

Essay Writing

Semester 2 - Advanced Communication and Interpersonal Skills

(03010002HM01)

Learning Objectives

- **Define** the purpose and characteristics of academic/professional essays.
- **Outline** the essential structure (5-paragraph model).
- **Identify** effective thesis statements and topic sentences.
- **Differentiate** between formal and informal language/tone.
- **Develop** logical connections using transitions.
- **Apply** revision strategies for coherence and clarity.

Introduction to Essay Writing

An essay is a **structured mechanism** to interpret and present a clear, persuasive perspective.

Core Functions:

- **Analyze:** Break down complex topics.
- **Evaluate:** Form an informed judgment.
- **Argue:** Present a specific, supported claim (the thesis).
- **Goal:** To move beyond simply stating facts and interpret their significance.

Importance for Engineers

- **Concept Documentation:** Present design ideas clearly through structured technical proposals.
- **Grant Applications:** Write persuasive proposals that justify need, impact, and feasibility.
- **Stakeholder Communication:** Convert complex data into clear, accessible reports for non-technical audiences.
- **Critical Thinking:** Essay writing sharpens logical organization and analytical reasoning for effective problem-solving.

Essay Structure: The Introduction

A. The Introduction:

- **Hook:** Broad, engaging statement to capture attention (statistic, anecdote, question).
- **Background/Context:** Narrow the focus; provide necessary information on the topic.
- **Thesis Statement (The Core):**
 - The **last sentence** of the introduction.
 - A single, focused sentence stating the essay's **main argument or purpose**.
 - Tells the reader **what** the essay is about and **what** position you will take.

Essay Structure: Body

B. The Body Paragraphs

- Each paragraph is a self-contained unit supporting the overall thesis.
- **Topic Sentence:** First sentence; states the specific sub-argument for that paragraph.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Use facts, data, examples, quotes, or logical reasoning.
- **Analysis/Elaboration:** Explain how the evidence proves the topic sentence and why it is relevant to the main thesis.
- **Transition:** Link the current idea to the next point.

Essay Structure: Conclusion

C. The Conclusion (The Reverse Funnel)

- **Restated Thesis:** Rephrase the main argument in new words (Do NOT copy verbatim).
- **Summary of Main Points:** Briefly remind the reader of the key evidence.
- **Concluding Thought/Impact:** End with a final, broad statement about the topic's wider significance or future implications.

Organizing Ideas & Tone

Organizing Ideas Logically

- **The Outline is Mandatory:** Map the thesis, topic sentences, and supporting evidence beforehand.
- **Order Body Paragraphs:**
 - **Climactic:** Weakest argument → Strongest (Most persuasive).
 - **Chronological:** Sequence in time.
- **Coherence through Transitions:** Use transition words (*Furthermore, Conversely, Consequently*) to connect ideas seamlessly between and within paragraphs.

Using Appropriate Language and Tone

- **Tone: Formal and Objective.** Maintain a serious, unbiased approach; focus on facts.
 - *Avoid:* Slang, emotional language, excessive exclamation points.
- **Language: Precise and Clear.** Use correct technical vocabulary.
 - *Avoid:* Contractions (*don't*), First/Second Person (*I think, you should*).

Mnemonic Device – T.R.E.A.T

Letter	Meaning	Function
T	Topic Sentence	State the main point of the section
R	Reason/Rule	Provides the general principle
E	Example/Evidence	Supplies specific data, quotes, or facts
A	Analysis	Explain how evidence proves the point
T	Transition	Link the idea to next section

Essay Writing: Four Stages of Practice

Essay Prompt: Analyze the three most significant ways that using a personal laptop or computer is essential for an engineering student's academic success.

Students must complete the following four phases in order, working toward a final essay of approximately 500 words written in a formal, objective tone.

1. Brainstorming and Outline Creation - Write a single, focused **Thesis Statement** that clearly names your three reasons (your main arguments). Then, create a structured outline that includes the **Topic Sentence** for each of your three body paragraphs. *Do not write the essay yet.*

2. Writing the Guided Draft - Write the introduction (ending with your Thesis), the three body paragraphs, and the conclusion. Crucially, ensure each body paragraph follows the pattern: **Topic Sentence → Specific Technical Example/Evidence → Analysis** (explaining why the evidence leads to success).

Essay Writing: Four Stages of Practice

3. Peer Feedback Session: Swap drafts with a partner. Read their essay, focusing only on structure. **Circle** any informal language (like contractions or "I think"). Check if the **Thesis and the three Topic Sentences** are perfectly aligned. Provide concise, written feedback on the main area that needs revision (e.g., "Strengthen evidence in Body 2").

4. Editing and Final Draft Submission: Review the feedback you received. First, fix all structural issues (Thesis, Topic Sentences, Flow/Transitions). Second, edit out all informal language. Finally, check your word count and submit the fully revised and polished essay.

Learning Outcomes

- **Construct** a clear introduction with a focused thesis.
- **Organize** supporting arguments into distinct body paragraphs.
- **Draft** a cohesive conclusion that reinforces the thesis.
- **Produce** an essay with logical flow using smooth transitions.
- **Maintain** an appropriate, **objective**, and **formal tone**.
- **Critique** and revise essays based on structure and development.

THANK YOU!