the children. Some might argue that having both parents working might be damaging to the children because of a lack of parental attention. However, such children have to learn to look after themselves at an earlier age, and their parents often rely on them to help with the housework. This therefore teaches them important life skills.

As regards society, the most significant impact of women going to work is greater gender equality. There are an increasing number of women who are becoming politicians, lawyers, and even CEOs and company managers. This in turn has led to greater equality for women in all areas of life, not just employment. For example, women today have much stronger legal rights to protect themselves against domestic violence and sexual discrimination in the workplace.

In conclusion, the increasing number of women at work has brought about some important changes to family life, including improved quality of life and increased independence for children, as well as affecting society itself. It is clear that the sexes are still a long way from being equal in all areas of life, however, and perhaps the challenge for the present century is to ensure that this takes place.

Causes :

- *Women's liberation and feminism*
- *The main reasons behind the increase of women in the workplace are women's liberation and feminism. The women's liberation movement*

originated in the 1960s and was popularised by authors such as Simone de Beauvoir. As a consequence of this, new legislation emerged, granting women equal rights to men in many fields, in particular employment. Because of feminist ideas, men have taken up roles which were previously seen as being for women only, most importantly those related to child rearing. As a result of this, women have more time to pursue their own careers and interests

Effects :

- *Family*
- *improving quality of life*
- *increasing children's sense of independence,*
- *society*
- *greater gender equality*
- *Although the earning capacity of a woman in her lifetime is generally much less than that of a man, she can nevertheless make a significant contribution to the family income. The most important consequence of this is an improved quality of life. By helping to maintain a steady income for the family, the pressure on the husband is considerably reduced, hence improving both the husband's and the wife's emotional wellbeing. Additionally, the purchasing power of the family will also be raised. This means that the family can afford more luxuries such as foreign travel and a family car.*
- *A further effect on the family is the promotion of independence in the children. Some might argue that having both parents working might be damaging to the children because of a lack of parental attention. However, such children have to learn to look after themselves at an earlier age, and their parents often rely on them to help with the housework. This therefore teaches them important life skills.*

- *As regards society, the most significant impact of women going to work is greater gender equality. There are an increasing number of women who are becoming politicians, lawyers, and even CEOs and company managers. This in turn has led to greater equality for women in all areas of life, not just employment. For example, women today have much stronger legal rights to protect themselves against domestic violence and sexual discrimination in the workplace*

Cause transitions :

- *The main reasons behind*
- *As a consequence of*
- *Because of*
- *As a result of*

Cause transitions:

- *The main reasons behind*
- *As a consequence of*
- *Because of*
- *As a result of*

Effect transitions:

- *The most important consequence of*
- *hence*
- *means that*
- *A further effect*
- *Therefore*
- *the most significant impact of*
- *in turn has led to*
- *has brought about*
- *affecting*

CHAPTER XI

COMPARE & CONTRAST ESSAY

To *compare* is to examine how things are similar, while to *contrast* is to see how they differ. A compare and contrast essay therefore looks at the similarities of two or more objects, and the differences. This essay type is common at university, where lecturers frequently test your understanding by asking you to compare and contrast two theories, two methods, two historical periods, two characters in a novel, etc. Sometimes the whole essay will compare and contrast, though sometimes the comparison or contrast may be only part of the essay. It is also possible, especially for short exam essays, that only the similarities or the differences, not both, will be discussed. See the examples below.

- Compare and contrast Newton's ideas of gravity with those proposed by Einstein ('compare and contrast' essay)
- Examine how the economies of Spain and China are similar ('compare' only essay)
- Explain the differences between Achaemenid Empire and Parthian Empire ('contrast' only essay)

Structure

There are two main ways to structure a compare and contrast essay, namely using a *block* or a *point-by-point* structure. For the *block* structure, all of the information about one of the objects being compared/contrasted is given first, and all of the information about the other object is listed afterwards. This type of structure is similar to the block structure used for **cause and effect** and **problem-solution** essays. For the *point-by-point* structure, each similarity (or difference) for one object is followed immediately by the similarity (or difference) for the other. Both types of structure have their merits. The former is easier to write, while the latter is generally clearer as it ensures that the similarities/differences are more explicit.

The two types of structure, *block* and *point-by-point*, are shown in the diagram below.

Block

Introduction

Object 1 - Point 1

Object 1 - Point 2

Object 1 - Point 3

Transition sentence/paragraph

Object 2 - Point 1

Object 2 - Point 2

Object 2 - Point 3

Conclusion

Point-by-point

Introduction

Point 1

Object 1 ► Object 2

Point 2

Object 1 ► Object 2

Point 3

Object 1 ► Object 2

Conclusion

Compare and Contrast Structure Words

Compare and contrast structure words are **transition signals** which show the similarities or differences. Below are some common examples.

