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ԵՎ ՍՊՈՐՏԻ ՆԱԽԱՐԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ



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Թեմա՝ « Էսսեն՝ որպես մանկավարժական գործիք»

Կատարող՝ Անուշ Սարգսյան

Ղեկավար՝ Օհաննա Ավետիսյան

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The Origin of The Essay

Essay Definition

Poet Donald Hall once said. " The best writing is like the letter O. But the writer only writes the letter C. It is the reader who fills the gap with his or her own experience."

The word essay derives from the French infinitive *essayer*, "to try" or "to attempt". In English essay first meant "a trial" or "an attempt", and this is still an alternative meaning. The Frenchman *Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592)* was the first author to describe his work as essays; he used the term to characterize these as "attempts" to put his thoughts into writing, and his essays grew out of his commonplacing. Inspired in particular by the works of Plutarch, a translation of whose *Ceuvres Morales (Moral works)* into French had just been published by *Jacques Amyot*, *Montaigne* began to compose his essays in 1572; the first edition, entitled *Essais*, was published in two volumes in 1580. For the rest of his life, he continued revising previously published essays and composing new ones. *Francis Bacon's* essays, published in book form in 1597, 1612, and 1625, were the first works in English that described themselves as essays. Ben Jonson first used the word *essayist* in English in 1609, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

An essay has been defined in a variety of ways. One definition is a "prose composition with a focused subject of discussion" or a "long, systematic discourse". It is difficult to define the genre into which essays fall. *Aldous Huxley (1932)*, a leading essayist, gives guidance on the subject. He notes that "the essay is a literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything", and adds that "by tradition, almost by definition, the essay is a short piece". Furthermore, Huxley argues that "essays belong to a literary species whose extreme variability can be studied most effectively within a three-poled frame of reference". These three poles (or worlds in which the essay may exist) are:

- The personal and the autobiographical: The essayists that feel most comfortable in this pole "write fragments of reflective autobiography and look at the world through the keyhole of anecdote and description".
- The objective, the factual, and the concrete particular: The essayists that write from this pole "do not speak directly of themselves, but turn their attention outward to some literary or scientific or political theme. Their art consists of setting forth, passing judgment upon, and drawing general conclusions from the relevant data".

- The abstract-universal: In this pole "we find those essayists who do their work in the world of high abstractions", who are never personal and who seldom mention the particular facts of experience

Huxley adds that the most satisfying essays "...make the best not of one, not of two, but of all the three worlds in which it is possible for the essay to exist."

The Shape of the Essay

For many of today's students, an essay is five to seven paragraphs of prose writing that explains or persuades. The actual length of the body of the essay is not particularly relevant. What is important is that students understand the general overview of the essay. Some essays are quite long, others short. Some are written in a formal tone, others conversationally. Whatever the length or the level of formality, the standard English composition consists of a beginning or introduction, a middle or body, and an end, or conclusion. According to Jock Mackenzie(2007:7)

Introduction/Beginning

As science fiction writer William Tenn used to say, "The beginning shouts." Though "shouts" is maybe not exactly the word your instructor is thinking of when she assigns your paper, the point is that the beginning calls attention to your topic. It introduces the reader to the importance of the issue at hand and often signals how the essay will be organized.

The Introduction usually contains your thesis, or main idea. Note that the thesis is not your topic, but rather the position you take on your topic. For example, you may be writing a paper about Cooper Building Materials Company. That company is your topic or subject. But a thesis in this case might be that the "Cooper Building Materials Company failed because it did not adapt quickly enough to changing technology" or "Cooper Building Materials Company needs to establish an online database of suppliers if it is to continue to grow." Both of these possibilities say something about the topic. The position you take on your topic is the thesis.

Remember that in the drafting stage of writing, your thesis is a provisional, or working thesis, which means that as you write, think, and write some more about your topic, you may modify or even change your mind about your main idea a number of times.

Often the introduction/beginning starts out with a general statement about the topic and then becomes more and more specific until it reaches a thesis statement and signals the organization of the essay.

Body/Middle

This is the part of the essay that develops and supports the thesis statement. The body is always, and often by far, the longest section in the essay. It calls for the writer to make a good case for the thesis by thoroughly developing the thesis' main supporting claims. Each supporting claim therefore should be followed by sufficient reasons and evidence.

Reasons function in at least two ways: They support the main claim, and also explain to your audience why you selected a particular, quote, or comparison as supporting evidence. Forms of evidence also include examples, facts, statistics, contrasts, analysis, definitions, descriptions of processes, etc.

