

Late adolescence

Topic-based essay writing

About Tab

Essay

This section explores what an essay is.

There is no *precise* definition of what an essay is because essays come in different forms depending on things such as the purpose for writing the essay, the topic of the essay, and audience for whom the essay is written.

In this module we define an essay as:

- a short, non-fiction piece of writing *that*
- uses research or information about a topic, event, issue or text *to*
- explore, analyse, evaluate or argue for or against a subject, issue or idea.

This is the definition of an essay commonly used in education.

Definitions (if cursor hovers over words):

Non-fiction:

Explore

Analyse

Evaluate

Argue

Experts

Paragraph

The Form of Essays

Essays come in many forms.

Some essays begin by stating an opinion or claiming that something is the case. The essay then supports this claim by using evidence, the opinion of experts, observations and statistics. IMAGE1

Students have the option to open up these sample essays. Essay 2 sample provided below on page 4.

Essay 1

This essay explores the arguments for using cars less. (VIEW ESSAY)

Some essays put forward the writer's personal point of view or perspective on an event or issue. This essay may make little or no use of facts, but the essay is convincing or persuasive because of *how* the writer writes about the event or issue. IMAGE2

Essay 2

This essay argues against unrealistic body images used by the media. (VIEW ESSAY)

Some essays like those found in English interpret a text and then justify this interpretation by referring to the text and its contents. IMAGE3

Essay 3

This essay interprets a text used in English. VIEW ESSAY

Some essays explore both sides of an argument, including information in support of both sides. The essay then finishes by choosing a side and explaining why this side is better. IMAGE4

Essay 4:

This essay explores both sides of an argument. VIEW ESSAY

Late adolescence

Topic-based essay writing



The Form of Essays

To summarise, essays come in many forms.

- Some essays begin by stating an opinion or claiming that something is the case. The essay then supports this claim by using evidence, the opinion of experts, observations and statistics.
- Some essays put forward the writer's often personal point of view or perspective on an event or issue. This essay may make little or no use of facts, but the essay is convincing or persuasive because of *how* the writer writes about the event or issue.
- Some essays like those found in English interpret a text and then justifies this interpretation by referring to the text and its contents.
- Some essays explore both sides of an argument, including information in support of both sides. The essay then finishes by choosing a side and explaining why this side is better.



The Form of Essays

Whatever form an essay takes,
essays usually contain:



Late adolescence Topic-based essay writing



An Introduction

This begins the essay and describes what the essay is about and its main ideas.

A Body

This is the middle part of the essay. It has a number of paragraphs that contain arguments, ideas and information that support the essay's ideas. Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence, which tells the reader the main idea of the paragraph.

A Conclusion

This sums up the essay's main points and overall point.



Read the essay displayed in the workspace. Identify the key features of the essay by dragging elements in the LIST tab onto the related part of the essay.

This essay was provided anonymously by a teenage girl.

Raising or Killing Our Teenage Girls?

Ever since I can remember, a girl's appearance and physical attire has dominated her life. Last century females would have their organs crushed and breathing limited by corsets in an attempt to make them look thinner. Should it be a surprise then that today 150,000 teenage girls die every year from Anorexia in the United States alone. So, where does this pressure to fit a certain body image come from? I think it's time to open closed doors and expose just how much pressure parents' ideas about raising girls places on our teenage girls; our daughters, our sisters, our students, and our girlfriends.

I feel passionate about this issue because I have personal experience of it. Although I've never starved myself and gone without food for days like other girls I know, I made myself throw up after eating junk food once. I felt so guilty that I had let myself 'pig out' on a meal that soon after eating it I quietly and discreetly made my way to the bathroom. After doing it I made a decision. I decided never to do it again because of how stupid it was, and how worthless it made me feel. Sure, I still look in the mirror and see that I have imperfections. I see that I don't have the preferred body shape. I have 'fat' days. I diet. It's every girl's way of thinking. But today I reflect more on why I think like I do and why I feel about my body the way I do.

Girls' obsession with how they look is embedded in their life cycle: a girl is born, she is wrapped up in pretty pink dresses, hats, stockings, lace socks, hair ribbons and any other adornment that her parents can find to doll her up and show her off. 'Isn't she pretty?' everyone says. As they grow older, out comes the make up, plastic jewelry and the earrings. Heck! Why not pierce the child's ears at 3 year's old? 'Doesn't she look so much more beautiful now with those two daggers of stainless steel stabbed through her ear lobes?'