Compare

- Similarly
- Likewise
- also
- both... and...
- not only... but also...
- neither... nor...
- just like (+ noun)
- similar to (+ noun)
- to be similar (to)
- to be the same as
- to be alike
- to compare (to/with)

Examples

- Computers can be used to communicate easily, for example via email. **Similarly/Likewise**, the mobile phone is a convenient tool for communication.
- **Both** computers **and** mobile phones can be used to communicate easily with other people.
- **Just like** the computer, the mobile phone can be used to communicate easily with other people.
- The computer **is similar to** the mobile phone in the way it can be used for easy communication.

Contrast

- However
- In contrast
- In comparison

- By comparison
- On the other hand
- while
- whereas
- but
- to differ from
- to be different (from)
- to be dissimilar to
- to be unlike

Examples

- Computers, although increasingly small, are not always easy to carry from one place to another. **However**, the mobile phone can be carried with ease.
- Computers are generally not very portable, **whereas** the mobile phone is.
- Computers **differ from** mobile phones in their lack of portability.
- Computers **are unlike** mobile phones in their lack of portability.

Criteria for comparison/contrast

When making comparisons or contrasts, it is important to be clear what *criteria* you are using. Study the following example, which contrasts two people. Here the criteria are unclear.

- Aaron is tall and strong. **In contrast**, Bruce is handsome and very intelligent.

Although this sentence has a **contrast transition**, the *criteria* for contrasting are not the same. The criteria used for Aaron are *height* (tall) and *strength* (strong). We would expect similar criteria to be used for Bruce (maybe he is short and weak), but instead we have new criteria, namely *appearance* (handsome) and *intelligence* (intelligent). This is a common mistake for students when writing

this type of paragraph or essay. Compare the following, which has much clearer criteria (contrast structure words shown in bold).

- Aaron and Bruce **differ** in four ways. The first difference is height. Aaron is tall, **while** Bruce is short. A second difference is strength. Aaron is strong. **In contrast**, Bruce is weak. A third difference is appearance. Aaron, who is average looking, **differs from** Bruce, who is handsome. The final difference is intelligence. Aaron is of average intelligence. Bruce, **on the other hand**, is very intelligent.

Example essay

Below is a compare and contrast essay. This essay uses the *point-by-point structure*. The different areas to highlight the different structural aspects in this essay, i.e. similarities, differences, and structure words. This will highlight not simply the paragraphs, but also the **thesis statement** and **summary**, as these repeat the comparisons and contrasts contained in the main body.

***Title:** There have been many advances in technology over the past fifty years. These have revolutionised the way we communicate with people who are far away. Compare and contrast methods of communication used today with those which were used in the past.*

Before the advent of computers and modern technology, people communicating over long distances used traditional means such as letters and the telephone. Nowadays we have a vast array of communication tools which can complete this task, ranging from email to instant messaging and video calls. While the present and previous means of communication are similar in their general form, they differ in regard to their speed and the range of tools available.

One similarity between current and previous methods of communication relates to the form of communication. In the past, both written forms such as letters were frequently used, in addition to oral forms such as telephone calls. Similarly,

people nowadays use both of these forms. Just as in the past, written forms of communication are prevalent, for example via email and text messaging. In addition, oral forms are still used, including the telephone, mobile phone, and voice messages via instant messaging services

However, there are clearly many differences in the way we communicate over long distances, the most notable of which is speed. This is most evident in relation to written forms of communication. In the past, letters would take days to arrive at their destination. In contrast, an email arrives almost instantaneously and can be read seconds after it was sent. In the past, if it was necessary to send a short message, for example at work, a memo could be passed around the office, which would take some time to circulate. This is different from the current situation, in which a text message can be sent immediately.

Another significant difference is the range of communication methods. Fifty years ago, the tools available for communicating over long distances were primarily the telephone and the letter. By comparison, there are a vast array of communication methods available today. These include not only the telephone, letter, email and text messages already mentioned, but also video conferences via software such as Skype or mobile phone apps such as WeChat, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

In conclusion, methods of communication have greatly advanced over the past fifty years. While there are some similarities, such as the forms of communication, there are significant differences, chiefly in relation to the speed of communication and the range of communication tools available. There is no doubt that technology will continue to progress in future, and the advanced tools which we use today may one day also become outdated.

Compare :

- *general form*
- *One similarity between current and previous methods of communication relates to the form of communication. In the past, both written forms such as letters were frequently used, in addition to oral forms such as telephone calls. Similarly, people nowadays use both of these forms. Just as in the past, written forms of communication are prevalent, for example via email and text messaging. In addition, oral forms are still used, including the telephone, mobile phone, and voice messages via instant messaging services.*
- *Forms of communication*

Contrast :

- *speed*
- *range of tools available*
- *However, there are clearly many differences in the way we communicate over long distances, the most notable of which is speed. This is most evident in relation to written forms of communication. In the past, letters would take days to arrive at their destination. In contrast, an email arrives almost instantaneously and can be read seconds after it was sent. In the past, if it was necessary to send a short message, for example at work, a memo could be passed around the office, which would take some time to circulate. This is different from the current situation, in which a text message can be sent immediately.*
- *Another significant difference is the range of communication methods. Fifty years ago, the tools available for communicating over long distances were primarily the telephone and the letter. By comparison, there are a vast array of communication methods available today. These include not only the telephone, letter, email and text messages already mentioned, but*

also video conferences via software such as Skype or mobile phone apps such as WeChat, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

- *speed of communication*
- *range of communication tools available.*

Compare transitions :

- *are similar*
- *Similarly,*
- *Just as*
- *still*

Contrast transitions :

- *differ*
- *However*
- *In contrast,*
- *is different from*
- *By comparison*

CHAPTER XII

DISCUSSION ESSAY

What are discussion essays?

