

Brief Overview of the 10 Essay Writing Steps

Why is writing an essay so frustrating?

Learning how to write an essay can be a maddening, exasperating process, but it doesn't have to be. If you know the steps and understand what to do, writing can be easy and even fun.

Brief Overview of the 10 Essay Writing Steps

Below are brief summaries of each of the ten steps to writing an essay. Select the links for more info on any particular step, or use the blue navigation bar on the left to proceed through the writing steps. How To Write an Essay can be viewed sequentially, as if going through ten sequential steps in an essay writing process, or can be explored by individual topic.

- 1. Research:** Begin the essay writing process by researching your topic, making yourself an expert. Utilize the internet, the academic databases, and the library. Take notes and immerse yourself in the words of great thinkers.
- 2. Analysis:** Now that you have a good knowledge base, start analyzing the arguments of the essays you're reading. Clearly define the claims, write out the reasons, the evidence. Look for weaknesses of logic, and also strengths. Learning how to write an essay begins by learning how to analyze essays written by others.
- 3. Brainstorming:** Your essay will require insight of your own, genuine essay-writing brilliance. Ask yourself a dozen questions and answer them. Meditate with a pen in your hand. Take walks and think and think until you come up with original insights to write about.
- 4. Thesis:** Pick your best idea and pin it down in a clear assertion that you can write your entire essay around. Your thesis is your main point, summed up in a concise sentence that lets the reader know where you're going, and why. It's practically impossible to write a good essay without a clear thesis.
- 5. Outline:** Sketch out your essay before straightway writing it out. Use one-line sentences to describe paragraphs, and bullet points to describe what each paragraph will contain. Play with the essay's order. Map out the structure of your argument, and make sure each paragraph is unified.
- 6. Introduction:** Now sit down and write the essay. The introduction should grab the reader's attention, set up the issue, and lead in to your thesis. Your intro is merely a buildup of the issue, a stage of bringing your reader into the essay's argument.
(Note: The title and first paragraph are probably the most important elements in your essay. This is an essay-writing point that doesn't always sink in within the context of the classroom. In the first paragraph you either hook the reader's interest or lose it. Of course your teacher, who's getting paid to teach you how to write an essay, will read the essay you've written regardless, but in the real world, readers make up their minds about whether or not to read your essay by glancing at the title alone.)
- 7. Paragraphs:** Each individual paragraph should be focused on a single idea that supports your thesis. Begin paragraphs with topic sentences, support assertions with evidence, and expound your ideas in the clearest, most sensible way you can. Speak to your reader as if he or she were sitting in front of you. In other words, instead of writing the essay, try talking the essay.
- 8. Conclusion:** Gracefully exit your essay by making a quick wrap-up sentence, and then end on some memorable thought, perhaps a quotation, or an interesting twist of logic, or some call to action. Is there something you want the reader to walk away and do? Let him or her know exactly what.
- 9. MLA Style:** Format your essay according to the correct guidelines for citation. All borrowed ideas and quotations should be correctly cited in the body of your text,

followed up with a Works Cited (references) page listing the details of your sources.

10. Language: You're not done writing your essay until you've polished your language by correcting the grammar, making sentences flow, incorporating rhythm, emphasis, adjusting the formality, giving it a level-headed tone, and making other intuitive edits. Proofread until it reads just how you want it to sound. Writing an essay can be tedious, but you don't want to bungle the hours of conceptual work you've put into writing your essay by leaving a few sloppy misppallings and pourly worded phrazies..

Research Assuming you've been given a topic, or have narrowed it sufficiently down, your first task is to research this topic. You will not be able to write intelligently about a topic you know nothing about. To discover worthwhile insights, you'll have to do some patient reading.

Read light sources, then thorough

When you conduct research, move from light to thorough resources to make sure you're moving in the right direction. Begin by doing searches on the Internet about your topic to familiarize yourself with the basic issues; then move to more thorough research on the Academic Databases; finally, probe the depths of the issue by burying yourself in the library. Make sure that despite beginning on the Internet, you don't simply end there. A research paper using only Internet sources is a weak paper, and puts you at a disadvantage for not utilizing better information from more academic sources.

Write down quotations

As you read about your topic, keep a piece of paper and pen handy to write down interesting quotations you find. Make sure you write down the source and transcribe quotations accurately. I recommend handwriting the quotations to ensure that you don't overuse them, because if you have to handwrite the quotations, you'll probably only use quotations sparingly, as you should. On the other hand, if you're cruising through the net, you may just want to cut and paste snippets here and there along with their URLs into a Word file, and then later go back and sift the kernels from the chaff.

With print sources, you might put a checkmark beside interesting passages. Write questions or other thoughts in the margins as well. If it's a library book, use post-it notes to avoid ruining the book. Whatever your system, be sure to annotate the text you read. If reading online, see if you can download the document, and then use Word's Reviewing toolbar to add notes or the highlighter tool to highlight key passages.

Take a little from a lot

You'll need to read widely in order to gather sources on your topic. As you integrate research, take a little from a lot -- that is, quote briefly from a wide variety of sources. This is the best advice there is about researching. Too many quotations from one source, however reliable the source, will make your essay seem unoriginal and borrowed. Too few sources and you may come off sounding inexperienced. When you have a lot of small quotations from numerous sources, you will seem -- if not be -- well-read, knowledgeable, and credible as you write about your topic.

