

I. Writing's basic:

What is an essay?

An essay is a group of paragraphs written about a single topic and a central main idea. It must have at least three to five paragraphs. Essay writing is currently considered to be one of the crucial sections of proficiency exams like TOEFL, IELTS, and GRE which determine the success or failure of the examinees on such tests.

Six Steps in Essay Writing

A. Pre-writing

1. *Step One: Choose a Topic*
2. *Step Two: Gather Ideas through Brainstorming (cluster thinking)*
3. *Step Three: Prioritize your sub-topics according to their importance.*

B. Drafting

4. *Step Four: Write*

C. Reviewing and Revising

5. *Step Five: Review Structure and Content*

D. Rewriting

6. *Step six: Rewriting*
 - a. *Revise Structure and content*
 - b. *Proofread*
 - c. *Make Final Corrections*



sub-topics according to

and Content

Step One: Choosing a Topic

The initial step in writing an essay or paragraph is to choose a good topic. In choosing your topic, you must be very careful to avoid topics which are too broad (i.e. a very general topic) or too narrow (i.e. a very limited topic). The problem with a narrow topic is that there is not a lot to write about such topics. On the other hand, an overly broad topic needs a lot of space for writing.

Step Two: Brainstorming (cluster thinking)

A good way to gather ideas about a specific topic is to brainstorm. In brainstorming, you should generate or collect many ideas about the topic you want to write about.

There are many different ways of brainstorming, including the following:

1. Listing
2. Free-writing
3. Mind-Mapping

In listing, you can make a list of whatever comes to your mind. You don't need to worry about the number or usefulness of the ideas. An example is shown below:

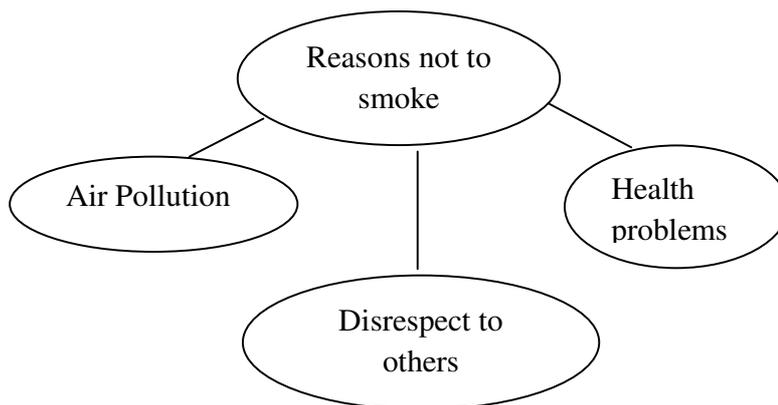
Why avoid smoking cigarettes:

- Dangerous for your health
- Polluting the air
- A disrespect to other non-smokers

The second way is to free-write. When you free-write, you write whatever which comes to your mind about the topic you want to write. This approach is different from listing in that you write entire sentences rather than keywords in a list; this way, you can go along with the flow of your ideas as you write. Even though you will write sentences, you should not worry about possible grammatical mistakes. Later, after you decide which ideas to keep, you can correct any errors.

Smoking is dangerous to our health and others' health. It is disrespectful. I don't like smokers because they...

Another way to brainstorm is to map your ideas. In this way, you can make a visual arrangement of the ideas that come to your mind. An example is shown below:



Step Three: Prioritize each sub-topic according to its importance. You can number them as 1st, 2nd, 3rd paragraph.

Step four: write a paragraph for each sub-topic and explain your thought completely. Add supporting statements to back up your ideas. Write an example to clarify your point of view. Use correct conjunctions for better flow of ideas and sentences.

Step Five: Review and Revise and Edit structure and Content. Read your writing few times and make sure that every sentence sounds logical and cohesive to other sentences.

Generally,

a paper should have a logical flow of ideas that make a reader enjoy reading. Further, ask a classmate or a friend to read your writing and check for any kind of errors such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization and grammar.

Step Six: Rewrite and make your final draft for proofreading and final corrections. This step is very critical because you may need an expert in English language to proofread your final draft.

STRUCTURE in WRITING

UNITY REFERS TO ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS WITHIN PARAGRAPHS.