Many essay titles require you to examine both sides of a situation and to conclude by saying which side you favour. These are known as *discussion* or *for and against* essays. In this sense, the academic meaning of the word *discuss* is similar to its everyday meaning, of two people talking about a topic from different sides. For a discussion essay, a balanced view is normally essential. This makes discussion essays distinct from persuasion essays, for which only one side of the argument is given. When writing a discussion essay, it is important to ensure that facts and opinions are clearly separated. Often you will examine what other people have already said on the same subject and include this information using paraphrasing and summarising skills, as well as correct citations.

The following are examples of discussion essay topics.

- Examine the arguments for and against capital punishment.
- Schools should teach children not only academic subjects but also important life skills. Discuss.
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of technology in the classroom?

Structure

Although the structure of a discussion essay may vary according to length and subject, there are several components which most discussion essays have in common. In addition to general statements and thesis statement which all good essay introductions contain, the *position* of the writer will often be stated, along with relevant *definitions*. The main body will examine *arguments for* (in one or more paragraphs) and *arguments against* (also in one or more paragraphs).

The conclusion will contain a *summary* of the main points, and will often conclude with *recommendations*, based on what you think are the most important ideas in the essay. The conclusion may also contain your *opinion* on the topic, also based on the preceding evidence.

An overview of this structure is given in the diagram below.

Structural component	Purpose	Stage of essay
General statements	To introduce the reader to the subject of the essay.	Introduction
Position	To give the opinion of the writer (not always possible).	
Definition(s) (optional)	To explain any important technical words to the reader.	
Thesis	To tell the reader what parts of the topic will be included in the essay.	
Arguments for	To explain to the reader the evidence for the positive side of the issue, with support. The most important ideas usually come first. This may be covered in one or more paragraphs.	Main body
Arguments against	To explain to the reader the evidence for the negative side of the issue, with support. The most important ideas usually come	

	first. This may be covered in one or more paragraphs.	
Summary	To give the reader a brief reminder of the main points, restating the issue. Sometimes also says what the writer believes have the strongest evidence.	Conclusion
Opinion & Recommendation	To give your opinion, and tell the reader what the writer believes is the best action to take, considering the evidence in the essay.	

Discussion vocabulary

When summarising the stages in a discussion or in presenting your arguments, it can be useful to mark the order of the items or degrees of importance. The following words and phrases can be used.

- First..., First of all..., The most important...
- Second..., In the second place...
- Finally..., Lastly...

The following can be used when introducing your opinion.

- There is no doubt that...
- I believe that...
- One of the main arguments in favour of/against X is that...

It is important in English writing, including academic writing, to use synonyms rather than repeating the same word. The following are useful synonyms for 'advantage' and 'disadvantage'.

- advantage: benefit, a positive aspect/feature, pro (informal)
- disadvantage: drawback, a negative aspect/feature, con (informal)

Example essay

Below is an example discussion essay. Click on the different areas (in the shaded boxes to the right) to highlight the different structural aspects in this essay.

Title: An increasing number of students are going overseas for tertiary education. To what extent does this overseas study benefit the students?

Most people spend around fifteen years of their life in education, from primary school to university study. In the past, students only had the opportunity to study in their own country. Nowadays, however, it is increasingly easy to study overseas, especially at tertiary level. Tertiary education, also called post-secondary education, is the period of study spent at university. As the final aspect of schooling before a person begins their working life, it is arguably the most important stage of their education. While there are some undoubted benefits of this trend, such as the language environment and improved employment prospects, there is also a significant disadvantage, namely the high cost.

The first and most important advantage of overseas study is the language learning environment. Students studying overseas will not only have to cope with the local language for their study, but will also have to use it outside the classroom for their everyday life. These factors should make it relatively easy for such students to advance their language abilities.

Another important benefit is employability. Increasing globalisation means that there are more multinational companies setting up offices in all major countries.

These companies will need employees who have a variety of skills, including the fluency in more than one language. Students who have studied abroad should find it much easier to obtain a job in this kind of company.

There are, however, some disadvantages to overseas study which must be considered, the most notable of which is the expense. In addition to the cost of travel, which in itself is not inconsiderable, overseas students are required to pay tuition fees which are usually much higher than those of local students. Added to this is the cost of living, which is often much higher than in the students' own country. Although scholarships may be available for overseas students, there are usually very few of these, most of which will only cover a fraction of the cost. Overseas study therefore constitutes a considerable expense.

