



Essay writing

What is an essay?

An essay (or response) is a short piece of writing.

Essays are used to develop and expand ideas or arguments and include supporting evidence. In high school, students are given a question which they must develop an answer for in essay form.

Typical school essays include:

Type	Main purpose	Structure	Key features
DISCUSSION	A discussion often consists of both sides of an argument being considered. Information and opinions about more than one side of an issue must be presented.	<p>Statement of issue (thesis): introduces issue and position to be argued.</p> <p>Arguments: series of paragraphs arguing for and against the issue. Recommendation or summary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present tense. Use of words that contrast arguments eg <i>however, nevertheless, in contrast, on the other hand.</i> Actions (verbs) are often changed into things (nouns). eg <i>explore</i> → <i>exploration</i>; <i>recite</i> → <i>recitation</i>; <i>we have considered</i> → <i>after consideration of.</i> Use of words that qualify eg <i>usually, probably, may, often.</i>
EXPOSITION	To persuade by arguing one side of an issue eg letter to the editor.	<p>Statement of position (thesis): introduces issue and position to be argued.</p> <p>Arguments: one paragraph for each argument or point. Reinforcement of thesis and recommendation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the text is written in present tense. Use of words that link arguments eg <i>in addition, moreover.</i> Actions (verbs) are often changed into things (nouns). eg <i>explore</i> → <i>exploration</i>; <i>recite</i> → <i>recitation</i>; <i>we have considered</i> → <i>after consideration of.</i> Use of words that qualify eg <i>usually, probably, may, often.</i>

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- Checklist
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- Critical analysis essay planner
- Discussion essay planner
- Evidence and references
- Exposition essay planner
- Review essay planner
- Structure



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CRITICAL ANALYSIS	To demonstrate an understanding of the ideas expressed in a text.	<p>Statement of meaning: introduces ideas about the central meaning(s) of the text.</p> <p>Review: one paragraph for each aspect of the text, including theme/meaning, structure, tone, language use, imagery and symbolism.</p> <p>Conclusion: remind the reader of the key points.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several paragraphs may need to be written about one or more aspects of the text. Evidence, such as full quotations from the text, should be included to support the writer's point of view. Use linking words at the beginning of paragraphs eg <i>moreover, in addition, another, furthermore.</i> Write in the third person – avoid the use of 'I', 'me' and 'my'.
COMPARE AND CONTRAST	To compare and contrast two texts.	<p>Statement of position (thesis): introduces the key similarities and/or differences.</p> <p>Observations: one paragraph for each key similarity/difference.</p> <p>Conclusion: final analysis and reaffirmation of the thesis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't simply retell or recount – show how the texts are similar or different. Include direct references to the text. Use connecting words at the beginning of paragraphs to clearly indicate similarities or differences eg <i>in contrast, alternatively, similarly, on the other hand.</i>

Type	Main purpose	Structure	Key features
REVIEW	To personally evaluate the quality of a book, film, play or website etc and to judge the effectiveness of the text to either inform, entertain or persuade a particular audience.	<p>Title: an eye-catching heading to attract the reader's attention. The heading may be a pun on the title of the work being reviewed.</p> <p>Context: a paragraph identifying the work and important details, such as the name of the director/ author, actors and publisher.</p> <p>Text synopsis: a series of paragraphs that provides a selective summary of the content of the text. Main events are outlined and major characters are introduced.</p> <p>Judgment: a final paragraph (or two) which summarises the reviewer's opinion of the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most of the text should be written in present tense. ■ First person eg <i>I/my</i> may be used. ■ Descriptive language for characters, setting and events, and the making or production of the text. ■ A plot summary which doesn't reveal the ending or surprise elements of the work. ■ A discussion of the author, director, designer or actors. ■ Use of technical and topical words, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film – director, viewer, script, dialogue, special effect, lighting, scenery, actors. • Book – incident, novel, author, setting, main characters, language, chapters. • Website – links, surfing, scrolling, URL, pop-ups, portal, purpose, author/producer/ designer, colour, graphics, functionality, content. ■ A recommendation for the audience to view, read or listen to the text.