



TRADITIONAL ESSAY WRITING

ESSAYS

- ✖ An essay is a short piece of writing that discusses, describes or analyzes one topic
- ✖ It can discuss a subject directly or indirectly, seriously or humorously
- ✖ It can describe personal opinions, or just report information
- ✖ An essay can be written from any perspective, but essays are most commonly written in the first person (*I*), or third person (subjects that can be substituted with the *he*, *she*, *it*, or *they* pronouns).

STEPS IN TRADITIONAL ESSAY WRITING

- ✗ Begin with a strong thesis
- ✗ Support your thesis with specific evidence
- ✗ Organize your essay connecting the evidence of introduction – conclusions – titles
- ✗ Revising and editing sentences

STEP 1. ANALYZE THE ESSAY QUESTION

- ✗ Discuss:
 - + Make observations about the subject by using facts, arguments and reasoning.
- ✗ Describe:
 - + Illustrate the topic using words.
- ✗ Show:
 - + Set forth clear position or idea.
 - + Support it with facts and reason.
- ✗ Explain:
 - + Make the essay plain and understandable
 - + Present logic, causes and reason.

BUILDING A THESIS

- ✗ General Subject: Marriage

- + Limited Subject: Honeymoon

- + Thesis: A honeymoon is perhaps the worst way to begin a marriage.

- ✗ General Subject: Sports

- + Limited Subject: Player's salaries

- + Thesis: High player's salaries are bad for the game, for the fans, and for the values our children are developing

COLLECTING SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

- ✖ College poses new pressures for many students
 - + *Heavy workload*
 - + *New people*
 - + *?*
- ✖ The first day of high school was the worst of my life
 - + *Couldn't find my first class*
 - + *Tripped and fell on the main staircase*
 - + *?*

STEP 2. ORGANIZE THE ESSAY THROUGH THE FORMAL OUTLINE

- ✕ Draft the Introduction.
- ✕ Draft the Body
 - + Body Paragraph One.
 - + Body Paragraph Two.
 - + Body Paragraph Three.
 - + Body Paragraph X...
- ✕ Draft the Conclusion

STEP 3. WRITE THE INTRODUCTION

- ✖ The writer states clearly what the essay is about and what they are trying to prove
- ✖ **Traditional essays** urge the writer to restate the essay question
- ✖ The writer has to maintain third person perspective and avoid meaningless statements such as "the essay will speak about" or "the essay is going to"
- ✖ The essay topics will be presented in the body paragraphs of your college papers

TYPES OF ESSAY INTRODUCTIONS

✕ Introductions

- a) General to narrow
- b) Starting with an opposite
- c) Stating importance of topic
- d) Incident or story
- e) Question(s)
- f) Quotation

STEP 4. WRITE THE BODY PARAGRAPHS

- ✗ The first body paragraph includes the **topic sentence, supportive evidence and a closing sentence**
- ✗ The same format applies to all body paragraphs in the college essay
- ✗ The essay may have as many body paragraphs as necessary to answer the essay question

STEP 5. WRITE THE CONCLUSION

- ✖ The writer summarizes the subject of the *traditional essay* by restating the question in a different way
- ✖ In conclusion, the writer expresses their personal opinion and conclusion about the essay question
- ✖ Essay conclusion in a **traditional essay** is a summary of the body of the essay to prove the writer's point

CONCLUDING ESSAYS

- a) Summary and final thought
- b) Question(s)
- c) Prediction
- d) Recommendation