In summary, studying abroad has some clear advantages, including the language environment and increased chances of employment, in addition to the main drawback, the heavy financial burden. I believe that this experience is worthwhile for those students whose families can readily afford the expense. Students without such strong financial support should consider carefully whether the high cost outweighs the benefits to be gained.

Thesis :

- *While there are some undoubted benefits of this trend, such as the language environment and improved employment prospects, there is also a significant disadvantage, namely the high cost.*

Adv :

- *the language environment*
- *The first and most important advantage of overseas study is the language learning environment. Students studying overseas will not only have to cope with the local language for their study, but will also have to use it*

outside the classroom for their everyday life. These factors should make it relatively easy for such students to advance their language abilities.

- *improved employment prospects*
- *The first and most important advantage of overseas study is the language learning environment. Students studying overseas will not only have to cope with the local language for their study, but will also have to use it outside the classroom for their everyday life. These factors should make it relatively easy for such students to advance their language abilities.*
- *Another important benefit is employability. Increasing globalisation means that there are more multinational companies setting up offices in all major countries. These companies will need employees who have a variety of skills, including the fluency in more than one language. Students who have studied abroad should find it much easier to obtain a job in this kind of company.*
- *the language environment*
- *increased chances of employment,*

Disadv :

- *the high cost*
- *There are, however, some disadvantages to overseas study which must be considered, the most notable of which is the expense. In addition to the cost of travel, which in itself is not inconsiderable, overseas students are required to pay tuition fees which are usually much higher than those of local students. Added to this is the cost of living, which is often much higher than in the students' own country. Although scholarships may be available for overseas students, there are usually very few of these, most of which will only cover a fraction of the cost. Overseas study therefore constitutes a considerable expense.*
- *the heavy financial burden*

Summary:

- *In summary, studying abroad has some clear advantages, including the language environment and increased chances of employment, in addition to the main drawback, the heavy financial burden*

Opinion :

- *I believe that this experience is worthwhile for those students whose families can readily afford the expense.*

Recommendation :

- *Students without such strong financial support should consider carefully whether the high cost outweighs the benefits to be gained.*



CHAPTER XIII

PERSUASION ESSAY

What are persuasion essays?

Persuasion essays are similar to discussion essays in that you will present your arguments on a topic. However, instead of presenting a balanced view considering both sides, a persuasion essay will focus on *one* side. To *persuade* means to convince someone that a particular opinion is the correct one, and so your task when writing a persuasion essay is to convince the reader that your view of the situation is correct. This does not mean you will not consider the other side; indeed, doing so, via counter-arguments, is an important step in strengthening your own argument.

Below are examples of persuasion essay titles.

- Give your views on same-sex schools.
- Do you agree that artificial intelligence poses a danger to mankind?
- Consider whether human activity has made the world a better place.

Although *persuasion essays* are often called *argument essays* (or *argumentation* or *argumentative essays*), it is worth highlighting that these two essays types, while similar, are slightly different. When you argue, you present reasons for (or against) something, while when you persuade, you seek to convince the reader that your position is the correct one. Persuasion is therefore stronger than argument. Both argument and persuasion rely on logical reasoning (*Logos* in Aristotle's elements of rhetoric). Persuasion, in addition, may make emotional appeals (*Pathos* in Aristotle's elements of rhetoric), or seek to assert the writer's authority on the subject (*Ethos* in Aristotle's elements of rhetoric), in order to convince the reader

Types of support

Most of the types of support used for a persuasion essay are similar to other essay types, such as using facts, reasons, examples and statistics. If it is a longer (researched) essay, then using evidence from sources, with appropriate citations, will also be essential. There are, however, two types of support which are particularly useful for this type of essay, namely *predicting the consequences* and *counter-arguments*. These are considered in more detail below.

Predicting the consequence

Predicting the consequence helps the reader understand what will happen if something does or does not happen. This type of support will therefore usually be introduced with 'If...'. For example, to convince your readers that same-sex schools are disadvantageous, you might say, 'If students do not go to mixed schools, they will lose many opportunities to interact with members of the opposite sex, which may hurt them in their development of important social skills'. Avoid exaggerating the consequences. For instance, telling the reader, 'If students do not go to mixed schools, they will be shy and will not be able to talk to members of the opposite sex' exaggerates the consequences of going to single-sex schools and will make your argument less persuasive.

Counter-arguments

Counter-arguments consider the opposition's point-of-view, then present arguments against it ('to be counter to' means 'to be against'). Showing that you are aware of other arguments will strengthen your own. This is often the most difficult type of support, as you need to think who the opposition is, consider their view, and think of a good response. Counter-arguments are often presented first in a paragraph. Useful language for this type of support are phrases such as 'Opponents claim that... However...', or transition signals such as 'Although...'

The following are examples of counter-arguments for an essay on same-sex schools. Language for counter-arguments is shown in bold.

- **Although it has been suggested that** same sex schools make children more focused on study, **it is generally agreed that** children of the same sex are more likely to talk with each other during class time.
- **Opponents of** mixed schools **claim that** it is more difficult for students to concentrate when there are members of the opposite sex studying close to them. **However**, it is much easier for students to be distracted by members of the same sex.

