

SUMMARIZING ESSAY TYPES

Preview

In this lecture, we are going to discuss the types of academic essays and to summarize the main ideas of the course. We will study

1. Narrative Essays
2. Descriptive Essays
3. Expository Essays
4. Persuasive Essays (2 types)

FOUR MAJOR TYPES OF ESSAYS

Effectively writing different types of essays has become critical to academic success. Essay writing is a common school assignment, a part of standardized tests, and a requirement on college applications. Often on tests, choosing the correct type of essay to write in response to a writing prompt is key to getting the question right. Clearly, students can't afford to remain confused about types of essays.

- There are over a dozen types of essays, so it's easy to get confused. However, the number is actually more manageable. Essentially there are four major types of essays, with the variations making up the remainder.

- Distinguishing between types of essays is simply a matter of determining the writer's goal. Does the writer want to tell about a personal experience, describe something, explain an issue, or convince the reader to accept a certain viewpoint? The four major types of essays address these purposes.

- **1. Narrative Essays: Telling a Story**

In a narrative essay, the writer tells a story about a real-life experience. While telling a story may sound easy to do, the narrative essay challenges students to think and write about themselves. When writing a narrative essay, writers should try to involve the reader by making the story as vivid as possible. The fact that narrative essays are usually written in the first person helps engage the reader. "I" sentences give readers a feeling of being part of the story. A well-crafted narrative essay will also build towards drawing a conclusion or making a personal statement.

• 2. Descriptive Essays: Painting a Picture

A cousin of the narrative essay, a descriptive essay paints a picture with words. A writer might describe a person, place, object, or even memory of special significance. However, this type of essay is not description for description's sake. The descriptive essay strives to communicate a deeper meaning through the description. In a descriptive essay, the writer should show, not tell, through the use of colorful words and sensory details. The best descriptive essays appeal to the reader's emotions, with a result that is highly evocative.

Lectures on Describing (Textbook – Chapter 4)

• **3. Expository Essays: Just the Facts**

The expository essay is an informative piece of writing that presents a balanced analysis of a topic. In an expository essay, the writer explains or defines a topic, using facts, statistics, and examples. Expository writing encompasses a wide range of essay variations, such as the comparison and contrast essay, the cause and effect essay, and the “how to” or process essay. Because expository essays are based on facts and not personal feelings, writers don’t reveal their emotions or write in the first person.

The key here is that you are explaining an issue, theme or idea to your intended audience. Your reaction to a work of literature could be in the form of an expository essay, for example if you decide to simply explain your personal response to a work. The expository essay can also be used to give a personal response to a world event, political debate, football game, work of art and so on.

What are its most important qualities?

You want to get and, of course, keep your reader's attention. So, you should:

- Have a well defined thesis. Start with a thesis statement/research question/statement of intent. Make sure you answer your question or do what you say you set out to do. Do not wander from your topic.
- Provide evidence to back up what you are saying. Support your arguments with facts and reasoning. Do not simply list facts, incorporate these as examples supporting your position, but at the same time make your point as succinctly as possible.
- The essay should be concise. Make your point and conclude your essay. Don't make the mistake of believing that repetition and over-stating your case will score points with your readers.

Lectures on Instructions (Textbook – Chapter 3)

• **4. Persuasive Essays: Convince Me**

While like an expository essay in its presentation of facts, the goal of the persuasive essay is to convince the reader to accept the writer's point of view or recommendation. The writer must build a case using facts and logic, as well as examples, expert opinion, and sound reasoning. The writer should present all sides of the argument, but must be able to communicate clearly why a certain position is correct.

Here your argument is most important. You are presenting an opinion and trying to persuade readers, you want to win readers over to your point of view.

Lectures on Reasons and Examples (Textbook – Chapter 5)

What are its most important qualities?

- Have a definite point of view.
- Maintain the reader's interest.
- Use sound reasoning.
- Use solid evidence.
- Be aware of your intended audience. How can you win them over?
- Research your topic so your evidence is convincing.
- Your purpose is to convince someone else so don't overdo your language and don't bore the reader. And don't keep repeating your points!
- Remember the rules of the good paragraph. One single topic per paragraph, and natural progression from one to the next.
- End with a strong conclusion.

NB!

One of the subtypes of that is the **argumentative** or **discursive** essay.