TYPES OF ESSAYS

✗ The expository essay

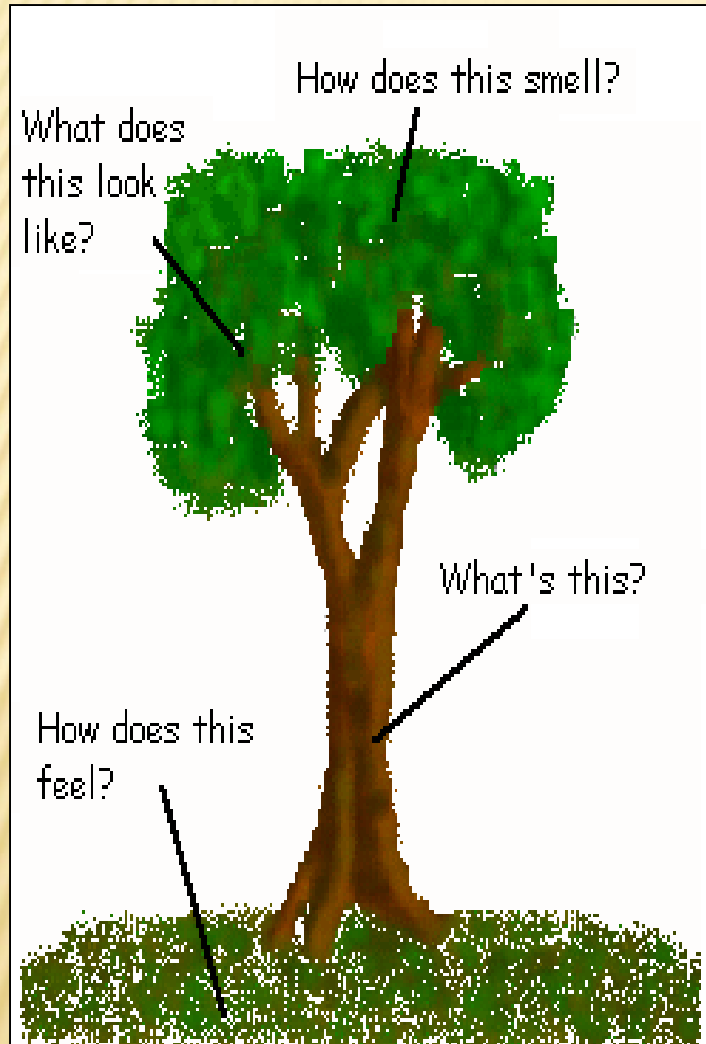
- + The key here is that you are explaining an issue, theme or idea to your intended audience

✗ The persuasive essay

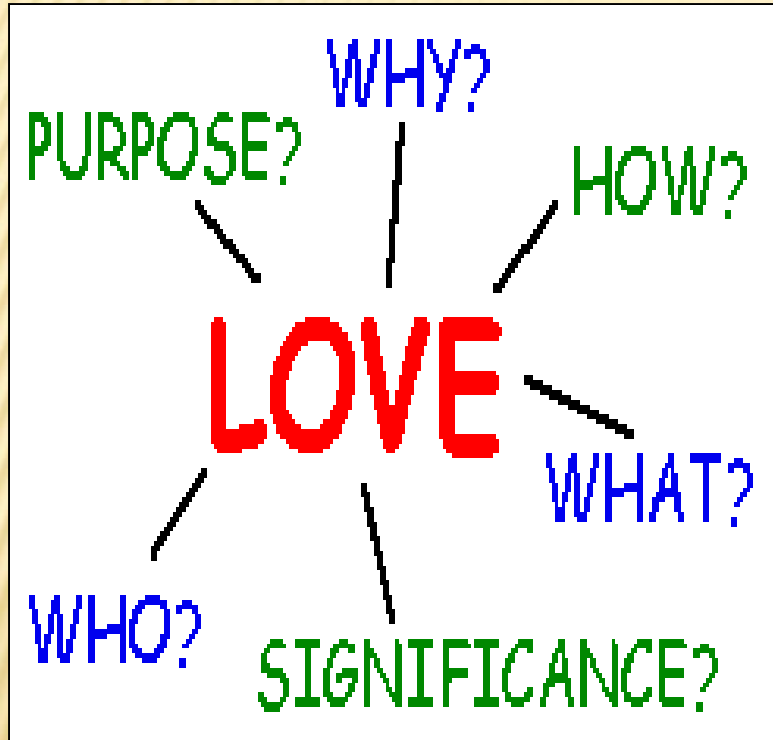
- + This is the type of essay where you try to convince the reader to adopt your position on an issue or point of view

