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ENGLISH

Introduction to Essay Writing

What is an Essay?

An essay is a piece of writing that revolves around a particular theme and contains the academic opinions of the person writing it.

An essay can perform one or more of the following functions:

- Analyses and critically evaluates a topic
- Presents the writer's argument for or against an idea
- Describes something
- Narrates a story
- Persuades the reader

Aldous Huxley described an essay as A literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything.

Characteristics of a Good Essay

- **Brevity:** Express what you want concisely. Do not beat around the bush.
- **Coherence:** Every sentence and paragraph should flow smoothly and logically from the previous one. A clumsily written essay reflects not only the lack of preparation but also the absence of clarity of thought.
- **Unity:** The essay should never stray from its main purpose. Different points of view can be introduced, but they should all be used for the same subject.
- **Lucidity:** The essay should be easy to read and understand. Using tough words or difficult phrases may impress a few but can confuse many others. Great writers are praised not only for their beautiful ideas but also for the simplicity of their language.

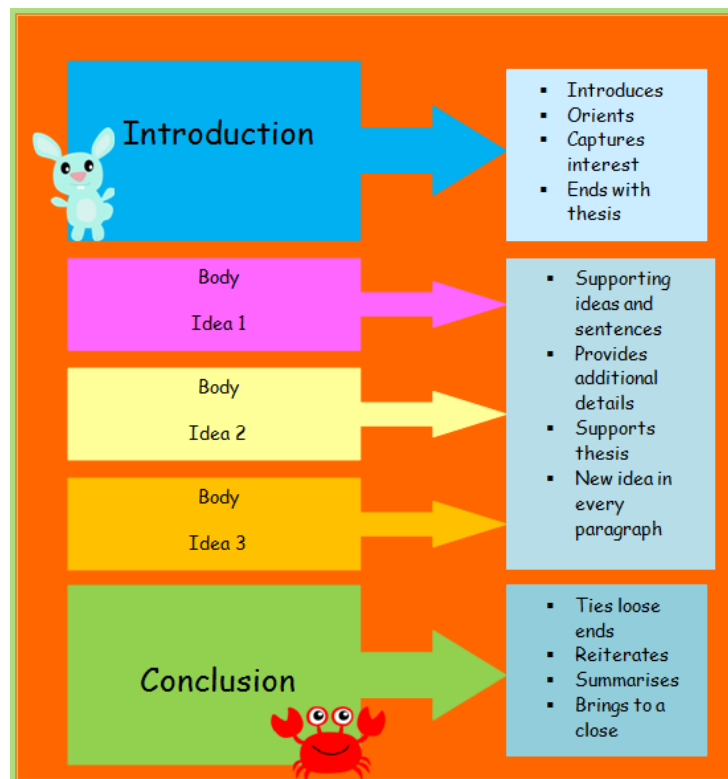
Objective of Essay Writing

Essay writing often forms a part of English written exams to test the ability of students to

- **Think critically:** Critical thinking involves understanding the task at hand and evaluating it appropriately.
- **Structure the ideas logically:** The essay has to be structured and coherent. The ideas have to neatly flow from one paragraph to the other.
- **Express views eloquently:** The student should be fluent in the language he or she is writing in. Ideas when presented shoddily may not make the right impact.

Parts of an Essay

- **Introduction:** It constitutes the opening paragraph of the essay.
 - It helps the reader get oriented with the topic.
 - It states the purpose of the essay.
 - It captures the interest of the reader.
 - It presents the general idea of the essay.
 - It often ends with the thesis or the main idea of the essay.
- **Body (Supporting Paragraphs):** They constitute the supporting sentences and ideas.
 - They provide the reader with additional details about the main idea.
 - They support the thesis of the writer.
 - There is no fixed number of supporting paragraphs.
 - Ideally, every supporting paragraph should contain a different idea.
- **Conclusion:** It constitutes the ending paragraph(s) of the essay.
 - It ties up loose ends of the paragraph.
 - It helps in reiterating or highlighting the main idea.
 - It summarises all the arguments.
 - It brings the essay to a logical close.
 - It never ends in a detail.



