



## Essay writing

An essay is a short piece of writing dealing with a single subject. Normally there are three parts to an essay- the introduction, the body and the conclusion. The introduction, as the name suggests, introduces the writer's ideas to the readers. It gives them an idea about what the rest of the essay will contain. The body consists of one or more paragraphs and contains thoughts, ideas or arguments to convince and articulate to the reader, the author's viewpoints. The conclusion summarizes the contents and findings of the essay.

### Essentials of a Good Essay:

**Choice of Topic-** Normally a student gets to choose between two or three different kinds of essays in an examination. It is of absolute importance to choose the topic which will enable him/her to write the best possible essay. The subject chosen should be one where the student has some basic information about. Moreover, the topic must give the student the scope to build some unique thoughts and ideas that can be presented in an interesting manner.

**Outline of thoughts-** Before starting to write the essay it is important to have an outline of the basic framework of the essay. It may be done mentally but a better way is to jot down all the thoughts in a rough sheet so that they may be arranged methodically while composing the essay.

**Writing the introduction-** Once the outline is ready it is important to write a strong introduction to the essay. The introduction is of utmost importance to capture the attention of the readers. A good introduction doesn't straightaway reveal all the points in the author's mind. It just excites the readers enough to want them to read through the entire writing and form a bond with the writer. Begin with an attention grabber. You can use shocking information, dialogue, a story, a quote, or a simple summary of your topic. Whichever angle you choose, make sure that it ties in with your thesis statement, which will be included as the last sentence of your introduction.

**Writing the Body-** The body of the essay argues, explains or describes the topic. Each main idea that is written in the outline will become a separate section within the body of your essay. Each body paragraph will have the same basic structure. Begin by writing one of your main ideas as the introductory sentence. Next, write each of your supporting ideas in sentence format and give detailed examples to back up your position. Sometimes it is a good idea to leave some space between the ideas and later fill in these spaces with relative information that will help link smaller ideas together.

Writing the conclusion-The conclusion brings closure of the topic and sums up your overall ideas while providing a final perspective on the topic. The conclusion should consist of three to five strong sentences. Simply review your main points and provide reinforcement of your thesis with a thought-provoking idea or question.

Review- Before submission of the essay it is important to review the essay and add finishing touches. The strongest points should be the first and last paragraphs within the body, with the others falling in the middle. Also, the paragraph order should make sense. Make sure that sentence flow is smooth and add phrases to help connect thoughts or ideas. Check your essay for grammar and spelling mistakes.

#### How to Write a Good Introduction:

It is fine to give a bit of context to the essay in the introduction, but the real meat of your argument should be located in your body paragraphs. A good test to see if information should go in a body or introductory paragraph is to ask a few questions. Is this providing context or evidence? Does this introduce my argument, or try to prove it? True evidence or proof deserves a body paragraph. Context and background most likely belong in your introduction. Anecdotes can be an interesting opener to your essay, but only if the anecdote in question is truly relevant to your topic. The same is true for statistics, quotes, and other types of information about your topic. Some types of introductions may have once been successful, but have been used so often that they have become tired and clichéd. Starting your essay with a definition is a good example of one of these conventions. At this point, starting with a definition is a bit boring, and will cause your reader to tune out. The reader should finish the introduction thinking that the essay is interesting or has some sort of relevance to their lives. A good introduction is engaging; it gets the audience thinking about the topic at hand and wondering how you will be proving your argument. Once they are thinking about the topic, and wondering why you hold your position, they are more likely to be engaged in the rest of the essay.

Don't be afraid to write a tentative introduction first and then change it later. Some people find that they need to write some kind of introduction in order to get the writing process started. Again many good writers prefer writing a proper introduction once the writing of the main essay is complete and all arguments methodically arranged. It is then easy to decide what should form the content where the topic would be first introduced to the readers.

The following generally serve as good ways to open an essay:

- ✓ an intriguing example
- ✓ a provocative quotation that is closely related to the argument
- ✓ a puzzling scenario
- ✓ a vivid and perhaps unexpected anecdote
- ✓ a thought-provoking question

Write suitable introductions to the following topics:

1. Importance of women in the family and the society.
2. Sports must be given more weightage in our education system.
3. Giving children household chores from an early age increases their sense of responsibility.
4. Pollution and the immediate need to address it.
5. Terrorism is the single major threat to the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
6. The best place to live-A metro city, a small town or a village?
7. The essence of a railway station waiting room.
8. Your favourite hideout as a child.
9. A person who inspires you.
10. The cell phone-a boon or a curse to mankind
11. An unusual dream you had
12. The best photograph you clicked
13. Is advertisement a necessity or an extravagant expenditure?
14. Importance of pets for growing children
15. Superstitions in the age of science.
16. Is the library losing its significance in the digital era?
17. Fashion
18. Problem of beggary in Indian Society
19. Importance of the youth in shaping India's future
20. The real significance of patriotism
21. Inside an examination hall
22. Looking back at your first day in school
23. The first time you defied an authority and the after effects
24. The most difficult decision you have taken
25. The most beautiful season in India
26. Your favourite celebrity and five questions you would ask him/her if you met him/her
27. The memories of someone or some place you miss the most.
28. Should uniforms be mandatory in educational institutes
29. What is the best television show you would recommend to children of your age
30. Should parents be punished for crimes committed by their children?

#### How to write the body of the essay:

The body of the essay is the core of your writing where all the points that you want to express have to be neatly organised in structured paragraphs. Keep in mind the following in order to write an impressive essay.