There have been many films about the high school experience. Most critics agree, however, that George Lucas 1973 film, *American Graffiti*, established the genre. This agreement is not surprising, as the film's unique approach to period reconstruction, its use of the popular rock and roll of the era, and its narrative point of view combine into a telling portrait of the social alternatives available to teenagers in 1962. More recently, Amy Heckerling and Richard Linklater have directed their own versions of the high school rite of passage. Heckerling's *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) and Linklater's *Dazed and Confused* (1993, but set in 1976) present conflicting images of the American high school student in the early years of the last quarter of the twentieth century.

1. Each sentence relates to the other sentences and is focused on the topic.
2. Each sentence contains the same grammatical elements such as subject.

BALANCE REFERS TO SENTENCE STRUCTURE WITHIN PARAGRAPHS.

In 1900, during the Great Exposition in Paris, Henry Adams wandered into the hall of dynamos and stood transfixed before a force he knew would reshape the world. This simple act of acknowledgment produced such powerful emotions that Adams would be haunted until his death with the paradox of "The Dynamo and the Virgin." Although Adams could appreciate the knowledge of physics necessary to construct a dynamo, he could also envision a danger within the dynamo itself: "Before the end, one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before the silent and infinite force." The dynamo would become the new religion of the twentieth century.

Michael Briggs

1. The writer varies sentence length to hold his reader's attention. (Simple and compound)
2. The addition of a quotation from the source text adds legitimacy to the essay.
3. The last sentence, a **simple sentence**, adds force and energy to the longer, **complex sentences** that constitute the body of the paragraph.
4. By not mentioning the dynamo by name until the end of the second sentence, the writer effectively increases the tension within the paragraph.
5. The concluding sentence includes a hook-the new religion- that will draw the reader into the essay.

COHESION REFERS TO PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE ESSAY.

For Adams, the virgin suggested both the infinite power of such a dynamic force and the religious symbolism of the virgin who the idealized protector of a fallible human race. What would happen if this sacred symbol of fertility, power, and humanity were eclipsed by the dynamo? Mary, in her dual role of human and virgin mother of Jesus, became a link between humanity and a spiritual universe of perfection and "kindness."

1. The second paragraph continues the theme established in the first paragraph, and it begins the development of the issue of religion as it ties the dynamo and the virgin together.
2. Subsequent paragraphs will continue this theme while developing pertinent topics.

PARALLELISM REFERS TO SPECIFIC WRITING STRATEGIES THAT EMPHASIZE THROUGH REPETITION.

American society is at an important crossroads in its cultural development. It must not allow drug abuse to determine its future. It cannot allow violence to determine its future. Further, it should not allow special interest groups to determine its future.

1. The three parallel sentences work together because they build on common topic-problems in American society-and include similar grammatical elements.
2. The overall style of the selection stems from its verb progression within the sentences.
3. Keep your tense in a parallel timing. (Use present or past or present perfect)

CHOICE OF WORDS

DENOTATION/CONNOTATION/COLLOCATION

A WORD' S DENOTATION REFERS TO ITS CONCRETE, DICTIONARY MEANING.

Fred watched as the bats flew out of the cave.

A WORD' S CONNOTATION REFERS TO WHAT IT SUGGESTS OR IMPLIES.

Fred warned his children that bats bring evil.

(In the second example, a negative connotation has been added to "bats" for effect.)

USE SYNONYMS CAREFULLY TO AVOID CONNOTATION MISTAKES.

1. The diver was noted for his mighty breath.
2. The diver was noted for his strong breath.

(Although "mighty" and "strong" can be synonyms, in this use they convey very different connotations.)CONSULT A DICTIONARY FOR THE MOST SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT A WORD.

Strong wind / strong member / strong influence / strong effect

CONSULT A DICTIONARY FOR THE MOST SPECIFIC **COLLOCATION** ABOUT PARTS OF SPEECH.

SEE THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES FOR **COLLOCATIONS** OF THE WORD “**KNOWLEDGE**”.

knowledge

Adjectives: **background / factual / general / prior / special / specialist knowledge**

E.g.: We did not have any prior knowledge of the attack.

deep / detailed / extensive / in-depth / profound / thorough / vast knowledge

The job requires an in-depth knowledge of foreign affairs.

basic / limited / little / passing / rudimentary / working knowledge

I have a working knowledge of Russian.

direct / first-hand / inside / intimate / personal knowledge

I do not have any first-hand knowledge of the prison system.

encyclopedic / historical / local / medical / procedural / scientific / technical knowledge

He has an encyclopedic knowledge of football.

human knowledge

This book contributes nothing to the sum of human knowledge.

be/become common / public knowledge

It is common knowledge that he has spent time in prison.

be comfortable / safe / secure in the knowledge (that)

They were secure in the knowledge that their fathers would pay their bills if necessary.