Example essay

Below is an example persuasion essay. Click on the different areas (in the shaded boxes to the right) to highlight the different structural aspects in this essay. This will highlight not simply the paragraphs, but also the thesis statement and summary, as these repeat the arguments contained in the main body.

***Title:** Consider whether human activity has made the world a better place.*

History shows that human beings have come a long way from where they started. They have developed new technologies which means that everybody can enjoy luxuries they never previously imagined. However, the technologies that are temporarily making this world a better place to live could well prove to be an ultimate disaster due to, among other things, the creation of nuclear weapons, increasing pollution, and loss of animal species.

The biggest threat to the earth caused by modern human activity comes from the creation of nuclear weapons. Although it cannot be denied that countries have to defend themselves, the kind of weapons that some of them currently possess are far in excess of what is needed for defence. If these weapons were used, they could lead to the destruction of the entire planet.

Another harm caused by human activity to this earth is pollution. People have become reliant on modern technology, which can have adverse effects on the environment. For example, reliance on cars causes air and noise pollution. Even seemingly innocent devices, such as computers and mobile phones, use electricity, most of which is produced from coal-burning power stations, which further adds to environmental pollution. If we do not curb our direct and indirect use of fossil fuels, the harm to the environment may be catastrophic.

Animals are an important feature of this earth and the past decades have witnessed the extinction of a considerable number of animal species. This is the consequence of human encroachment on wildlife habitats, for example deforestation to expand human cities. Some may argue that such loss of species is natural and has occurred throughout earth's history. However, the current rate of species loss far exceeds normal levels, and is threatening to become a mass extinction event

In summary, there is no doubt that current human activities such as the creation of nuclear weapons, pollution, and destruction of wildlife, are harmful to the earth. It is important for us to see not only the short-term effects of our actions, but their long-term effects as well. Otherwise, human activities will be just another step towards destruction.

Arguments :

- *the creation of nuclear weapons, increasing pollution, and loss of animal species.*
- *The biggest threat to the earth caused by modern human activity comes from the creation of nuclear weapons. Although it cannot be denied that countries have to defend themselves, the kind of weapons that some of them currently possess are far in excess of what is needed for defence. If*

these weapons were used, they could lead to the destruction of the entire planet.

- *Another harm caused by human activity to this earth is pollution. People have become reliant on modern technology, which can have adverse effects on the environment. For example, reliance on cars causes air and noise pollution. Even seemingly innocent devices, such as computers and mobile phones, use electricity, most of which is produced from coal-burning power stations, which further adds to environmental pollution. If we do not curb our direct and indirect use of fossil fuels, the harm to the environment may be catastrophic.*
- *Animals are an important feature of this earth and the past decades have witnessed the extinction of a considerable number of animal species. This is the consequence of human encroachment on wildlife habitats, for example deforestation to expand human cities. Some may argue that such loss of species is natural and has occurred throughout earth's history. However, the current rate of species loss far exceeds normal levels, and is threatening to become a mass extinction event.*
- *the creation of nuclear weapons, pollution, and destruction of wildlife,*

Predicting consequence :

- *If these weapons were used, they could lead to the destruction of the entire planet*
- *If we do not curb our direct and indirect use of fossil fuels, the harm to the environment may be catastrophic*

Counter argument:

- *Although it cannot be denied that countries have to defend themselves, the kind of weapons that some of them currently possess are far in excess of what is needed for defence.*

CHAPTER XIV

PROBLEM-SOLUTION ESSAY

What are problem-solution essays?

Problem-solution essays consider the problems of a particular situation, and give solutions to those problems. They are in some ways similar to cause and effect essays, especially in terms of structure (see below). Problem-solution essays are actually a sub-type of another type of essay, which has the following four components:

- Situation
- Problem
- Solution
- Evaluation

The 'situation' may be included in the essay prompt, in which case it will not be needed in the main body. If it is needed, it can often be included in the introduction, especially for short essays, as with the example essay below. The 'evaluation' may be included as part of the conclusion (also as in the example below), or omitted altogether, especially for short essays. For these reasons, problem-solution essays are more common than situation-problem-solution-evaluation essays (or SPSE essays).

Structure

There are two main ways to structure a problem-solution essay. These are similar to the ways to structure cause and effect essays, namely using a *block* or a *chain* structure. For the *block* structure, all of the problems are listed first, and all of the solutions are listed afterwards. For the *chain* structure, each problem is followed immediately by the solution to that problem. Both types of structure have their merits. The former is generally clearer, especially for shorter essays, while the latter ensures that any solutions you present relate directly to the problems you have given.

The two types of structure, *block* and *chain*, are shown in the diagram below. This is for a short essay, which includes the 'situation' in the introduction and 'evaluation' in the conclusion. A longer essay, for example one of around 1,000 words, with citations, would probably have these two sections as separate paragraphs in the main body.

Block

Introduction
(including 'situation')

Problem 1

Problem 2

...