Then comes the Barbies. Oh... the Barbies. 30 centimeters of plastic that rip and hack at girls' brains, staining their way of thinking for the next 30 years. Shoved in our faces by parents, the television and shop pamphlets, these 'toys' force girls to believe that Barbies' small waist, separated thighs, perky breasts and skeleton-like limbs are the 'ideal' female body shape. After all, barbie is 'perfect', isn't she? If she is, then I'd better skip those three meals a day for a while.

As girls move into their teenage years, the influence of teenage girls' magazines grows. The photoshopped pictures of skinny celebrities, the tips on dieting and the rules to finding a cute boy for Valentines (*Rule #1: Always wear make up!*) increases girls' anxiety about and unhealthy obsession with their bodies. Thanks mum for buying me all of those magazines to read!

With girls being raised in this environment, it is not surprising that the Anorexia Association reports that 68% of 15 year old girls are on diets and 10 out of 100 girls will experience anorexia or bulimia during their teenage years! Just as concerning is the research findings that 85% of girls who suffered Anorexia or Bulimia during their adolescent years were pressured and influenced by the media, which include television and magazines. How many diagnoses is it going to take before the media realise that constantly shoving skinny models in our girls' faces is going to affect their self-esteem and could harm them?

If we want girls to be healthy and happy, we need to make girls feel confident about themselves and their bodies. If this is to happen, then parents and the media need to pay less attention to the appearance of girls and more attention to their personality, their intelligence and their contributions to society.

LIST TAB

Essay elements

- This is the title
- This is the introduction
- This is paragraph 2
- This is a supporting point
- This is a topic sentence
- This is a supporting pint
- This is a topic sentence
- This is a conclusion
- This is an example
- This is the main topic of the essay

Late adolescence

Topic-based essay writing

ESSAY 2

This essay was provided anonymously by a teenage girl.

Raising or Killing Our Teenage Girls?

Ever since I can remember, a girl's appearance and physical attire has dominated her life. Last century females would have their organs crushed and breathing limited by corsets in an attempt to make them look thinner. Should it be a surprise then that today 150,000 teenage girls die every year from Anorexia in the United States alone. So, where does this pressure to fit a certain body image come from? I think it's time to open closed doors and expose just how much pressure parents' ideas about raising girls places on our teenage girls; our daughters, our sisters, our students, and our girlfriends.

I feel passionate about this issue because I have personal experience of it. Although I've never starved myself and gone without food for days like other girls I know, I made myself throw up after eating junk food once. I felt so guilty that I had let myself 'pig out' on a meal that soon after eating it I quietly and discreetly made my way to the bathroom. After doing it I made a decision. I decided never to do it again because of how stupid it was, and how worthless it made me feel. Sure, I still look in the mirror and see that I have imperfections. I see that I don't have the preferred body shape. I have 'fat' days. I diet. It's every girl's way of thinking. But today I reflect more on why I think like I do and why I feel about my body the way I do.

Girls' obsession with how they look is embedded in their life cycle: a girl is born, she is wrapped up in pretty pink dresses, hats, stockings, lace socks, hair ribbons and any other adornment that her parents can find to doll her up and show her off. 'Isn't she pretty?' everyone says. As they grow older, out comes the make up, plastic jewelry and the earrings. Heck! Why not pierce the child's ears at 3 year's old? 'Doesn't she look so much more beautiful now with those two daggers of stainless steel stabbed through her ear lobes?'

Then comes the Barbies. Oh... the Barbies. 30 centimeters of plastic that rip and hack at girls' brains, staining their way of thinking for the next 30 years. Shoved in our faces by parents, the television and shop pamphlets, these 'toys' force girls to believe that Barbies' small waist, separated thighs, perky breasts and skeleton-like limbs are the 'ideal' female body shape. After all, barbie is 'perfect', isn't she? If she is, then I'd better skip those three meals a day for a while.

As girls move into their teenage years, the influence of teenage girls' magazines grows. The photoshopped pictures of skinny celebrities, the tips on dieting and the rules to finding a cute boy for Valentine's Day (*Rule #1: Always wear make up!*) increases girls' anxiety about and unhealthy obsession with their bodies. Thanks mum for buying me all of those magazines to read!

