

ESSAYS...The Basics:

- Essays include a topic and a thesis statement, sometimes **explicit** and other times **implicit**.
- Essays explain the thesis by supporting and describing it using examples, direct evidence, explanations, reasons, ideas and information from various sources.
- Essays are written in clear and effective paragraph. The format of an essay changes depending on the type. Typically, the “Five Paragraph Structure” is the most basic of essay forms.

**The Six Types of Essays****1. The EXPOSITORY Essay (EXPLANATION)**

This essay describes or explains a topic. For example, “How to Teach a Cat How to Play Fetch” or “Maintaining Your Robotic Arm” would be expository essays provided they follow the typical essay format.

2. The PERSUASIVE Essay (DEFEND AN ARGUMENT)

The persuasive essay must choose a side, make a case for it, consider and refute alternative arguments, and prove to the undecided reader that the opinion it presents is the best one. The essay must acknowledge the other sides and be fair to them; dismissing them completely will weaken the argument.

3. The INFORMAL/NARRATIVE Essay (RECOUNT A STORY)

A single well-told story is the basis for drawing a conclusion or making a statement of opinion in this essay. It is typically written for enjoyment and is usually more informal in its structure and language than other essay types. In an informal essay the writer is speaking directly to the reader in a conversational style. If you are writing informally, try to maintain a sense of your own personality. Do not worry about sounding academic, but avoid sloppiness.

4. The REVIEW (EVALUATE SOMETHING)

A review may be either formal or informal, depending on the context. Its goal is to evaluate a work, which implies that the reviewer's personal opinion plays a significant role in the process. However, a certain objective standard needs to be maintained and, as in a persuasive essay, assertions need to be proved.

The formality of the review will be determined by how much of the essay is analysis, how much is summary, and how much is a reaction to the work being reviewed. A more formal review will not only discuss the work on its own but also place it in context. Newspapers and popular magazines tend to review in terms of finance: is this record or film worth spending money on? Critical journals will attempt to determine whether a new novel or play has achieved something new and significant. A good review will discuss both the qualities and the importance of a given work.

5. The RESEARCH Essay (CONNECTING IDEAS)

The research essay leads you into the works of others and asks you to compare their thoughts with your own. Writing a research paper involves going to source material and connecting what you learn from it with your own ideas. You must find texts on the subject and use them to support the topic you have been given to explore. A Works Cited and Bibliography are extremely important for this essay type to avoid plagiarism.

6. The LITERARY Essay (EXPLORING LITERATURE)

In the literary essay, you are exploring the meaning and construction of a piece of literature. This task is more complicated than reviewing, though the two are similarly evaluative. In a review you are discussing the overall effect and validity of written work, while in a literary essay you are paying more attention to specifics.

A literary essay focuses on such elements as structure, character, theme, style, tone, and subtext. You are taking a piece of writing and trying to discover how and why it is put together the way it is. You must adopt a viewpoint on the work in question and show how the details of the work support your viewpoint.

A literary essay may be your own interpretation, based only on your reading of the piece, or it may be a mixture of your opinions and references to the criticism of others, much like a research paper.