Example:

Introduction: - The idea is explained. <u>The main idea or thesis is stated.</u>	Terrorism: A Cataclysmic Threat We can define terrorism as the systematic use of violence and other intimidation techniques to achieve goals. Unlike wars that are fought by the government, terrorist activities are controlled entirely by rogue elements and dissenters. <u>Terrorist activities have the potential to tear the very fabric of society. It is therefore the objective of every government to monitor the growth of nefarious activities so that they be nipped in the bud.</u>
Body: Idea 1 Supports the main idea through an example.	Terrorism has been growing at an alarming rate these days. Very few nations have been saved from the onslaught of terrorist activities. They have caused a profound loss of life and property. Contrary to popular beliefs, not just the prosperous nations such as the UK and the USA but also the underdeveloped nations such as Afghanistan have faced problems related to terrorism.
Body: Idea 2 Supports the main idea through an example.	Terrorism can be categorised into various types—political terrorism, criminal terrorism, eco-terrorism and religious terrorism. Their modus operandi is the same: create fear and destruction to intimidate the government and to make it succumb to their demands. Like most institutions, there is a hierarchy in every terrorist organisation, and attacks are carried out at the behest of their kingpins.
Body: Idea 2 Supports the main idea through an example.	There is a strange dichotomy in the attitudes concerning terrorist activities. Though the nations that are affected may condemn them, the groups whose cause is taken up by these organisations laud them as freedom fighters. For example, activities by the Pakistani terrorists on the Kashmir border are seen as acts of infiltration by the Indian government. However, to the Pakistani government, these mercenaries are nothing less than national heroes.
Conclusion: <u>The main idea or thesis of the essay is reiterated.</u> - The essay is brought to a close.	No matter how big or noble the cause, terrorist activities are unethical. Nothing justifies the killing and maiming of hundreds of innocent people to further one's own goals. Governments along with law enforcement agencies should strive to eliminate terrorism. They should isolate nations that encourage terrorist activities and keep a close watch on the sources than lend financial support to them. <u>In this manner, we can uproot terrorism and rid society of it.</u>

Types of Essays

Narrative Essay: A narrative essay tells the reader a story or narrates an incident. This type of composition is addressed in detail in the chapter 'Introduction to Story Writing'.

The characteristics of narrative essays are

- They follow a chronological order.
- They may contain firsthand accounts of the narrator.
- They may use first person, second person or third person narrative techniques.
- They may contain dialogues or conversations between characters.
- They use vivid descriptions of scenes, characters and moods in the story.
- They can contain elements of suspense or twists in the conclusion.

Sample 1

The Funniest Boy

He was the funniest boy I had ever met. He would make every one laugh till they toppled over their chairs and fell. His smartness was equally famed. There was no one in the school who did not know Dean Peters. He was just like me. We played football, topped the Math class, participated in Science exhibitions and acted in the annual plays. We were both all-rounders and best friends. However, there was one more side to us which no one knew about. We were not really as good as all thought us to be. We had a little secret.

We loved to play pranks on others. It was like a science for us. We planned, we experimented and finally we implemented. We were so good at what we did that no one ever suspected us of the action. The entire school was left baffled every time we pulled off a prank as the prankster would never be caught. On one such occasion, all the teachers found their attendance registers missing. All the children cheered with joy when the news reached them. Some of them even ran off home as they knew that they could not be marked absent without the registers.

The entire school was searched but to no avail. This trick worked well till our very own friend Jay told the teachers that he heard us speaking about the registers. We were caught and asked to confess. We finally accepted our mischief and apologised for the same. We were forgiven but not before completing the punishment of scrubbing all the trophies in the entire school.

Our mischief was pardoned taking into consideration our academic performance. That is when we realised that being smart did not give us the right to play pranks on others and that every action had a consequence. We surely improved our mistakes, but our qualities remain intact. We are still the most famous pair in the school and take part in every activity as before.