With girls being raised in this environment, it is not surprising that the Anorexia Association reports that 68% of 15 year old girls are on diets and 10 out of 100 girls will experience anorexia or bulimia during their teenage years! Just as concerning is the research findings that 85% of girls who suffered Anorexia or Bulimia during their adolescent years were pressured and influenced by the media, which include television and magazines. How many diagnoses is it going to take before the media realise that constantly showing skinny models in our girls' faces is going to affect their self-esteem and could harm them?

If we want girls to be healthy and happy, we need to make girls feel confident about themselves and their bodies. If this is to happen, then parents and the media need to pay less attention to the appearance of girls and more attention to their personality, their intelligence and their contributions to society.

The title indicates the topic or the essay

Introduction paragraph. This raises the issue to be covered.

Body: Contains paragraphs that explain the writer's main point.

Conclusion: Sums up the main idea and offers a solution.

Writer chooses to use 'I' in this essay. She chooses a casual style of writing and choice of words.

This last sentence states the writer's main point. It states the essay's thesis.

The first sentence of paragraph tells the reader the topic of the paragraph.

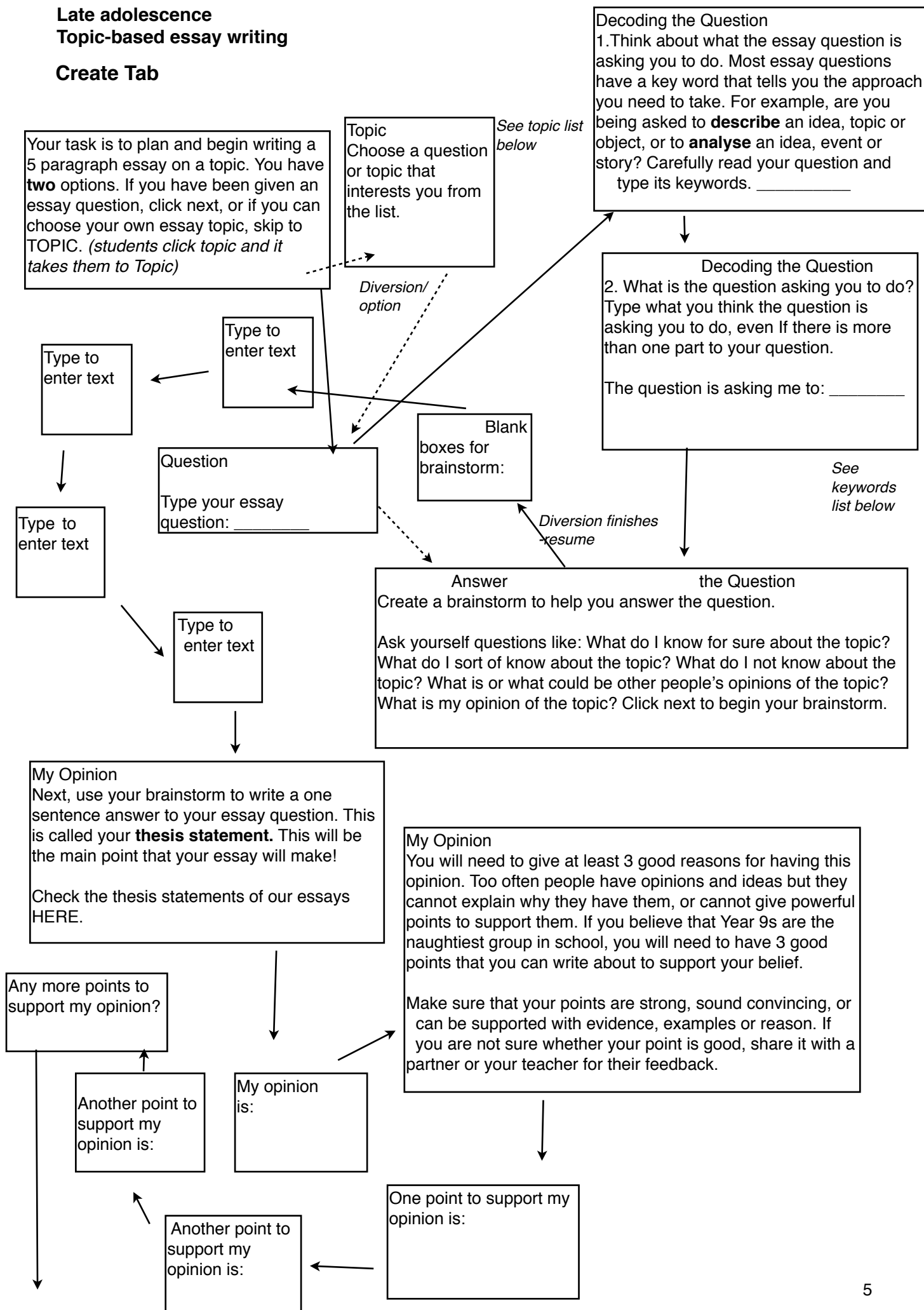
The writer chooses to describe her view of how girls are raised. She takes common events or objects and tells us how they may be harmful to girls.

