

Different Types of Essays

1. Persuasive/Argumentative essay
2. Expository essay
3. Descriptive essay
4. Narrative essay

1. Persuasive (Argumentative) Essay

The main goal of a persuasive essay is to convince your reader that your viewpoint on an issue is the correct one. In this type of essay, you will need to research the topic, evaluate your sources, choose your stance on the topic, and then present your argument to your reader. A persuasive essay usually requires quite a bit of **research** to use as **evidence** to support your stance and make a strong argument.

Your thesis statement should explain how and why the evidence you found supports your viewpoint on the topic. In the body of the essay, it is important to also present any valid counterarguments and explain with logic and evidence the reasons why they are not as convincing as your stance on the issue.

Main goal: Convince your reader that your viewpoint on an issue is the correct one.

- Requires research and evaluation of sources in order to choose and present your stance.
- Can fit well into 5-paragraph essay format.

2. Expository Essay

Keep in mind that the definition of “expository” is “intended to explain or describe something.” You will need to investigate your topic, evaluate what you have found, and then explain your findings to your reader. Your thesis statement should clearly set forth your findings to the reader.

Some common types of expository writing assignments are the compare and contrast essay and the cause and effect essay. In a compare and contrast essay, you should investigate the similarities and differences between two things (e.g., theories, time periods, people, places, etc.), evaluate them, and then present the findings to your reader. In a cause and effect essay, you should explain the reasons why certain circumstances lead to an event or a situation, in addition to predicting what will happen as a result of the situation.

Main goal: Explain your topic to your reader.

- Requires research and evaluation of sources in order to present the topic to your readers.
- Common type of expository essay: compare and contrast, cause and effect.
- Can fit well into 5-paragraph essay format.

3. Descriptive Essay

The goal of a descriptive essay is to bring your topic (e.g., person, experience, place, object, etc.) to life for your reader. The best way to accomplish this is through vivid description of the topic by evoking all of your reader's senses: touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. This type of writing is usually personal and allows for artistic freedom and lots of creativity. While a descriptive essay does not necessarily need to follow a traditional format (e.g., 5-paragraph format), be careful to present your writing in organized and logical structure.

Main goal: Bring your topic to life for your reader.

- Descriptive writing is usually personal and vivid in description of the senses.
- Allows for artistic freedom and creativity in your writing.

4. Narrative Essay

A narrative essay gives you the chance to tell a story. The story is usually a personal narrative that details an experience you've had, but it is possible also to narrate another person's experience in this type of essay. Keep in mind that the story should result in your reader gaining insight or learning a lesson based on your experience. This insight (you may think of it as "the moral of the story" or "making a point") should be present in your thesis statement.

If you've written an effective narrative essay, your reader will be able to visualize the events of your story in their minds. One good way to achieve this is by using lots of detail. While a narrative essay does not necessarily need to follow a traditional format (e.g. 5-paragraph format), be careful to present your writing in organized and logical structure.

Main goal: Tell your story to your reader in such a way that s/he can visualize the events.

- Narrative writing is usually based on a personal experience and should allow your reader to gain insight from the experience.
- Allows for artistic freedom and creativity in your writing.