Conclusion/End

Nobody wants to read an essay that ends abruptly or without a sense of closure. The conclusion/end provides that sense of closure by restating the thesis statement and the essay's main points. The conclusion reminds the reader why the topic is important and relevant, and may even suggest, without going into detail or introducing new ideas, areas for further discussion about the topic.

A good strategy to create closure at the end of your essay is to recall your beginning:

If the beginning shouts, the ending echoes. An example from the same developmental psychology paper: Do these theories hold up? Not for our two sample families. Models that assume all families are white, middle-class, Judeo-Christian, two-parent families fail to take into account both our increasingly diverse society and the importance of examining the beginning assumptions of any model or theory. Combining the older models of human development may begin to serve new circumstances.

The Essay as a Pedagogical Tool

In recent times, essays have become a major part of a formal education. Secondary students are taught structured essay formats to improve their writing skills, and essays are often used by universities in selecting applicants. In both secondary and tertiary education, essays are used to judge the mastery and comprehension of material. Students are asked to explain, comment on, or assess a topic of study in the form of an essay. Academic essays are usually more formal than literary ones. They may still allow the presentation of the writer's own views, but this is done in a logical and factual manner, with the use of the first person often discouraged.

Producing the essay

Formulating a coherent and logical argument takes time and thought. To produce an essay you will need to write a number of drafts – more than two. Professional writers understand the necessity of drafting. Your first draft is unlikely to persuade your reader as to the logic of your argument. This is because you are still writing to work out what you think about a subject. Give yourself plenty of time to plan, draft, redraft, revise and edit your work. Between your first thoughts on a topic and the finished essay is a lengthy and interesting process of:

- conducting research, analysing, engaging with, synthesising and arranging information;
- ‘trying on’ (and kicking off) propositions and ideas;
- writing and refining your thesis statement and topic sentences;
- selecting examples and illustrations;
- playing with paragraph order; and
- using transitions to make the relationship between ideas clear.

Editing and proofreading at the sentence level comes later. The more complete and thorough this process is, the better the end product – our final version – will be.

Academic essays

Longer academic essays (often with a word limit of between 2,000 to 5,000 words) are often more discursive. They sometimes begin with a short summary analysis of what has previously been written on a topic, which is often called a literature review. Longer essays may also contain an introductory page in which words and phrases from the title are tightly defined.

Most academic institutions will require that all substantial facts, quotations, and other supporting material used in an essay be referenced in a bibliography at the end of the text. This scholarly convention allows others (whether teachers or fellow scholars) to understand the basis of the facts and quotations used to support the essay's argument, and thereby help to evaluate to what extent the argument is supported by evidence, and to evaluate the quality of that evidence. The academic essay tests the student's ability to present their thoughts in an organised way and tests their intellectual capabilities. Some types of essays are:

Descriptive essays

The aim of descriptive essays is to provide a vivid picture of a person, location, object, event, or debate. It will offer details that will enable the reader to imagine the item described.

An expository essay

It requires extensive research on an idea or issue. The writer must present an evaluation of the issue and the conclusion based on his or her findings.

One of the functions of this essay format is to learn how to conduct a research. Research requires a certain set of skills. It takes a lot of practice to obtain them. Students may want to draw from their own experiences when discussing certain issues they write about. But through expository essay writing, students will find out, that doing research can be rewarding. Expository essay writing brings a new light to an aspect or idea they probably would not have come to on their own.

Expository essays are opinion based essays, so there are no wrong answers when presenting it. However, expect this essay type to be at least 5 paragraphs in length.

Narrative essays

The aim of a narrative essay is to describe a course of events from a subjective vantage point, and may be written in first-person present or first person past tense. Though not always chronological, narrative essays do follow the development of a person through a series of

experiences and reflections. The focus of the essay is often to more clearly identify the point of view of the narrator, and to express common features of subjectivity.

Compare and contrast essays

The aim of a compare and contrast essay is to develop the relationship between two or more things. Generally, the goal is to show that superficial differences or similarities are inadequate, and that closer examination reveals their unobvious, yet significant, relations or differences.

Persuasive essays

In a persuasive essay, the writer tries to persuade the reader to accept an idea or agree with an opinion. The writer's purpose is to convince the reader that her or his point of view is a reasonable one. The persuasive essay should be written in a style that grabs and holds the reader's attention, and the writer's opinion should be backed up by strong supporting details.