✗ The analytical essay

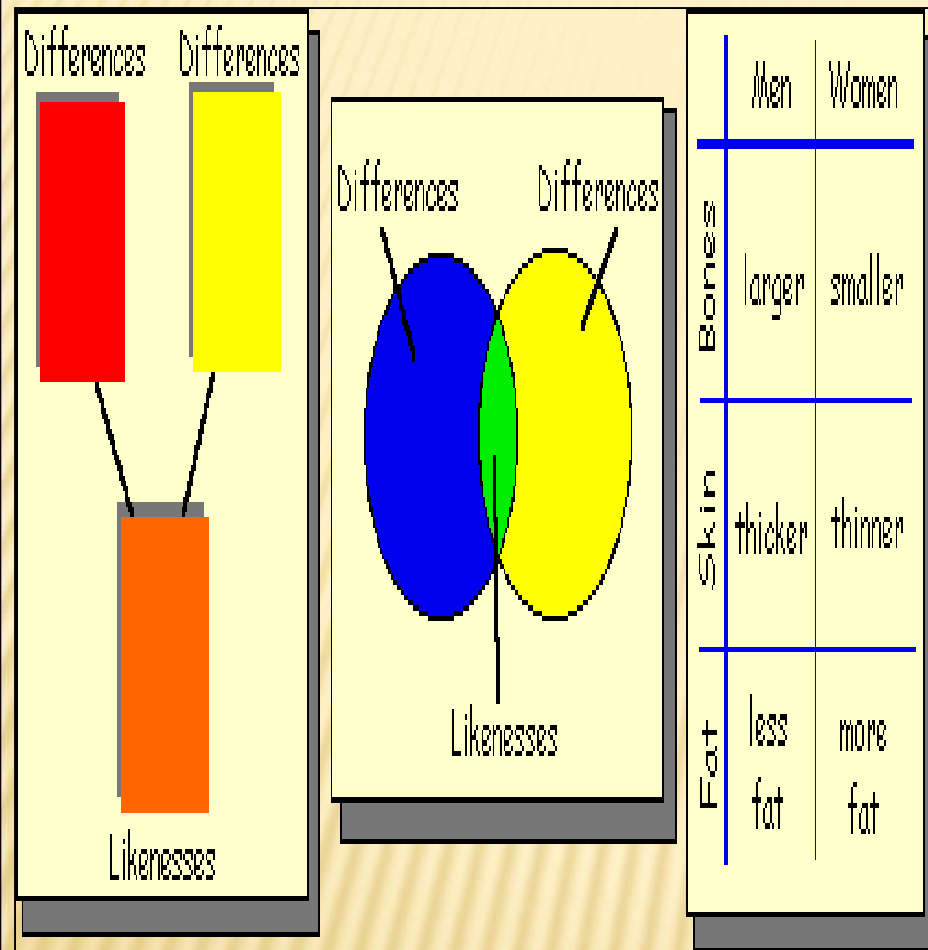
- + In this type of essay you analyze, examine and interpret such things as an event, book, poem, play or other work of art



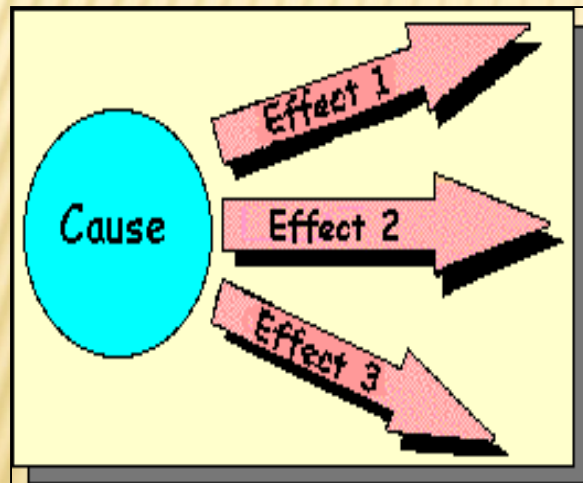
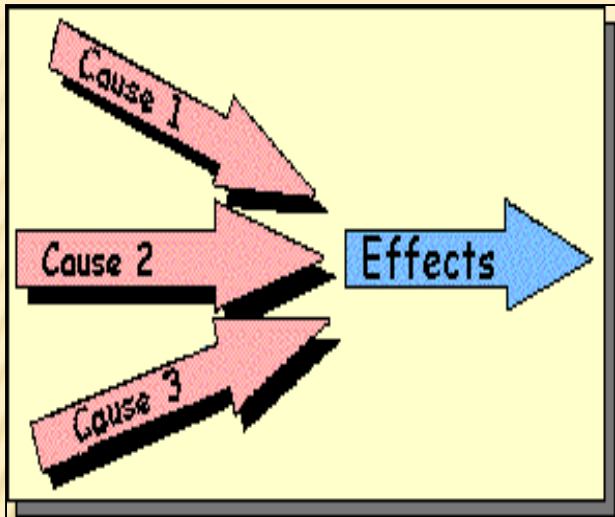
- ✖ The **descriptive essay** provides details about how something looks, feels, tastes, smells, makes one feel, or sounds
- ✖ It can also describe what something is, or how something happened
- ✖ These essays generally use a lot of sensory details.



- ✗ A **definition essay** attempts to define a specific term
- ✗ It could try to pin down the meaning of a specific word, or define an abstract concept
- ✗ The analysis goes deeper than a simple dictionary definition; it should attempt to explain *why* the term is defined as such
- ✗ It could define the term directly, giving no information other than the explanation of the term



- ✗ The **compare/contrast** essay discusses the similarities and differences between two things, people, concepts, places, etc.
- ✗ It could also be written simply to entertain the reader, or to arrive at an insight into human nature
- ✗ A **comparison essay** usually discusses the similarities between two things, while the **contrast essay** discusses the differences.

