

Some Guidelines for Expository Essays

- Thesis is arguable, original, and interesting, not an umbrella thesis. (An umbrella thesis is too broad and allows the writer to write about almost anything.)

- The statement of the thesis creates interest or the author uses an interest creating device.

- Thesis paragraph includes an essay map (statement of organization) which is usually three (3) sentences, one for each supporting idea. These sentences outline the argument presented in the middle paragraphs.

- The body of the essay includes three (3) supporting paragraphs; each one describes and proves an idea presented in the essay map. The structure of the essay may be different if the ideas require a different plan.

- Each body paragraph includes (usually at the beginning) a clear statement of the main idea of the paragraph using different words than were used in the essay map in the first paragraph.

- Each body paragraph uses three pieces of evidence to prove that the idea presented is true. The evidence may often be a quotation from the literature but could be a paraphrase of a section of the novel, a fact, an image, a statement of something that doesn't happen, a comment by a critic or academic, etc.

- Each piece of evidence includes a citation which clearly tells where the evidence can be found.

- Quotations do not stand alone; they are included within the sentence as a logical part of the sentence.

- Quotations of more than three typed lines should be avoided and must be in proper format:

1. Indent 10 spaces from the left margin
2. Omit starting and ending quotation marks
3. End the sentence which introduces the long quotation with a colon.

4. Each citation uses the proper format:

....end of the sentence" (27). If the citation is not from the literature under study, then the source title must be included in a list of works cited, and a shortened title must be included before the page number and separated from it with a comma:

....end of the sentence" (Weisel, 27).

- The paper avoids the use of simple and artificial transitional words like first, second, firstly, secondly, etc. Transitions should be logical connections between ideas which lead the reader comfortably from topic to topic and from evidence to evidence.

- The paper avoids the middle-school practice of telling the reader to expect a piece of evidence. (e.g. - The next fact that supports my thesis is that....) In fact, you probably should avoid all "...is that..." constructions.

- The paper avoids the use of the passive voice.

- The paper avoids the excessive use of intransitive verbs (is verbs and other verbs of

being).

- Each paragraph ends with a logical, not artificial, transition to the new idea. (e.g. - Moshe the Beadle continued to lecture the boys, but Eliezer used another approach.)

- The conclusion is not a summary of the argument or a restatement of the thesis. See "Methods of Conclusion" on the web site for suggested, alternate methods of conclusion.