

原力英语 B2 学术写作训练

学术写作类别和写作形式（二）

GENRES OF ESSAYS

The four genres of essays are common paper assignments:

Expository essays

Descriptive essays

Narrative essays

Argumentative (Persuasive) essays

NARRATIVE ESSAYS

WHAT IS A NARRATIVE ESSAY?

A narrative essay (记叙文) is a type of essay that has a single motif, or a central point, around which the whole narrative revolves. All incidents, happenings, and characters revolve around a single motif presented in the narrative.

When writing a narrative essay, one might think of it as telling a story. These essays are often anecdotal, experiential, and personal—allowing students to express themselves in a creative and, quite often, moving ways.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A NARRATIVE ESSAY AND A SHORT STORY

A narrative essay has a specific format, specific aspect to discover, and a specific motif. It revolves around that motif set by the writer prior to writing the essay.

A short story, however, is different from a narrative essay in that it does not revolve around a pre-set motif, and that it does not have a specific format. Also, a short story always leaves readers at a critical juncture with the desire to discover more. In contrast, a narrative essay ends when the readers are fully satisfied. They do not wish to read any more or do not want to discover anymore.

ELEMENTS OF A NARRATIVE ESSAY

Character

Characters are an important part of a narrative essay. Even if the essay is autobiographical in nature, the person writing the essay is a character involving some other characters who act, behave, and do like all other characters presented in stories and novels.

Theme or Motif

A narrative essay revolves around a theme or a motif. This theme or motif is presented in its thesis statement, which breaks it down into three distinct evidences. These three distinct evidences are then further elaborated through characters in body paragraphs.

Dialogue

Dialogue is used to capture the conversation between characters. In a narrative essay, dialogue is the third important element, without which the characters lose their worth and liveliness.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A NARRATIVE ESSAY

If written as a story, the essay should include all the parts of a story.

This means that you must include an introduction, plot, characters, setting, climax, and conclusion.

When would a narrative essay not be written as a story?

A good example of this is when an instructor asks a student to write a book report. Obviously, this would not necessarily follow the pattern of a story and would focus on providing an informative narrative for the reader.

The essay should have a purpose.

Make a point! Think of this as the thesis of your story. If there is no point to what you are narrating, why narrate it at all?

The essay should be written from a clear point of view.

It is quite common for narrative essays to be written from the standpoint of the author; however, this is not the sole perspective to be considered.

Creativity in narrative essays oftentimes manifests itself in the form of authorial perspective.

Use clear and concise language throughout the essay.

Much like the descriptive essay, narrative essays are effective when the language is carefully, particularly, and artfully chosen. Use specific language to evoke specific emotions and senses in the reader.

The use of the first person pronoun ‘I’ is welcomed.

Do not abuse this guideline! Though it is welcomed it is not necessary—nor should it be overused for lack of clearer diction.

FUNCTION OF NARRATIVE ESSAY

A narrative essay describes people, presents their conversation, and narrates their experiences to teach lessons to readers. In fact, it is like a story, but different in that it is weaved around a motif. A motif is given before the incidents of the essay. Readers become aware of this single theme, central idea, or motif once they go through the essay. Its major aim is to provide information about life experiences and lessons learned from those experiences.

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS

WHAT IS AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY?

The argumentative essay (议论文) is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner.

An argumentative essay is a piece of writing that takes a stance on an issue. In a good argumentative essay, a writer attempts to persuade readers to understand and support their point of view about a topic by stating their reasoning and providing evidence to back it up.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.

Clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and

conclusion.

Body paragraphs that include evidential support.

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Evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).

A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided.

3 TIPS FOR WRITING A GOOD ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

1: MAKE YOUR THESIS CRYSTAL CLEAR

The thesis is the key to your argumentative essay; if it isn't clear or readers can't find it easily, your entire essay will be weak as a result. Always make sure that your thesis statement is easy to find. The typical spot for it is the final sentence of the introduction paragraph, but if it doesn't fit in that spot for your essay, try to at least put it as the first or last sentence of a different paragraph so it stands out more.

2: SHOW WHY THE OTHER SIDE IS WEAK

When writing your essay, you may be tempted to ignore the other side of the argument and just focus on your side, but don't do this. The best argumentative essays really tear apart the other side to show why readers shouldn't believe it. Before you begin writing your essay, research what the other side believes, and what their strongest points are. Then, in your essay, be sure to mention each of these and use evidence to explain why they're incorrect/weak arguments. That'll make your essay much more effective than if you only focused on your side of the argument.

3: USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR SIDE

Remember, an essay can't be an argumentative essay if it doesn't support its argument with evidence. For every point you make, make sure you have facts to back it up. Some examples are previous studies done on the topic, surveys of large groups of people, data points, etc. There should be lots of numbers in your argumentative essay that support your side of the

argument. This will make your essay much stronger compared to only relying on your own opinions to support your argument.