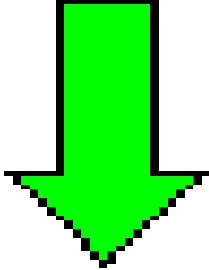


- ✗ The **cause/effect** essay explains why or how some event happened, and what resulted from the event
- ✗ This essay is a study of the relationship between two or more events or experiences
- ✗ The essay could discuss both **causes** and **effects**, or it could simply address one or the other
- ✗ A **cause essay** usually discusses the reasons why something happened
- ✗ An **effect essay** discusses what happens after a specific event or circumstance.

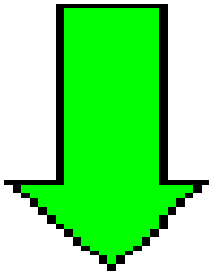
My brother always knew how to find the best fishing spots. I used to love to go fishing with him, because that's when he would tell me his secrets. He told me which fly was best for catching bass, and what time of day was ...

- ✗ The **narrative essay** tells a story. It can also be called a "short story."
- ✗ Generally the narrative essay is conversational in style, and tells of a personal experience
- ✗ It is most commonly written in the first person (uses I)
- ✗ This essay could tell of a single, life-shaping event, or simply a mundane daily experience.

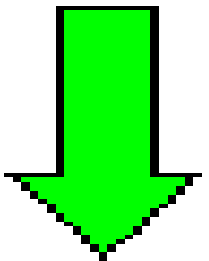
Start
Step 1



Step 2



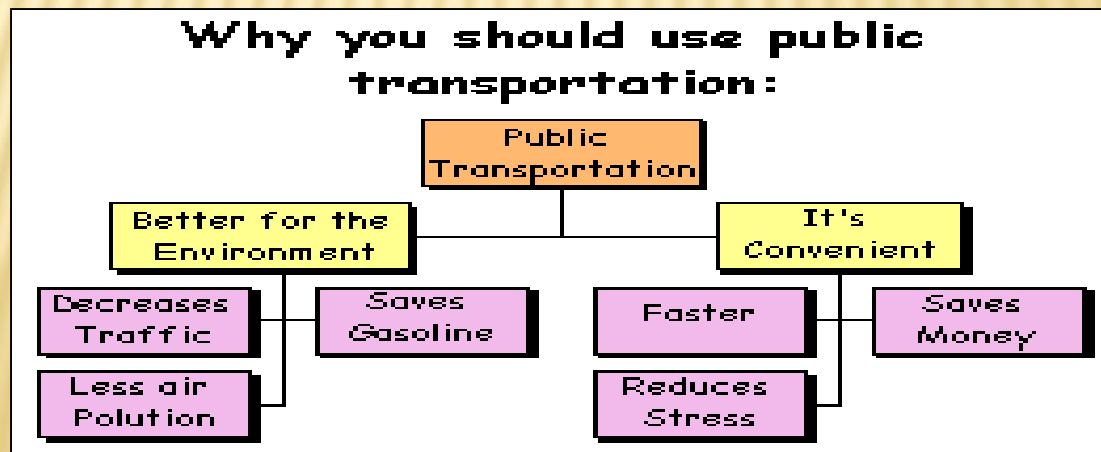
Step 3



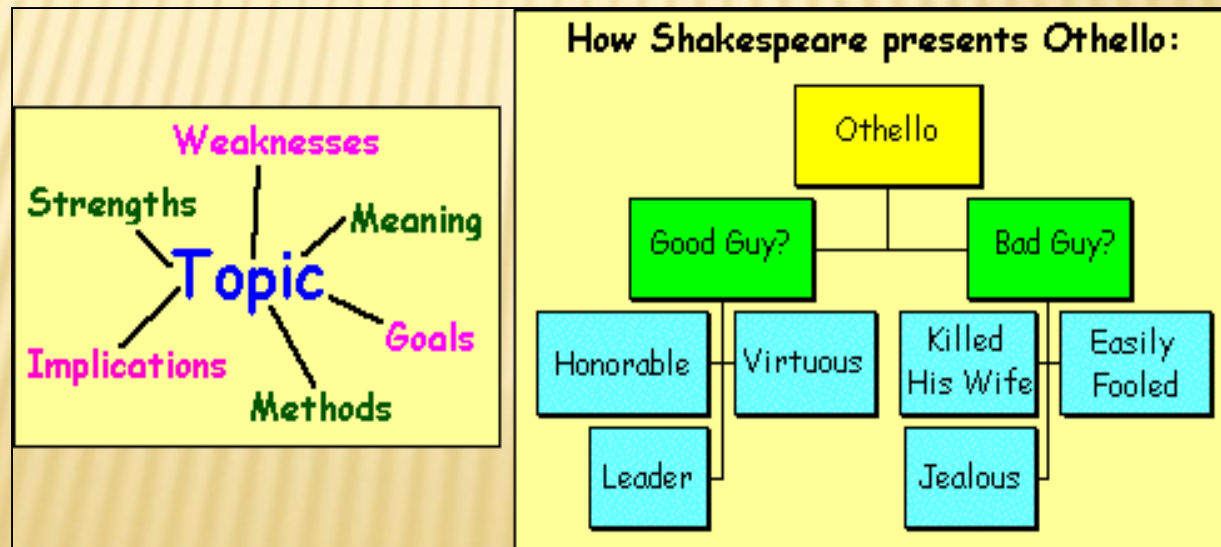
Finish

- ✗ A **process essay** describes how something is done
- ✗ It generally explains actions that should be performed in a series
- ✗ It can explain in detail how to accomplish a specific task, or it can show how an individual came to a certain personal awareness
- ✗ The essay could be in the form of step-by-step instructions, or in story form, with the instructions/explanations subtly given along the way.

- ✗ An **argumentative essay** is one that attempts to persuade the reader to the writer's point of view
- ✗ The writer can either be serious or funny, but always tries to convince the reader of the validity of his or her opinion
- ✗ The essay may argue openly, or it may attempt to subtly persuade the reader by using irony or sarcasm



- ✗ A **critical essay** analyzes the strengths, weaknesses and methods of someone else's work
- ✗ Generally these essays begin with a brief overview of the main points of the text, movie, or piece of art, followed by an analysis of the work's meaning
- ✗ It should then discuss how well the author/creator accomplishes his/her goals and makes his/her points
- ✗ A critical essay can be written about another essay, story, book, poem, movie, or work of art



BASES FOR REVISING ESSAYS

✗ Unity Base

- + Where are the sentences that are off topic, and don't support the topic sentence?