Transition sentence/paragraph

Solution 1

Solution 2

...

Conclusion
(including 'evaluation')

Chain

Introduction
(including 'situation')

Problem 1

&

Solution to Problem 1

Problem 2

&

Solution to Problem 2

Problem 3

&

Solution to Problem 3

...

Conclusion
(including 'evaluation')

Example essay

Below is a problem-solution essay on the topic of *obesity and poor fitness*. It uses the *block structure*. Click on the different areas (in the shaded boxes) to highlight the different structural aspects in this essay, i.e. Situation, Problem, Solution, Evaluation. This will highlight not simply the paragraphs, but also (for problems and solutions) the thesis statement and summary, as these repeat the problems and solutions contained in the main body.

Consumption of processed and convenience foods and our dependence on the car have led to an increase in obesity and reduction in the fitness level of the adult population. In some countries, especially industrialized ones, the number of obese people can amount to one third of the population. This is significant as obesity and poor fitness lead to a decrease in life expectancy, and it is therefore important for individuals and governments to work together to tackle this issue and improve their citizens' diet and fitness.

Obesity and poor fitness decrease life expectancy. Overweight people are more likely to have serious illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease, which can result in premature death. It is well known that regular exercise can reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, which means that those with poor fitness levels are at an increased risk of suffering from those problems.

Changes by individuals to their diet and their physical activity can increase life expectancy. There is a reliance today on the consumption of processed foods, which have a high fat and sugar content. By preparing their own foods, and consuming more fruit and vegetables, people could ensure that their diets are healthier and more balanced, which could lead to a reduction in obesity levels. In order to improve fitness levels, people could choose to walk or cycle to work or to the shops rather than taking the car. They could also choose to walk up stairs

instead of taking the lift. These simple changes could lead to a significant improvement in fitness levels.

Governments could also implement initiatives to improve their citizens' eating and exercise habits. This could be done through education, for example by adding classes to the curriculum about healthy diet and lifestyles. Governments could also do more to encourage their citizens to walk or cycle instead of taking the car, for instance by building more cycle lanes or increasing vehicle taxes. While some might argue that increased taxes are a negative way to solve the problem, it is no different from the high taxes imposed on cigarettes to reduce cigarette consumption.

In short, obesity and poor fitness are a significant problem in modern life, leading to lower life expectancy. Individuals and governments can work together to tackle this problem and so improve diet and fitness. Of the solutions suggested, those made by individuals themselves are likely to have more impact, though it is clear that a concerted effort with the government is essential for success. With obesity levels in industrialized and industrializing countries continuing to rise, it is essential that we take action now to deal with this problem.

Situation :

- *Consumption of processed and convenience foods and our dependence on the car have led to an increase in obesity and reduction in the fitness level of the adult population. In some countries, especially industrialized ones, the number of obese people can amount to one third of the population.*

Problem :

- *as obesity and poor fitness lead to a decrease in life expectancy,*
- *Obesity and poor fitness decrease life expectancy. Overweight people are more likely to have serious illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease, which can result in premature death. It is well known that regular exercise can reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, which means that those with poor fitness levels are at an increased risk of suffering from those problems.*
- *obesity and poor fitness are a significant problem in modern life, leading to lower life expectancy.*

Solution :

- *individuals and governments to work together to tackle this issue and improve their citizens' diet and fitness.*
- *Changes by individuals to their diet and their physical activity can increase life expectancy. There is a reliance today on the consumption of processed foods, which have a high fat and sugar content. By preparing their own foods, and consuming more fruit and vegetables, people could ensure that their diets are healthier and more balanced, which could lead to a reduction in obesity levels. In order to improve fitness levels, people could choose to walk or cycle to work or to the shops rather than taking the car. They could also choose to walk up stairs instead of taking the lift. These simple changes could lead to a significant improvement in fitness levels.*
- *Governments could also implement initiatives to improve their citizens' eating and exercise habits. This could be done through education, for example by adding classes to the curriculum about healthy diet and lifestyles. Governments could also do more to encourage their citizens to walk or cycle instead of taking the car, for instance by building more cycle lanes or increasing vehicle taxes. While some might argue that increased*

taxes are a negative way to solve the problem, it is no different from the high taxes imposed on cigarettes to reduce cigarette consumption.

- *Individuals and governments can work together to tackle this problem and so improve diet and fitness.*

Evaluation :

- *Of the solutions suggested, those made by individuals themselves are likely to have more impact, though it is clear that a concerted effort with the government is essential for success.*

CHAPTER XV

TRANSITION SIGNALS

Transition signals, along with repeated words and reference words, are one of the main ways to achieve good cohesion and coherence in your writing. They are therefore a way to help ensure that your ideas and sentences *cohere* or 'stick together'. Transition signals are used to signal relationships between ideas in your writing. For example, the transition signal 'for example' is used to give examples, while the word 'while' is used to show a contrast. In addition, there are phrases like 'in addition' for adding new ideas. Likewise there are words such as 'likewise' to connect similar ideas.

