

Expository Essay

Definition of Expository Essay

Expose means to uncover or lay something bare, or to discover something in a way that others know what it is. Expository is derived from [exposition](#), which is a noun of 'expose.' An expository [essay](#) is a [genre](#) of writing which tends to explain, illustrate, clarify, or explicate something in a way that it becomes clear for readers. Therefore, it could be an investigation, evaluation, or even argumentation about an idea for clarification.

Types of Expository Essay

Expository essay is further divided into five major [categories](#).

[Descriptive Essay](#): A descriptive essay describes something, some place, some experience, or some situation through sensory information.

[Process Essay](#): A process essay explains or shows a process of making or doing something.

[Comparison Essay](#): A comparison essay makes comparison and contrasts between two things.

Cause/Effect Essay: A [cause and effect essay](#) finds out the cause of something and then its effects on something else.

Problem/Solution Essay: A problem/solution essay presents a problem and its solution for readers.

Difference Between an Expository Essay and an Argumentative Essay

As is clear, an expository essay is an exposition, explanation, investigation, or illustration for the purpose of clarification, therefore, its tone is often kept neutral. However, in an [argumentative essay](#), a clear position about something is taken before the [argument](#) is presented. There is no issue of objectivity or neutrality.

Examples of Expository Essay in Literature

Example #1: *How Chinese Mothers are Superior* (by Amy Chua)

“I’m using the term ‘Chinese mother’ loosely. I know some Korean, Indian, Jamaican, Irish and Ghanaian parents who qualify too. Conversely, I know some mothers of Chinese heritage, almost always born in the West, who are not Chinese mothers, by choice or otherwise. I’m also using the term ‘Western parents’ loosely. Western parents come in all varieties. All the same, even when Western parents think they’re being strict, they usually don’t come close to being Chinese mothers. For example, my Western friends who consider themselves strict make their children practice their instruments 30 minutes every day. An hour at most. For a Chinese mother, the first hour is the easy part. It’s hours two and three that get tough.”

This is an excerpt from a comparison/[contrast](#) essay by Amy Chua, which explains how mothers are different in different cultures. This paragraph compares mothers from Chinese, Iranian, Jamaican, and Irish contexts.

Example #2: *Learning to Read* (by Malcolm X)

“It was because of my letters that I happened to stumble upon starting to acquire some kind of a homemade education.

I became increasingly frustrated at not being able to express what I wanted to convey in letters that I wrote, especially those to Mr. Elijah Muhammad. In the street, I had been the most articulate hustler out there. I had commanded attention when I said something. But now, trying to write simple English, I not only wasn’t articulate, I wasn’t even functional. How would I sound writing in [slang](#), the way I would say it, something such as, ‘Look, daddy, let me pull your coat about a cat, Elijah Muhammad — ‘

Many who today hear me somewhere in person, or on television, or those who read something I've said, will think I went to school far beyond the eighth grade. This impression is due entirely to my prison studies."

This passage has been taken from a process essay. In this essay, Malcolm X tells the process of his learning. In this paragraph, he gives full detail how he learns letters.

Example #3: *Summer Ritual* (by Ray Bradbury)

"About seven o'clock you could hear the chairs scraping from the tables, someone experimenting with a yellow-toothed piano, if you stood outside the dining-room window and listened. Matches being struck, the first dishes bubbling in the suds and tinkling on the wall racks, somewhere, faintly, a phonograph playing. And then as the evening changed the hour, at house after house on the twilight streets, under the immense oaks and elms, on shady porches, people would begin to appear, like those figures who tell good or bad weather in rain-or-shine clocks.

Uncle Bert, perhaps Grandfather, then Father, and some of the cousins; the men all coming out first into the syrupy evening, blowing smoke, leaving the wSWomen's voices behind in the cooling-warm kitchen to set their universe aright. Then the first male voices under the porch brim, the feet up, the boys fringed on the worn steps or wooden rails where sometime during the evening something, a boy or a geranium pot, would fall off."

This is an example of a passage from a descriptive essay. It has full description which tells us about sounds and colors; a type of sensory information.

Functions of an Expository Essay

The function of an expository essay is to clarify and expose things, ideas, persons, and places through description, process, comparison/contrast, or through problem solution. The objective of this type of essay is to make

readers aware of things given in the essay. It proves full and detailed information in a way that readers become knowledgeable about the topic.