The writer uses a range of writing devices - descriptive and emotive language, rhetorical questions, irony (eg. saying things you don't believe).

Refers to statistics to support her argument.

Late adolescence
Topic-based essay writing

Create Tab



Late adolescence

Topic-based essay writing



Now let's draft your essay using the following 6 parts:

- Introduction
- Paragraph 1
- Paragraph 2
- Paragraph 3
- Paragraph 4
- Conclusion



Introduction

Your introduction introduces your topic and your opinion in a short paragraph (try 4-6 sentences). Try to make your introduction engaging for your reader, although make sure it contains your main point - your reader will want to know what you are arguing or telling them.



Introduction:



Paragraph 1

Use your first paragraph to make your first point in support of your opinion. Begin this paragraph with a topic sentence, that is a short sentence that tells your reader what your paragraph is about. You can then add more sentences that explain your first point. Once you have made your point, skip to the next paragraph. You can use the sentence in the next box or those in the list to begin writing your paragraph.



I believe ____ to be the case because ____



Paragraph 2

Write down another point to support your idea and explain it. Make sure it doesn't repeat your first point.



Another reason i believe that ____



Paragraph 3

Write down another point to support your idea and explain it.



In addition to this ____



Late adolescence

Topic-based essay writing



Paragraph 4
You must now think of a point against your opinion. These are called counter-arguments because they counter, or go against, your opinion. You can ask a partner what counter-argument could be made against your opinion.

Many people disagree with this opinion.
Some people argue...

Conclusion
You have now made three points for your opinion and one point against it. Now you must conclude your essay by explaining why the points against your opinion is not as powerful or correct as your points and opinion.

However, when both sides are considered, it can be argued that...

Read and review the writing you have done.

You can add a title, make corrections, share with a partner and teacher for feedback, and share with others through the student library.

Remember to save and print.

- List**
Essay Questions/topics
- Should people use their cars less than they do now?
 - Should people make better use of public transport?
 - Should all homework be banned?
 - Children should not have computers in their bedrooms.
 - Why are Year 9s the naughtiest group in school?
 - Should magazines be banned from having unrealistic models in them?
 - Science will save the world.
 - Parents should be strict with their children.
 - Young people do not understand older people.
 - Why do so many people want to be famous?
 - Older people do not understand young people.
 - Fame is bad.
 - The goal of equality is no longer valued.
 - People shouldn't be bullied because they are different.
 - Why do people feel the need to bully others?
 - Life is wonderful.
 - Essay writing is a good skill to have.

- List**
Essay question keywords
- Compare: look for and describe the similarities and differences between two things.
 - Describe: give a detailed description or account of something.
 - Discuss: describe and examine something by argument or debate, and give your reasons for and against it.
 - Argue: Make a powerful case for, or an argument for, a belief or idea using supporting ideas or facts.
 - Evaluate: assess the worth, value or rightfulness of something.
 - Explain: describe plainly and then interpret it.
 - Interpret: explain the meaning of something
 - Justify: explain the reasons for ideas, decisions and conclusions.
 - Outline: describe the main features of a subject, object or process.
 - Review: provide an overview or survey and examination of a subject or topic.
 - Summarize: give a concise description of the main points or ideas.
 - Trace: describe the development of a topic; 'tracing its history'