Researching on the Internet

While the Internet should never be your only source of information, it would be ridiculous not to utilize its vast sources of information. You should use the Internet to acquaint yourself with the topic more before you dig into more academic texts. When you search online, remember a few basics:

Use a variety of search engines

The Internet contains some 550 billion web pages. Google is a powerful search engine, but it only reaches about 5 billion of those pages -- less than one percent!

When you search the Internet, you should use a handful of different search engines. The Academic Search Engines above (collected mostly from Paula Dragutsky's Searchability) specialize in delivering material more suitable for college purposes, while the Popular Search Engines help locate information on less academic topics.

Look at the Site's Quality

With all the returns from your searches, you'll doubtless pull in a bundle of sites, and like a fisherman on a boat, your job will be to sort through the trash. The degree of professional design and presentation of a site should speak somewhat towards the content. Sites with black backgrounds are usually entertainment sites, while those with white backgrounds are more information based. Sites with colorful and garish backgrounds are probably made by novice designers. Avoid blog pages (online journals). Avoid "free-essay" pages. Avoid pages where there are multiple applets flashing on the screen. Also pay attention to the domain types. You should know that:

- .com = commercial
- .org = organization
- .gov = government
- .edu = education
- .net = network

The domain type indicates a possible bias toward the information. Obviously an .org site on animal rights is going to be a bit slanted towards one side of the issue. And if the sites try to sell you something, like many of the "sponsored listings" that appear on the top of the hits list with search engines, avoid them.

Mix up your search words

If you're getting too many hits, enter more keywords in the search box. If you aren't getting enough hits, enter fewer keywords in the searchbox. Also try inputting the same concept but in different words and phrases. Overture has a keyword search suggestion tool that lets you know what the most popular search strings are for the concept you're searching for. Search Engine Watch also has a useful tutorial on how to enter search strings, explaining how to add + and - and quotation marks to get more accurate results.

Many search engines have advanced tabs that help you search with more detail. Google, for example, has an advanced search option that greatly increases accuracy of returns, though few use it. Finally, know that some search engines specialize in specific types of content, so if you don't have much success with one search engine, try another.

Don't Limit Yourself to the Internet

While it's fun to surf the net and discover new sites with information relevant to your topic, don't limit yourself to the Internet. By and large the Internet, because it is a medium open to publication by all, can contain some pretty sketchy information. If your essay is backed by research from "Steve and Kim's homepage," "Matt's Econ Blog," and "teenstuffonline," your essay won't be as convincing as it would be with more academic journals. Academic journals and books have better research, more thorough treatment of the topics, a more stable existence (they'll still be there in a 10 years), and ultimately more persuasive power. Don't substitute Eddy Smith's "Summer Vacation to the Middle East" for Edward Said's Orientalism "Write something to suit yourself and many people will like it; write something to suit everybody and scarcely anyone will care for it."

An essay can have many purposes, but the basic structure is the same no matter what. You may be writing an essay to argue for a particular point of view or to explain the steps necessary to complete a task.

Either way, your essay will have the same basic format.

If you follow a few simple steps, you will find that the essay almost writes itself. You will be responsible only for supplying ideas, which are the important part of the essay anyway.

Don't let the thought of putting pen to paper daunt you.

Get started!

These simple steps will guide you through the essay writing process:

Decide on your topic.

Prepare an outline or diagram of your ideas.

Write your thesis statement.

Write the body.

Write the main points.

Write the sub points.

Elaborate on the sub points.

Write the introduction.

Write the conclusion.

Add the finishing touches.

how to write an essay..???

Here's How:

Select the topic of your essay.

Choose the central idea, or thesis, of your essay. For example: Information technology has revolutionized the way we work.

Outline your essay into introductory, body and summary paragraphs.

The introductory paragraph begins with an interesting sentence. For example:

Home workers have grown from 150,000 to over 12 million in the past 5 years thanks to the wonders of the computer.

After this first sentence, add your thesis statement from above.

Use one sentence to introduce every body paragraph to follow. For example: The Internet has made this possible by extending the office into the home.

Finish the introductory paragraph with a short summary or goal statement. For example: Technological innovation has thus made the traditional workplace obsolete.

In each of the body paragraphs (usually two or three) the ideas first presented in the introductory paragraph are developed.

Develop your body paragraphs by giving detailed information and examples. For example: When the Internet was first introduced it was used primarily by scientists, now it is common in every classroom.

Body paragraphs should develop the central idea and finish with a summary of that idea. There should be at least two examples or facts in each body paragraph to support the central idea.

The summary paragraph summarizes your essay and is often a reverse of the introductory paragraph.

Begin the summary paragraph by quickly restating the principal ideas of your body paragraphs. For example: The Internet in the home, benefits and ease of use of modern computer systems...

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he penultimate sentence should restate your basic thesis of the essay. For example: We have now passed from the industrial revolution to the information revolution.

Your final statement can be a future prediction based on what you have shown in the essay. For example: The next step: The complete disappearance of the workplace.

Tips:

Use strong verbs and avoid modals to state your opinion. It is better to write: The workplace has evolved than The workplace seems to have evolved

Do not apologize for what you are saying. An essay is about your opinion.

Do not translate from your mother tongue; it will quickly get you into trouble!

Hope i have been of some help!!