

Process Essay

Definition of Process Essay

As the name suggests, this type of [essay](#) explains a process of making or breaking something. These essays are often written in chronological order, or in numerical order to show step-by-step processes. They are written in descriptive or prescriptive modes. Although it is not a technical communication, it sounds like having all the qualities of a technical document. The only difference is that it is often written in descriptive mode, while a technical document is mostly in imperative mode.

Transition in a Process Essay

As process essay provides step-by-step approach of doing something, they have typical [transition](#) words. These transition words make readers understand what has been done and what will follow next. Some of the specific transition words could be *immediately, initially, in the end, in the future, in the meanwhile, later, next, soon, eventually, finally* or *firstly, and secondly*.

Examples of Process Essay in Literature

Example #1: *Community Re-Discovered* (by Heidi Ramirez)

“In any [community](#), there are several and varying ways in which residents fulfill a sense of community: participating in intramural sports, attending farmers’ markets, walking with neighbors, attending political meetings, helping the elderly, visiting the library, and volunteering for youth groups. It’s knowing the people in these interchanges, not just being familiar with faces, that build strong community. Unfortunately, when

this basic engagement is overlooked, communities can begin to disintegrate.”

This an excerpt from a process essay by Heidi Ramirez. It sets the tone of a process how communities integrate with each other. It clearly shows the sequence of the integration process.

Example #2: *A Homemade Education* (by Malcolm X)

“I was so fascinated that I went on—I copied the dictionary’s next page. And the same experience came when I studied that. With every succeeding page, I also learned of people and places and events from history. Actually, the dictionary is like a miniature encyclopedia. Finally the dictionary’s A section had filled a whole tablet—and I went on into the B’s. That was the way I started copying what eventually became the entire dictionary. It went a lot faster after so much practice helped me to pick up handwriting speed. Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words.”

In this essay, Malcolm X has stated some of the ways through which he learned writing. He states how he “went on” copying the dictionary from one page to the next page. Some of the transition words such as “finally” and “actually” are quite obvious.

Example #3: *Perspectives on “Borders”* (by Luis Valdez)

“Let’s go back to the Popol Vuh. We’re talking about borders now. There is a border that defines the human being as a material and spiritual being. We have all learned that we’re Homo sapiens, wise monkeys. The monkey is a [symbol](#) of intelligence in the Popol Vuh, and in the classic Chinese novel Monkey. The wise monkey is a symbol for humanity. Now let me offer you another symbol for our human being—the feathered serpent. You are a

of your being. And once in awhile you get caught up in the dead skins of your life. You know biologically we go through a complete cellular change every seven to nine years. We're totally renewed. So in one sense, biologically, you crawl out of a dead skin. You evolve out of yourself. The feathers are necessary because they represent our spiritual being."

Although written in second person, this excerpt shows that the essay presents a process. It follows the same structure and same pattern of using things or doing tasks in a sequence. Specifically, the last lines show it clearly.

Function of a Process Essay

A process essay gives reader a sense of complete how-to-do process of making or creating some objects or things. Readers, after going through the essay, are able to create and make things. Although it is not like imperative instructions, it gives full details in a descriptive or prescriptive mode. It is because its major objective is not to present trite and dry instructions, but lively language to make readers read it with interest and do the act with enthusiasm.