Lectures on Opinions (Textbook – Chapter 6)

This is the type of essay where you prove that your opinion, theory or hypothesis about an issue is correct or more truthful than those of others. In short, it is very similar to the persuasive essay (see above), but the difference is that you are arguing for your opinion as opposed to others, rather than directly trying to persuade someone to adopt your point of view.

What are its most important qualities?

- The argument should be focused
- The argument should be a clear statement (a question cannot be an argument)
- It should be a topic that you can support with solid evidence
- The argumentative essay should be based on pros and cons
- Structure your approach well
- Use good transition words/phrases
- Be aware of your intended audience. How can you win them over?
- Research your topic so your evidence is convincing.
- Don't overdo your language and don't bore the reader. And don't keep repeating your points!
- Remember the rules of the good paragraph. One single topic per paragraph, and natural progression from one to the next.
- End with a strong conclusion.

TIPS FOR WRITING

1. Define your topic

Before you begin your essay you need to define what the topic is. Discursive essay topics can be about anything, but they are primarily used to argue ideas about controversial topics such as gun control. You should decide at this point which side you are supporting.

2. Outline

The foundation of any well structured essay is an outline. A discursive essay should have:

- **Introduction:** The Introduction clearly states the topic and explains why it is important.
- **Body:** The Body contains the arguments and logic for both sides.
- **Conclusion:** The Conclusion is where you establish your personal stance on the argument and explain why. Here you explain why it is difficult to establish a solid stance on the topic.

Lectures - Notes, Clusters, Listing Outlines

NB!

for	against

3. Write 4-6 different points to include in body

Knowing in advance which points you will discuss will help during the actual writing process. Make sure that each point has a counterargument. For example, if you have 3 points for one side, you should have 3 points against it to balance it out. This ensures your argument is unbiased as well as thorough.

Each individual argument is a paragraph. The amount of paragraphs is up to your discretion, but if this is for a class there should be at least 4.

4. Fill in the content

Now that you've fully outlined your essay, it's time to flesh it out. Establish credibility by citing valid sources. Don't believe everything you read. Look for scientific studies or valid statistics. Hard facts enrich any argument.

Your tone should be neutral throughout the body, giving each point its turn to truly speak. Try to be as thorough and unbiased as possible.

5. Write a conclusion

In the last paragraph you will wrap up the argument by stating your personal stance on the issue. Try to explain why you feel the way you do, and if you don't actually have an opinion, try to define as to why that is. Mention again why the issue is important and should be evaluated further.

Tips:

- Stay in formal third person perspective throughout the body
- Before you begin writing, you should create a "spider-diagram", or "mind-map" (a cluster) to help clearly relate your points.
- When writing the separate arguments, try to pretend as though a person from that specific viewpoint "has the floor". Pretend as though you are trying to convince another person of that viewpoint, even if you don't necessarily agree with it. Make sure to keep a third person writing style, though.
- Use the phrases for linking ideas in a discursive essay (Transition Signals)

Same line of thought

e.g. - and, firstly, secondly etc., next, furthermore, likewise, in addition, similarly, also, moreover.

Conclusion/summary

e.g. - thus, therefore, consequently, accordingly, in retrospect, hence, in conclusion, in brief, as a result.

Definite statement

e.g. - without question, without doubt, unquestionably, absolutely.

Contrasting idea

e.g. - yet, on the other hand, nevertheless, however, although, conversely, otherwise, on the contrary.

Further examples

for instance, for example, because, since, so that, despite the fact that, accordingly, although, if, though, unless.

PROOF READ AND REVIEW YOUR ESSAY

Here are a few aspects to pay attention to while you proofread:

- Look out for any spelling errors or grammatical mistakes regardless of how minor fix them! They can derail the focus of the reader and undermine the intellectual integrity of your essay.

Sentence structure, Punctuation, Capitalization

- Keep your audience in mind. In most cases it will be your teacher or professor. Make sure your language reflects this, keep it formal and academic no colloquialisms!

NB!

Use dictionaries!

e.g. cool – *прил.*

1) прохладный, свежий

We were in the cool shadow of the mountain.

11) **разг.** крутой, клёвый, классный cool girl — клёвая, классная девчонка

Dad gave me a really cool bike for my birthday.

(formal, informal)

- Have you got enough evidence and explained it well? If not, you can always do a little more to strengthen any weaker arguments.

It certainly takes time but if you want improve your critical thinking and problem solving skills while getting good essay grades proof-reading and reviewing are the necessary ones.