**What is an essay?**

**An essay is a concise piece of nonfiction writing that aims to either inform the reader about a topic or argue a particular perspective.** It can either be formal or informal in nature. Most academic essays are highly formal, whereas informal essays are commonly found in journal entries, social media, or even blog posts.

As we can see from this essay definition, the beauty of essays lies in their versatility. From the exploration of complex scientific concepts to the history and evolution of everyday objects, they can cover a vast range of topics.

How long is an essay?

**The length of an essay can vary from a few hundred to several thousand words but typically falls between 500–5,000 words.** However, there are exceptions to this norm, such as Joan Didion and David Sedaris who have written entire books of essays.

Let’s take a look at the different types of essays and their lengths with the help of the following table:

| **Type of essay** | **Essay length** | **Level** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| One-paragraph essay | 100–300 words | Elementary school, middle school, high school |
| Three-paragraph essay | 500–700 words | College admission |
| Five-paragraph essay | 800–1,500 | Undergraduate school |
| Extended essay | 1,500–5,000 | Undergraduate and graduate school |

How many paragraphs are in an essay?

**Typically, an essay has five paragraphs: an introduction, a conclusion, and three body paragraphs. However, there is no set rule about the number of paragraphs in an essay.**

The number of paragraphs can vary depending on the type and scope of your essay. An expository or argumentative essay may require more body paragraphs to include all the necessary information, whereas a narrative essay may need fewer.

**Structure of an essay**

To enhance the coherence and readability of your essay, it’s important to follow certain rules regarding the structure. Take a look:

**1. Arrange your information** from the most simple to the most complex bits. You can start the body paragraph off with a general statement and then move on to specifics.

**2. Provide the necessary background information** at the beginning of your essay to give the reader the context behind your thesis statement.

**3. Select topic statements** that provide value, more information, or evidence for your thesis statement.

There are also various essay structures, such as the compare and contrast structure, chronological structure, problem method solution structure, and signposting structure that you can follow to create an organized and impactful essay.

**Parts of an essay**

An impactful, well-structured essay comes down to three important parts: the introduction, body, and conclusion.

**1. The introduction** sets the stage for your essay and is typically a long paragraph. It should grab the reader’s attention and give them a clear idea of what your essay will be about.

**2. The body** is where you dive deeper into your topic and present your arguments and evidence. It usually consists of two paragraphs, but this can vary depending on the type of essay you’re writing.

**3. The conclusion** brings your essay to a close and is typically one paragraph long. It should summarize the main points of the essay and leave the reader with something to think about.

The length of your paragraphs can vary depending on the type of essay you’re writing. So, make sure you take the time to plan out your essay structure so each section flows smoothly into the next.

Introduction

When it comes to writing an essay, the introduction is a critical component that sets the tone for the entire piece. A well-crafted introduction not only grabs the reader’s attention but also provides them with a clear understanding of what the essay is all about.

Let’s take a look at how to write an attractive and informative introductory paragraph.

**1. Construct an attractive hook**

To grab the reader’s attention, an opening statement or hook is crucial. This can be achieved by incorporating a surprising statistic, a shocking fact, or an interesting anecdote into the beginning of your piece.

For example, if you’re writing an essay about water conservation you can begin your essay with, “Clean drinking water, a fundamental human need, remains out of reach for more than one billion people worldwide. It deprives them of a basic human right and jeopardizes their health and wellbeing.”

**2. Provide sufficient context or background information**

An effective introduction should begin with a brief description or background of your topic. This will help provide context and set the stage for your discussion.

For example, if you’re writing an essay about climate change, you start by describing the current state of the planet and the impact that human activity is having on it.

**3. Construct a well-rounded and comprehensive thesis statement**

A good introduction should also include the main message or thesis statement of your essay. This is the central argument that you’ll be making throughout the piece. It should be clear, concise, and ideally placed toward the end of the introduction.

By including these elements in your introduction, you’ll be setting yourself up for success in the rest of your essay.

Let’s take a look at an example.

Essay introduction example

* Hook
* Background information
* Thesis statement

The Wright Brothers’ invention of the airplane in 1903 revolutionized the way humans travel and explore the world. Prior to this invention, transportation relied on trains, boats, and cars, which limited the distance and speed of travel. However, the airplane made air travel a reality, allowing people to reach far-off destinations in mere hours. This breakthrough paved the way for modern-day air travel, transforming the world into a smaller, more connected place. In this essay, we will explore the impact of the Wright Brothers’ invention on modern-day travel, including the growth of the aviation industry, increased accessibility of air travel to the general public, and the economic and cultural benefits of air travel.

