

B. How to write an essay

An essay is a written text about a topic or a response to a question.

The **planning stage** is very similar to that of a written report. So, analyse the topic or the question you have to answer, collect together relevant facts, references and quotations and make some notes on paper.

Write a rough plan for your essay. Order the points you want to make in your essay in a logical sequence. Make notes on what you want to say in each paragraph.

Decide on the main points you need to include in the introduction and the conclusion.

After you have written the working plan and collected the relevant information, you can start writing.

Writing an essay

Like reports, essays are divided into three parts: **Introduction, Body, Conclusion**

• Introduction

The introduction paragraph introduces the main idea of your essay. A good opening paragraph captures the interest of your reader and tells why your topic is important.

• Body (Supporting paragraphs)

The supporting paragraphs develop the main idea of your essay.

How do I write them?

List the points that develop the main idea of your essay.

Place each supporting point in its own paragraph.

Develop each supporting point with facts, details, and examples.

To connect your supporting paragraphs, you should use special linking words, which link your paragraphs together and make your essay easier to read.

Like all good paragraphs, each supporting paragraph should have a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a summary sentence.

• Conclusion/Summary paragraph (and a general conclusion if necessary)

The conclusion is the end of the essay. It is a short paragraph – about three sentences.

It often has the same idea as the Introduction, only in different words.

There are many **types of essay**. Here you will find examples of the following:

- Definition essay
- Classification essay
- Compare and Contrast essay
- Sequence essay
- Explanation essay
- Evaluation essay
- Argumentative essay (for or against)
- Argumentative essay - Expressing opinion

Definition Essay

When you are writing a definition essay, you take a term or an idea and write what it is. Often, definitions are combined with classification or other forms of organization in the essay. You need to give a careful definition of the key term before going on to discuss different types or examples.

Example question: *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.

Classification Essay

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

Example question:	<i>Write an essay discussing the three types of government in the USA.</i>
Introduction:	Give background about government in the USA.
Supporting paragraphs:	1. Define and describe federal government. 2. Define and describe state governments. 3. Define and describe local governments.
Summary paragraph:	Summarize government in the USA.

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 organise the essay by comparing each subject by category.

Example question:	<i>Write an essay comparing the weather in Britain and Italy.</i>
Introduction:	Introduce weather in Britain and Italy.
Supporting paragraphs:	1. Compare weather in spring and summer for both countries. State how they are similar or different. 2. Compare weather in fall and winter for both countries. State how they are similar or different.
Summary paragraph:	Summarize the similarities and differences.

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 organise the essay by writing about each step of the process in the order it occurs/occurred.

Example question:	<i>Write an essay outlining the main stages of a typical business transaction.</i>
Introduction:	Describe what a business transaction is.
Supporting paragraphs:	1. Describe stage 1: enquiry and reply to enquiry. 2. Describe stage 2: order and reply to order (positive or negative reply). 3. Describe stage 3: execution of order (the goods are forwarded). 4. Describe stage 4: payment.
Summary paragraph:	Summarize the main stages of a business transaction.

Explanation Essay

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

Example question:	<i>Write an essay explaining why so many Third World's people moved to Britain after World War II.</i>
Introduction:	Give background information on Britain's economic-financial situation after World War II.
Supporting paragraphs:	1. Explain first reason. 2. Explain second reason.
Summary paragraph:	Summarize the main reasons for immigration to Britain after World War II.

Evaluation Essay

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

Example question:	<i>Write an essay evaluating the importance of the President of the USA.</i>
Introduction:	Give your judgement on whether the President is important in the USA.
Supporting paragraphs:	1. Explain first criteria: defender of the Constitution. 2. Explain second criteria: Head of State and Head of Government. 3. Explain third criteria: has other powers.
Summary paragraph:	Conclude with an overall judgement about the importance of the American President.

Argumentative Essay (for or against)

Argumentative essays are most often used to address controversial issues over which there is some evident disagreement. You are expected to consider a topic from opposing points of view and give a balanced consideration of your opinion. Personal expressions such as *I believe* or *I think* should only be used in the final paragraph when you can give your opinion.