Argumentative essays

Most academic essays require to present an argument through reasoning and the use of evidence. In the process of planning and drafting an essay, we need to respond to the assigned question by thinking, reading and writing our way to a considered position/stance, or thesis statement. The thesis statement is expressed as one or two sentences in the introductory paragraph of an essay, and supported in the body of the essay by a series of topic sentences, one in each paragraph. Each topic sentence is in turn supported by evidence and examples from our readings and research, reflection, observation and analysis. An essay should connect our thesis/focus statement and the major points we make to support it (topic sentences). It should also connect the topic sentences with the evidence and examples we use to develop and illustrate them. Failing to provide an adequate, workable thesis/focus statement or failing to support it or 'stick to it' are two of the more common mistakes made by undergraduate essay writers.

Argumentative essays are most often used to address controversial issues - i.e. serious issue over which there is some evident disagreement. An argument is a position combined with its supporting reasons. Argumentative papers thus set out a main claim and then provide reasons for thinking that the claim is true.

How to Teach Essay

According to Andrei Zakhareuski (2018) *Being a teacher, we perfectly understand what skills our students should get in order to become successful.*

Their college life is impossible to imagine without paper work, and that is why it is very important for them to know how to write an essay, an assignment, a dissertation, a composition, etc. So, our task as a teacher is to *tell them how to write an essay write and be able to express their thoughts clearly.* How to do that? What aspects to pay attention to in order our students could become the best essay writers?

The Basic Principles of an Essay

1. Topic

It is obvious, that the very first thing your students should think of before writing an essay is its topic. Remember, that an essay is not only about writing skills, but it demonstrates the ability of your students to research as well. So, your task is to teach them to research. That is why try to reject the chosen topics if they are too easy for a student, and you see that it will not take much time to write such an essay.

An essay is not an essay without any research. Explain your students, that it is always better for them to choose a topic they understand well and have an opportunity to make a research on. Good research capability is important for every student to get, that is why do not forget practicing different research tactics with them: tell in details about the methods they can use to find all the information needed, how to use this info wisely, and what are the best ways to distinguish the important facts.

2. Purpose

Informative and well-styled essays are impossible to write without a purpose. An essay can not be just a piece of writing about general things everybody knows and understands perfectly. So, teach your students that they should not be in a hurry to write their essays at once they've chosen the topic. Make them decide upon the purpose of an essay.

When a student perfectly understands what he writes an essay for, it will be much easier for him to draw the outline and start writing.

3. Examples

The process of teaching is impossible without examples. For your students to understand what a good piece of writing actually is, just give them some examples of excellent essays. It may be an essay of your former student for example. When they see a sample, your students will have an idea what a good essay should look like.

Use samples to tell students about each element their essays should include. They will perfectly understand what the good introduction is, what an informative body of an essay should look like,

and how to make an appropriate conclusion. Moreover, your students will also have an opportunity to see how sentences are built, and what grammar constructions are used in an essay.

4. Outline

The last thing to do before starting to write an essay is to make its outline. Choose some topic and make a list of points your students would need to mention if they wrote an essay on it. Such a technique will give them a better understanding of what an essay is, and how it should be written. We must:

- make sure that all students perfectly understand the fact they should follow an essay outline, because it will be much easier for them to write this piece of paper.
- make it clear to them that every point of the outline should start from a new paragraph,

Moreover, the smaller these paragraphs are – the more attractive an essay will look for its readers. It is not very comfortable to read very long paragraphs, as it will be more difficult to get the point in such a way. Eventually, it will be easier for students themselves to compose shorter paragraphs of an essay.

5. Introduction

Finally, it is time to start writing an essay. And here comes its most important part that is called an introduction. As a rule, students find it very difficult to write this part of their essay, as they do not know how to start a piece of writing in order to attract readers' attention and tell them shortly about what this essay is about.

It is clear, that an essay will not be good without a proper and attractive beginning, so, your task is to explain this moment to your students. Tell them, that no one will continue reading their essays if they do not make it eye-catching and clear for a potential reader. Moreover, an essay introduction should be intriguing a bit.

Depending on the topic of an essay, students can start it with a story from their personal experience. This is a good way to grab an attention. Discuss this option with your students, listen to their suggestions. Discussions will help them learn the material better.

6. Conclusion

We have already mentioned the outline of an essay, that will help your students write the body of their essay right. Now it is high time for a conclusion, which is not less important than an introduction by the way. It is a real art to finish your writing in a way your reader would feel good and satisfied with everything he has read.

The teacher must tell his/her students how to conclude their essays appropriately, explain, that it is not good to abrupt a piece of writing, and not forget to mention, that a conclusion of their essay should contain a summary of all points they discussed in the body!

To summarize everything mentioned above, we can say that the importance of essay writing skills should not be underestimated. Such skills will help students express their thoughts clearly and write really good and even professional essays and other kinds of paper work during their

further study at colleges or universities. Be sure, they will thank you for teaching such a necessary information to them.