**Understand the topic and critically evaluate it:** Before you start writing the essay make sure you have the main idea in mind. It is often very tempting to divert to any allied ideas or topics. Before including anything in your essay ask yourself if it is related to your topic and directly supports the thesis you are presenting.

**Make an outline of the Essay:** It is important to have an idea about the points that are going to be presented in the essay. You can quickly jot down the points on a rough piece of paper and arrange them in accordance of importance. This will help you to organise your ideas better and ensure no critical points are left behind.

**Start with your strongest point or Argument:** Once you have made your view clear in the introduction, the strongest point or the most effective argument should come in the first body paragraph. Add examples or data/ statistics to emphasise your point. Also make sure you explain in lucid terms how that example substantiates your point.

**Use Adequate Supporting Details:** In your writing, the key to developing your body paragraphs is to use supporting details and examples as you discuss your main points. In other words, you need to be specific in your explanations of your points so that you're not feeding your reader vague, fuzzy ideas, but rather, clear, well-supported points. To develop your paragraph effectively, you would need to include specific examples and details. So, rather than packing one body paragraph with several broad, vague ideas, you could use each of the ideas as the main idea in three separate body paragraphs and develop each of those paragraphs fully with specific details and examples.

**Pay Attention to the Transition:** Even though different paragraphs will concentrate on different points; the entire essay should have cohesion. For a body paragraph to be unified, all of the sentences in that paragraph should stick to the main idea expressed in the topic sentence. Again, there needs to be some connectivity when you move from one point to another related point. For this it is important to pay attention to the transition from one point to another. Examples of good transitional phrases include, "in addition to", "nevertheless", "furthermore," "moreover," but also "by contrast" and "on the other hand" etc. These phrases when used within the same paragraph or to create a sense of unity in the essay.

**Use the Right Vocabulary:** The difference between a good essay and a brilliant essay is the use of words. How you use language is important, especially in academic essay writing. When writing an academic essay, remember that you are trying to persuade others that you can make an intelligent argument. Using big words just to sound smart often results in the opposite effect—it is easy to detect when someone is overcompensating in their writing. If you aren't sure of the exact meaning of a word, you risk using it incorrectly. Using obscure language can also take away from the clarity of your argument.

**Pay Attention to Grammar and Punctuation:** Grammar basics include verb and subject agreement, proper article and pronoun usage, and well-formed sentence structures. Make sure you know the proper uses for the most common forms of punctuation. Be mindful of your comma usage and know when a period is needed. Finally, in academic essay writing, voice is important. Try to use the active voice instead of the passive whenever possible. This will make the tone of your essay stronger. Ensure your language is concise. Avoid unnecessary wordiness that detracts from your argument.

**Revise your Composition:** Before moving on to the conclusion, read the body paragraphs thoroughly. Make sure no relevant points or arguments are missing. Check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. Once you are sure that you have presented thoughts in a clear concise lucid and coherent manner- you can move on to the conclusion.

Just as the introduction helps the readers to become familiar with the author's idea about the topic, the conclusion can provide a bridge to help the readers see why all the analysis and information should matter to them after they put the paper down. The conclusion allows the writer to have the final say on the issues raised in the paper, to synthesize the thoughts, to demonstrate the importance of the ideas, and to propel the reader to a new view of the subject. It is also the opportunity to make a good final impression and to end on a positive note. The conclusion pushes beyond the boundaries of the prompt and allows the author to consider broader issues, make new connections, and elaborate on the significance of the findings. The end of an essay should therefore convey a sense of completeness and closure as well as a sense of the lingering possibilities of the topic, its larger meaning, its implications: the final paragraph should close the discussion without closing it off.

There are many ways in which the writing can be closed effectively. Different authors use different methods to make a strong end which the readers can take with them. Some of the strategies of closing an essay are:

- ✓ Concluding by linking the last paragraph to the first, perhaps by reiterating a word or phrase used at the beginning.
- ✓ Conclude by setting your discussion into a different, perhaps larger, context. For instance, the essay might be a topic relevant to our society but in conclusion point out how the points make sense even in the global scenario.
- ✓ Conclude by considering the implications of your argument. The author can elaborate on how the points suggested in the essay body are difficult to achieve but possible.
- ✓ Conclude with an insightful fact or quotation that is relevant to the subject of the essay and is thought provoking for the readers.

- ✓ Try to end on a note of positivity. Even if the topic is broadly negative the concluding paragraph must have a ray of hope and end with at least a theoretical solution.
- ✓ You may conclude with a rhetorical question which is an intriguing question, not requiring an answer. It may leave the readers with some thoughts. Such questions put the subject in the context of the bigger issue.

While it is important to learn how to conclude an essay it is equally important to know some cliché and unimpressive conclusions that one must avoid. Such conclusions do not make any value addition to the quality of the essay- rather they bring in sense of compulsion to the writing. The following are the things that should be avoided:

- ×Avoid repetition of the points mentioned in the introduction or the body of the essay.
- ×Avoid introducing a completely new idea or topic that needs elaboration which should have been a part of the body of the essay.
- ×Avoid dramatizing the essay with sentimental speeches, emotional content or exaggerated appeal to the readers.
- ×Avoid filling up the conclusion with intensive data or facts and figures which is difficult for the readers to process at the end of the writing.
- ×Certain phrases like “in conclusion”, “to summarise”, “to the end the essay” take away the freshness of the writing and bring in a sense of forced closure to the writing.
- ×Don't undercut the authority as an author by saying things like, "this is just one approach to the subject; there may be other, better approaches. . ."