

# Essay Writing Tips

(adapted from WritingDen)

## ***1. The pre-writing stage***

The prewriting stage is when you prepare your ideas for your essay before you begin writing. You will find it easier to write your essay if you make a plan first.

### **Prewriting Steps**

1. Think carefully about what you are going to write. Ask yourself: What question am I going to answer in this essay? How can I best answer this question? What is the most important part of my answer? What facts or ideas can I use to support my introductory paragraph? How can I make this essay interesting? Why should people be interested in this topic?
2. Find the main idea of your paragraph or essay. Choose the most important point or argument you are going to present. If you cannot decide which point is the most important, just choose one point and stick to it throughout your essay. This is your 'central thesis'.
3. Organize your facts and ideas in a way that develops your main idea. Look at the facts you have written and your ideas on the topic. Decide which facts and ideas will best support the main idea of your essay. Once you have chosen the facts and ideas you plan to use, ask yourself which order to put them in the essay. Write a plan to guide you as you write your essay.

## ***2. The writing stage***

### **(a) Introductory paragraph**

The introductory paragraph is the first paragraph of your essay. It introduces the main idea of your essay. A good opening paragraph captures the interest of your reader and explains why your topic is important.

The introduction essentially consists in a statement of your central thesis/main idea (this might be a few sentences); your essay will essentially be a development of this thesis statement. If your thesis statement is too short to form an introductory paragraph, add a few sentences briefly setting out the main points you intend to make in your supporting paragraphs.

### **(b) Supporting paragraphs**

Supporting paragraphs make up the main body of your essay. They develop the main idea of your essay. Looking at your plan, you should be able to list the points that develop the main idea of your essay and be able to place each supporting point in its own paragraph.

Now you need to develop each supporting point with facts, details, and examples. Recalling what you have learned about paragraphs, remember that each one should broadly speaking contain a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a summary sentence.

To connect your supporting paragraphs, you should use transition words.: these link your paragraphs together and make your essay easier to read. Use them at the beginning and end of your paragraphs. Here are some examples:

*For listing different points:* First, Second, Third

*For counter examples:* However, Even though, On the other hand, Nevertheless

*For additional ideas:* Another; In addition to; Related to; Furthermore; Also

*To show cause and effect:* Therefore; Thus; As a result of; Consequently

### **(c) Conclusion**

The conclusion comes at the end of your essay after you have finished developing your ideas. It summarizes or restates the main idea of the essay. You want to leave the reader with a sense that your essay is complete. You can:

1. Restate the strongest points of your essay that support your main idea.
2. Conclude your essay by restating the main idea in different words.
3. Give an evaluation and/or your personal opinion depending on the essay question set.

### ***3. The editing stage***

The editing stage is when you check your essay for mistakes and correct them.

1. Read your essay again
2. Check your spelling and grammar.
3. Make sure your subjects and verbs agree with each other.
4. Check the verb tenses of each sentence.
5. Make sure that each sentence makes sense.

### **Style and Organization**

1. Make sure your essay has an introduction, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion.
2. Check that you have a thesis statement that identifies the main idea of the essay.
3. Check that all your paragraphs follow the proper paragraph format.

# Types of essay

## 1. Definition Essay

When you are writing a definition essay, you take a term or an idea and write about what it is. Often, definitions are combined with classification or other forms of organization in the essay.

*Write an essay defining energy resources and discuss the different types.*

Introduction: Define the key term energy resources.  
Supporting paragraphs: 1. Define one type of energy resources: renewable resources.  
2. Define another type of energy resources: non-renewable resources.  
Summary paragraph: Summarize energy resources.

## 2. Classification essay

In a classification essay, you separate things or ideas into specific categories and discuss each of them. You organize the essay by defining each classification and by giving examples of each type.

*Write an essay discussing the three types of government in Canada.*

Introduction: Give background information about government in Canada.  
Supporting paragraphs: 1. Define and describe federal government.  
2. Define and describe provincial governments.  
3. Define and describe municipal governments.  
Summary paragraph: Summarize government in Canada.

## 3. Descriptive essay

In a description essay, you write about what a person, place, or thing is like. You organize the essay by describing different parts or aspects of the main subject.

*Write an essay describing the polar bear.*

Introduction: Introduce what a polar bear is.  
Supporting paragraphs: 1. Describe where the polar bear lives.  
2. Describe the body of the polar bear.  
3. Describe what the polar eats.  
Summary paragraph: Summarize what a polar bear is.

## 4. Compare and contrast essay

In a compare and contrast essay, you write about the similarities and differences between two or more people, places, or things. You can organize the essay by writing about one subject first and then comparing it with the second subject. A more effective way is to organize the essay by comparing each subject by category (this applies, for example, in literature essays which compare two poems, or in history essays which ask you to weight up pros and cons of a particular action)

*Write an essay comparing the weather in London and Warsaw*

Introduction: Introduce weather in the cities of London and Warsaw  
Supporting paragraphs: 1. Compare weather in spring and summer for both cities, stating how they are similar or different.  
2. Compare weather in autumn and winter for both cities, stating how they are similar or different.  
Summary paragraph: Summarize the similarities and differences.

## 5. Sequence Essay

In a sequence essay, you are writing to describe a series of events or a process in some sort of order. Usually, this order is based on time. You organize the essay by writing about each step of the process in the order it occurred.

*Write an essay outlining the stages of the salmon life cycle.*

Introduction:	Describe what a salmon is like.
Supporting paragraphs:	1. Describe young salmon. 2. Describe adult salmon. 3. Describe what salmon do before they die.
Summary paragraph:	Summarize the main steps of the salmon life cycle.

## 6. Explanatory essay

In an explanatory essay, you explain how or why something happens or has happened. You need to explain different causes and effects. You should organize the essay by explaining each individual cause or effect.

*Write an essay explaining why so many Europeans moved to Canada during the early nineteenth century.*

Introduction:	Give background information on European immigration during this time.
Supporting paragraphs:	1. Explain first reason: poor economy in Europe. 2. Explain second reason: better living conditions in Canada.
Summary paragraph:	Summarize main reasons.

## 7. Evaluation essay

In an evaluation essay, you make judgements about people, ideas, and possible actions. You make your evaluation based on certain criteria that you develop. Organize the essay by discussing the criteria you used to make your judgement.

*Write an essay evaluating the importance of the House of Commons.*

Introduction:	State briefly that the H of C is important and state three reasons.
Supporting paragraphs:	1. Explain first reason: meeting place for government 2. Explain second reason: represents people 3. Explain third reason: makes laws for country
Summary paragraph:	Conclude with an overall evaluation of the importance of the House of Commons based on your arguments