Grammar of transition signals

Broadly speaking, transition signals can be divided into three types:

- sentence connectors
- clause connectors
- other connectors

Sentence connectors are used to connect two sentences together. They are joined by a full-stop (period) or semi-colon, and are followed by a comma. The following are examples of sentence connectors.

- Transition signals are very useful. **However**, they should not be used to begin every sentence.
- Transition signals are very useful; **however**, they should not be used to begin every sentence.
- Contrast signals are one type of transition signals. **In addition**, there are others such as compare signals and addition signals.
- There are three main ways to improve cohesion in your writing. **First**, you can use transition signals.

Clause connectors are used to connect two clauses together to form one sentence.

They are joined by a comma. The following are examples of clause connectors.

- Transition signals are very useful, **but** they should not be used to begin every sentence.
- **Although** transition signals are very useful, they should not be used to begin every sentence.
- Contrast signals are one type of transition signal, **and** there are others such as compare signals and addition signals.

Other connectors follow different grammar patterns. Many are followed by noun phrases. Some are verbs and should therefore be used as verbs in a sentence. The following are examples of other connectors.

- **Despite** their importance in achieving cohesion, transition signals should not be used to begin every sentence.
- Good cohesion **is the result of** using repeated words, reference words, and transition signals.
- **It is clear that** careful use of transition signals will improve the cohesion in your writing.
- Contrast signals are one type of transition signal. **Another** type is comparison signals.

Types of transition signals

Below are examples of different types of transition signals. They are divided by type, and sub-divided according to grammar. More information on some of these is given in relevant essay sections.

To introduce an additional idea

Sentence connectors

- Also
- Besides
- Furthermore
- in addition
- moreover
- additionally

Clause connectors

- and
- nor

Other

- another (+ noun)
- an additional (+ noun)

To compare

Sentence connectors

- likewise
- similarly
- equally
- in the same way

Clause connectors

- and
- both... and
- not only... but also
- neither... nor
- just as

Other

- as... as

- like/alike
- just like
- to be similar to
- to be alike
- to be similar

To contrast

Sentence connectors

- however
- in contrast
- in/by comparison
- on the other hand

Clause connectors

- but
- whereas
- while

Other

- compared to/with
- to be different (from)
- to be dissimilar
- to be unlike
- to differ (from)

To show concession

Concession transitions show an unexpected result. They are similar to but not the same as contrast transitions. E.g. *Although the sun was shining, he took an umbrella to work.* (The sun shining means taking an umbrella is unexpected.)

Sentence connectors

- however
- nevertheless
- nonetheless
- still

Clause connectors

- but
- yet
- although
- even though
- though

Other

- despite (+ noun)
- in spite of (+ noun)

To introduce a cause/reason

Sentence connectors

- for this reason

Clause connectors

- for
- because
- since
- as

Other

- to result from
- to be the result of
- due to
- because of
- to be the effect of
- to be the consequence of

- as a result of
- as a consequence of

To introduce an effect/result

Sentence connectors

- as a result
- as a consequence
- consequently
- hence
- thus
- therefore

Clause connectors

- so

Other

- to result in
- to cause
- to have an effect on
- to affect
- the cause of
- the reason for

To give an example

Sentence connectors

- for example
- for instance
- in this case

Other

- such as (+ noun)
- like
- an example of (+ noun)
- to demonstrate

To show chronological order

Sentence connectors

- first, second, etc.
- first of all
- then
- next
- now
- then
- soon
- last
- finally
- previously
- meanwhile
- gradually
- after that
- since
- then

Clause connectors

- after
- as
- as soon as
- before
- since
- until

- when
- while

Other

- the first, the second
- the next, the last, the final
- before (lunch etc.)
- after (the war etc.)
- since (1970 etc.)
- in the year (2000 etc.)

To show order of importance

Sentence connectors

- above all
- first and foremost
- more/most importantly
- primarily

Other

- a more important
- the most important
- the second most significant
- the primary

To show an alternative

Sentence connectors

- alternatively
- otherwise

Clause connectors

- or

- if
- unless

To identify or clarify

Sentence connectors

- that is
- in other words
- specifically

Other

- namely
- i.e.

To reinforce

Sentence connectors

- in fact
- indeed
- of course
- clearly

To conclude

Sentence connectors

- all in all
- in brief
- in conclusion
- in short
- in summary

Other

- to summarise
- to conclude
- It is clear that...

- We can see that...
- The evidence suggests..
- .These examples show..

CHAPTER XVI

REPORTING VERBS

In academic writing, you will need to cite (or 'refer to') other people's work or ideas. In order to do this accurately, you will need to use reporting verbs to link your in-text citation to the information cited. This section looks at what reporting verbs are, then looks at the strength and grammar of reporting verbs. Finally, there is a table which lists some of the most common reporting verbs, giving meaning, strength and usage. At the end there are some exercises to help you practice.

What are reporting verbs?

Reporting verbs, also known as referring verbs, are verbs which are used when you report or refer to another writer's work. They are needed to connect the in-text citation to the information which you are citing. See the following examples, in which the reporting verbs (*point out* and *state*) are shown in bold.