Body paragraphs

You can persuade your readers and make your thesis statement compelling by providing evidence, examples, and logical reasoning. To write a fool-proof and authoritative essay, you need to provide multiple well-structured, substantial arguments.

Let’s take a look at how this can be done:

**1. Write a topic sentence for each paragraph**

The beginning of each of your body paragraphs should contain the main arguments that you’d like to address. They should provide ground for your thesis statement and make it well-rounded. You can arrange these arguments in several formats depending on the type of essay you’re writing.

**2. Provide the supporting information**

The next point of your body paragraph should provide supporting information to back up your main argument. Depending on the type of essay, you can elaborate on your main argument with the help of relevant statistics, key information, examples, or even personal anecdotes.

**3. Analyze the supporting information**

After providing relevant details and supporting information, it is important to analyze it and link it back to your main argument.

**4. Create a smooth transition to the next paragraph**

End one body paragraph with a smooth transition to the next. There are many ways in which this can be done, but the most common way is to give a gist of your main argument along with the supporting information with transitory words such as “however” “in addition to” “therefore”.

Here’s an example of a body paragraph.

Essay body paragraph example

* Topic sentence
* Supporting information
* Analysis of the information
* Smooth transition to the next paragraph

The Wright Brothers’ invention of the airplane revolutionized air travel. They achieved the first-ever successful powered flight with the Wright Flyer in 1903, after years of conducting experiments and studying flight principles. Despite their first flight lasting only 12 seconds, it was a significant milestone that paved the way for modern aviation. The Wright Brothers’ success can be attributed to their systematic approach to problem-solving, which included numerous experiments with gliders, the development of a wind tunnel to test their designs, and meticulous analysis and recording of their results. Their dedication and ingenuity forever changed the way we travel, making modern aviation possible.

Conclusion

A powerful concluding statement separates a good essay from a brilliant one. To create a powerful conclusion, you need to start with a strong foundation.

Let’s take a look at how to construct an impactful concluding statement.

**1. Restructure your thesis statement**

To conclude your essay effectively, don’t just restate your thesis statement. Instead, use what you’ve learned throughout your essay and modify your thesis statement accordingly. This will help you create a conclusion that ties together all of the arguments you’ve presented.

**2. Summarize the main points of your essay**

The next point of your conclusion consists of a summary of the main arguments of your essay. It is crucial to effectively summarize the gist of your essay into one, well-structured paragraph.

**3. Create a lasting impression with your concluding statement**

Conclude your essay by including a key takeaway, or a powerful statement that creates a lasting impression on the reader. This can include the broader implications or consequences of your essay topic.

Here’s an example of a concluding paragraph.

Essay conclusion example

* Restated thesis statement
* Summary of the main points
* Broader implications of the thesis statement

The Wright Brothers’ invention of the airplane forever changed history by paving the way for modern aviation and countless aerospace advancements. Their persistence, innovation, and dedication to problem-solving led to the first successful powered flight in 1903, sparking a revolution in transportation that transformed the world. Today, air travel remains an integral part of our globalized society, highlighting the undeniable impact of the Wright Brothers’ contribution to human civilization.

**Types of essays**

Most essays are derived from the combination or variation of these four main types of essays. let’s take a closer look at these types.

**1. Narrative essay**

A narrative essay is a type of writing that involves telling a story, often based on personal experiences. It is a form of creative nonfiction that allows you to use storytelling techniques to convey a message or a theme.

**2. Descriptive essay**

A descriptive essay aims to provide an immersive experience for the reader by using sensory descriptors. Unlike a narrative essay, which tells a story, a descriptive essay has a narrower scope and focuses on one particular aspect of a story.

**3. Argumentative essays**

An argumentative essay is a type of essay that aims to persuade the reader to adopt a particular stance based on factual evidence and is one of the most common forms of college essays.

**4. Expository essays**

An expository essay is a common format used in school and college exams to assess your understanding of a specific topic. The purpose of an expository essay is to present and explore a topic thoroughly without taking any particular stance or expressing personal opinions.