 - + Identify the sentence or sentences that should be eliminated from the paragraph in order to make it more *unified*
-
- ✗ “When I was six years old, my mother took me to an adventure movie. I enjoyed the film immensely, but when I got home I could not sleep. I still suffer from insomnia sometimes but for different reasons now. In one scene in the film, the characters entered a cave filled with snakes. Those snakes haunted my dreams for months. I can still remember how vivid they seemed to me in my sleep.”

BASES FOR REVISING ESSAYS

✖ Support Base

- + How do you create support in an essay?
 - + Revise the paragraph by providing specific supporting examples for the writer's main idea
-
- ✖ “ Good friends are harder to find than most of us think. We all have people in our lives we call "friends," but that word describes so many different things. A co-worker or someone you see regularly at your hostel might be a friend. But whom do you turn to in a crisis? Who can you call at all hours of the night? Who can you depend on through thick and thin? “

BASES FOR REVISING ESSAYS

✗ Coherence Base

- + How do you create coherence in an essay?
 - + Revise the paragraph by strengthening the organization of the supporting ideas and using transition words where appropriate
-
- ✗ “The key to being an effective researcher is perseverance. If you cannot find information about a subject the first time you try, that doesn't mean you should give up. If you want to find out about "headhunters" you should also try the term "executive recruiters." Perhaps there is a better way to conduct your search. Perhaps you are using the wrong keyword.”

BASES FOR REVISING ESSAYS

✕ Sentence Skill Base

- + As you read each sentence, you have to look at the sentence on 4 different levels:
 - i. Is the sentence unified with the main idea? (keep the main idea in mind)
 - ii. Is the sentence a transition, or a general topic statement, or specific evidence? (keep the evidence in mind)
 - iii. Is the sentence coherent with other sentences nearby? (keep the organization or structure in mind)
 - iv. Is the sentence free of grammar, spelling, punctuation and other errors?

REFERENCES

- ✕ *Lyon, E.S. 1992: Humanities graduates in the labour market.*
- ✕ *In H. Eggins (ed.), Arts Graduates, their Skills and their Employment.*
- ✕ *Knapper, C.K. and Cropley, A. 1991: Lifelong Learning and Higher Education. London: Croom Helm.*
- ✕ *Berry, R. 2004: The Research Project: How to Write It*
- ✕ *Gibaldi, J. 2004: MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (sixth edition). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.*