Nouns: a body / lack / level of knowledge

Their level of knowledge about social issues is high.

a thirst for knowledge

Children have an incredible thirst for knowledge.

gaps in your knowledge

I'm taking the course to fill in some of the gaps in my knowledge.

knowledge base

He expressed concerns that much of homeopathy's knowledge base is untested.

Verbs: have knowledge of something

I had no knowledge of their activities.

acquire / gain knowledge

I acquired some knowledge of planning law during my time as a counselor.

broaden / increase knowledge

I'm hoping to broaden my knowledge of the travel industry.

deny (all) knowledge of something

They denied all knowledge of the missing money.

ESTABLISHING A PATTERN

AN ESSAY CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THREE, DISTINCT PARTS

THE INTRODUCTION- One or two paragraphs that introduce the topic to the reader.

The introduction includes the thesis statement, a single sentence that states a topic and an opinion about the topic.

THE BODY-Several paragraphs that present the evidence in an orderly manner.

Each paragraph in the body organizes around a topic sentence that relates to the thesis statement.

Add your supporting statements which defend your idea and thoughts about the topic in body section of your writing.

THE CONCLUSION: Usually no more than one paragraph that brings a tone of finality to the essay.

The conclusion includes a restatement of the thesis statement and touches on the main ideas presented in the body of the essay.

FIVE –PARAGRAPH ESSAY

INTRODUCTION-One paragraph in length moving from general sentences to a specific thesis statement as the final sentence.

BODY –Three paragraphs in length with the emphasis on specific pieces of evidence that support the thesis.

CONCLUSION-One paragraph moving from a specific restatement of the thesis statement to a general statement of finality.

This classic form is often used in freshman writing courses to introduce the essay. It is however, structurally limited for longer topics or research papers and should not serve as a model for all academic writing. Instead, the beginning writer should use its essential elements—a clear thesis and concrete supports—as a basis for more complex essay formats.

Introduction (P1)

- A. Motivator, i.e. a statement which grabs the readers' attention
- B. Paraphrase of the main topic
- C. Thesis Statement, i.e. the central idea of the essay

Body (Pb1, Pb2, Pb3)

- A. Paragraph One:
 1. Topic Sentence (TS)
 2. Details (explanations and examples to support your TS)
 3. Conclusion of Paragraph One
- B. Paragraph Two:
 1. Topic Sentence (TS)
 2. Details (explanations and examples to support your TS)
 3. Conclusion of Paragraph Two
- C. Paragraph Three
 1. Topic Sentence
 2. Details (explanations and examples to support your TS)
 3. Conclusion of Paragraph Three

Conclusion (Pc)

- A. Stating the thesis from another angle

B. Summary of Viewpoint

CONNECTORS:

JOINING ELEMENTS (Linking sentences)

CONJUNCTIONS (TRANSITIONS)

Joining words that link parts of sentences.

Coordinating

conjunctions

and

or

nor

but

yet

for

whereas

Subordinating

conjunctions

although

since

because

when

while

if

as if

as

Adverbial

conjunctions

therefore

however

in other words

thus

then

otherwise

nevertheless

on the other hand

1. **Coordinating conjunctions** join like parts of words, phrases, and clauses.

a. Joe **and** Mary went to the show.

b. You will find it in the cupboard **or** under the counter.

c. Jim shut the door, **but** he did not lock it.

2. **Correlative conjunctions** join like parts and come **in pairs**. (E.G: **Either / or**)

a. **Not** Tom **but** his brother won the tournament.

b. *Neither Mary nor Jane was impressed by this.*

3. **Subordinate conjunctions** are used to introduce **adverbial clauses** and link them to the main clause.

- *Not only Tom but his brother won the tournament, because they practiced hard.*

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

Used to join main clauses.