- Sharpling (2012) **points out** that reporting verbs have subtle differences in meaning.
- University of Adelaide (2014) **states** that using the same reporting verb all the time is both repetitive and boring.

The most common reporting verb is *state*. However, while it is simpler to use the same verb over and over, this will not give your writing much variation. In addition, each reporting verb has a slightly different meaning, depending on what the writer you are citing is saying. It is therefore important for you to be aware of and try to use a range of reporting verbs, depending on the information you are citing.

Note that *According to* is another common way to refer to a writer's work. This is not a reporting verb, but is used in the same way. A common student mistake is to

use this with a reporting verb such as *state*, which makes the sentence grammatically incorrect. See the following examples.

- According to Smith (2016), using *According to* and *state* in the same sentence is a common student error.
- Smith (2016) states that using *According to* and *state* in the same sentence is a common student error.
- ~~According to Smith (2016) states that using *According to* and *state* in the same sentence is a common student error.~~

Strength of reporting verbs

Reporting verbs vary in terms of strength. Consider the following examples.

- Smith (2016) **assumes** that reporting verbs have different strengths.
- Smith (2016) **insists** that reporting verbs have different strengths.

Although both verbs have the same general meaning, namely *believe*, the verb *assume* is quite weak, while the verb *insist* is much stronger. The second verb most closely matches the information above on this page, i.e. as a fact, and is therefore more accurate than the first one.

Grammar of reporting verbs

Reporting verbs are often followed by a *that* clause. However, not all verbs follow this pattern. It is important, when using reporting verbs, to check the grammar usage to make sure that your writing is accurate. Consider the following examples.

- Smith (2016) **insists** that reporting verbs have different strengths. (*insist + that*)
- Smith (2016) **agrees** with Sharpling (2012) that reporting verbs have subtle differences in meaning. (*agree with sb*)

- Smith (2016) **challenges** writers to use reporting verbs accurately.
(*challenge sb to do sth*)

Note that it is usually acceptable to use reporting verbs in either the past or present tense. The present tense is more common as this brings the past research into the present and therefore makes it more current and important. There may, however, be special requirements for your course, so it is always useful to check the style guide for assignments.

Examples of usage for the most common reporting verbs are given in the table in the following section.

Examples of reporting verbs

The table below lists some of the most common reporting verbs. They are listed according to their general meaning. Usage and strength are also given. Verbs which are in the same cell have the same general meaning, usage and strength (e.g. *admit* and *concede* both mean *agree*, are both followed by *that* clauses, and are both weak verbs).

General meaning	Reporting verb	Usage	Strength
accuse	accuse	sb of sth	strong
	allege	that	strong
	blame, criticise	sb for sth	strong
add	develop		weak
	contribute	to sth	strong
agree	admit, concede	that	weak
	echo	sth	neutral

	accept, acknowledge, confirm, recognise	that	neutral
	endorse, support	sth	strong
	agree	that	strong
	concur	with sb	strong
believe	assume	that	weak
	subscribe to	sth	neutral
	feel, hold, profess	that	neutral
	argue, believe, claim, insist, maintain	that	strong
conclude	discover, find, infer, discern	that	neutral
	conclude	that	strong
disagree	question, query	sth	weak
	doubt	sth	neutral
	disapprove	of sth	strong
	challenge	sb to do sth	strong
	cast doubt on, contradict, discount, dismiss, disprove, dispute, oppose, refute, reject, object to	sth	strong
	deny	that	strong
	disagree	with sb	strong
	counter, rebuff		strong
discuss	discuss	sth	neutral
emphasise	highlight, underscore	sth	strong
	emphasise, stress	that	strong

examine	inquire		weak
	analyse, assess, evaluate, examine, investigate, study	sth	neutral
	compare	sth to sth	neutral
	contrast	sth with sth	neutral
	scrutinise	sth	strong
explain	identify, illustrate	sth	neutral
	define	sth as sth	neutral
	articulate, clarify, explain	that	neutral
guess	speculate, suppose, suspect	that	weak
include	take into consideration		weak
persuade	persuade	that	strong
	convince		strong
require	stipulate	that	strong
see	view	sth as sth	weak
	notice	that	weak
	see		weak
	observe	that	neutral
show	calculate	that	weak
	establish	that	neutral
	demonstrate	that/how	neutral
	prove, reveal	that	strong
	show	that/how	strong

	determine		strong
state	comment, note, remark	that	weak
	describe, express, outline, present	sth	neutral
	add, declare, inform, mention, point out, remind, report, state	that	neutral
	assert	that	strong
suggest	put forward	sth	weak
	imply, intimate, suggest	that	weak
	hypothesise, posit, postulate, propose, theorise	that	neutral
	warn	sb of sth/that	strong
	exhort	sb to do sth	strong
	advise, advocate, affirm, recommend, urge	that	strong
think	consider	sth	neutral
	reflect	that	neutral
	contend, reason	that	strong

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