Example question:	<i>Does aid to poor countries work?</i>
Introduction:	(Sentence 1) For the last fifty years, poor countries have been receiving huge sums of money from rich donor countries. (Sentence 2) Some of this money has improved lives, while much of it has disappeared or made no difference. (Sentence 3) In this essay, I will discuss some arguments for and against foreign aid.
Supporting paragraphs:	1. Arguments for and justification 2. Arguments against and justification
Summary paragraph:	Summarize the arguments and give a balanced consideration of your opinion.

Argumentative Essay – Expressing opinion

Unlike for/against essays, essays expressing opinions ask you for your opinion, which should be clearly stated and supported by reasons.

Example question:	<i>Are computers a necessity?</i>
Introduction:	State topic and your opinion clearly.
Supporting paragraphs:	1. Viewpoint 1 and reason (In the first place,...) 2. Viewpoint 2 and reason (Furthermore,...)* 3. Give the opposing viewpoint and reasons (Nevertheless, there are those who claim that...)
Summary paragraph:	Restate your opinion, using different words (*You may include more viewpoints, and therefore more paragraphs in the main body).

WRITING AN ESSAY: USEFUL STANDARD WRITTEN PHRASES

You can use a variety of standard phrases when writing an essay.

1 INTRODUCTION		2 BODY (Supporting paragraphs)	
Describing the subject of the essay		Linking words that can help you link your paragraphs together	
	is about ... focuses on ... / will focus on ... describes ... / will describe ... deals with ... / will deal with ... outlines ... / will outline ...	For listing different points First Second Third	For counter examples However Even though On the other hand Nevertheless
		To show cause and effect Therefore Thus As a result Consequently	
Describing the aim of the essay		3 CONCLUSION	
This essay	aims to ... / intends to ...	Introducing the summary In brief ... / Overall then ... Introducing the conclusion In conclusion I can say that ... To conclude I would like to...	
The objective of this essay is to ...			
Summarising the content			
Firstly/First of all ... Secondly/then ... Thirdly... Finally ...			

Activities

1. Complete this essay with the appropriate words and phrases from the box.

the negative effects • However (x2) • In conclusion • in favour of • Second • Secondly •
A third problem is • A further point is • First of all (x2) • A third point is

Do foreign workers benefit the host country?

In many countries, foreign labour is an important part of the economy. What are some of the benefits and disadvantages for the economy of having workers from outside the country?

In many countries, foreign workers make up a large part of the labour force.

(1), there some debate about the advantages of this for the economy of the country. In this essay, I will look at some of the arguments (2) foreign labour and discuss some of (3) it can have.

There are several advantages to foreign labour. (4), foreign labour is almost always cheap. Workers and economic migrants are attracted to countries with strong economies because they can earn higher salaries than at home. This means that the host country can get a good supply of cheap labour and this will make it more competitive and increase profits. (5), foreign workers are already trained. There is no need to wait years to train them in college or on the job. This also saves a lot of money and means that projects can be completed rapidly. (6) that foreign workers are prepared to do jobs that local people do not want to do, such as work in remote areas or do dangerous or dirty jobs. These often include jobs in construction or in jobs with antisocial hours such as hotels. All of these mean that companies can provide a wide range of services at lower costs.

(7), there are also hidden costs to hiring foreign labour. (8), foreign workers may not be loyal to a company. This means they may change job often or leave the country quickly if there is a problem, such as happened recently in Libya.

(9), they may create a lack of employment opportunities among locals. Employers may not want to give locals high salaries if they can employ expatriates more cheaply. (10) that they lower wages for certain jobs. Jobs which are attractive in some countries such as construction become very low paid if they employ mostly foreign workers. These factors may cause serious problems and imbalances in the host economy, such as too many locals in the government or public sector. (11) that some expatriate labour is not really cheap, since it may be less effective or their skills may not transfer well to the new country.

(12), it is a difficult balance between finding workers at the right price and developing a strong and diversified economy with good employment opportunities for all. Countries have to decide between protecting their own workforce and creating a competitive environment for business.

2. Write essays on the following topics.

Early School Leavers

Many students do not complete their high school. Why is this and what can be done to solve this problem?

Drug Abuse

Drug abuse is becoming more and more common in many countries. What are some of the problems associated with drug abuse, and what are some of the possible solutions?