1. Conjunctive adverbs are always preceded by a semicolon [;] and are always followed by a comma [,]

2. Examples: **Accordingly, consequently, furthermore, however, nevertheless, etc.**

a. *She knew her lack of studying would be a detriment; nevertheless, she took the test.*

b. *She was sick and tired of all this nagging about studying. However, she did find this chart useful.*

SENTENCES

Definition of a sentence: Group of related words having a subject and a verb which express a complete thought.

KINDS OF SENTENCES

- **DECLARATIVE SENTENCE**

1. Makes a statement.

2. *Today is the day before the long holiday.*

- **IMPERATIVE SENTENCE**

1. Gives a command.

2. *Please close the door on your way out.*

- **INTERROGATIVE SENTENCE**

1. Asks a question.

2. *Who was that woman?*

- **EXCLAMATORY SENTENCE**

1. Expresses strong feeling

2. End with an exclamation point

3. *What a beautiful morning!*

SENTENCE PATTERNS

- **PATTERN 1 (S+V) [subject] + [verb]**

1. The subject may be compound.
2. The verb may be compound.
3. **John ran.** (John is the subject and ran is the verb).
4. **John and Peter ran and fell down.**

- **PATTERN 2 (S +V + D.O.)**
[subject + verb + direct object]

1. Any of the elements may be compound.
2. The verb represents direct or indirect action, active or passive voice.
3. **John ran the race** (John is the subject, ran is the verb, and race is the direct object)
4. **The race was run by John.**

- **PATEERN 3 (S + V + I.O. + D.O.)**
[subject + verb + indirect object + direct object]

1. Any of the elements may be compound.
2. **Dad paid the clerk the sales tax.** (Dad is the subject, paid is the verb, clerk is the indirect object and sales tax is the direct object.)

- **PATEERN 4 (S + V + S.C.)**
[subject + verb + subjective complement]

1. Any of the elements may be compound.
2. The verb must be linking have no action.
3. **Jane is my attorney** . (Jane is the subject, is [linking verb] is the verb, and attorney is a predicate nominative)
4. **The water is blue.** (water is the subject, is [linking verb] is the verb , and blue is a predicate adjective).

SENTENECE FORMS:

Simple / compound / complex / compound-complex

- **SIMPLE SENTENCE (an independent clause) :**
Contain a subject and a verb and expresses only one complete thought.

Either the subject or the verb may be compound.

1. John slept.
2. John and Bobbie slept.

- **COMPOUND SENTENCE:**
Contains two or more independent clauses and can express more than one complete thought.

1. Compound sentences **are joined by coordinating conjunctions** (and, or, nor, for, so, yet, but) or a **semicolon** [;] when no coordinating conjunction is present.

a. *Bobbie likes watching TV, but she prefers going to the movies.*

b. *Bobbie likes watching TV, she enjoys exercising on the treadmill, and she adores the smell of puppy breath.*

2. Note: using **only** a comma [,] between the two or more independent clauses of a compound sentence will result in a **comma splice error**.

Error-Bobbie likes John , she loves vacations.

3. Placing no punctuation between independent clauses which do not have a coordinating conjunction will result in an error called “**run-on**” or “**fused**”.

Error- Bobbie likes movies john likes vacations.

- **COMPLEX SENTENCE**

Contains an independent and a dependent clause.

- **Adverbial clauses** appearing at the beginning of a complex sentence are **set off** by a comma.

If you are going to walk , be sure to stay on the path.

- **COMPOUND /COMPLEX SENTENCE:**

Contains at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

- *If you are going to walk, be sure to stay on the path; you won't get lost.*

Approach

A. Descriptive approach – Write about a thing a person, or an event, such as: “The Recent Drought in Kansas.” You would detail the drought, its effects on farmers, crops, economics, etc.

B. Explanatory approach – Explain why or how something happened such as: “why the Mississippi River Flooded in 1993,” You would marshal facts, scientific opinion, and statistics about weather and other causes.

C. Argumentative approach – Example: “Military Education should be Mandatory in High School.”

1. Here you can offer opinion, anecdotal evidence, etc.

2. **Important** : As you move from **Descriptive to Explanatory to Argumentative**, the material you need to include in the paper becomes cumulative.

a. You cannot take an Explanatory approach without including Descriptive material.

b. You cannot take an Argumentative approach without including **both Explanatory and Descriptive** material.

c. How much of each you include will be dictated by the prescribed length of the paper and the amount of material you feel necessary to prove or disprove an argument.