

Introduction to Expository Writing



Writing 2101
Dr. Andrew Chater
Week 1

Exposition

- Expository Essays vs. Argumentative Essays:
- “The expository essay is a genre of essay that requires the student to investigate an idea, evaluate evidence, expound on the idea, and set forth an argument concerning that idea in a clear and concise manner. This can be accomplished through comparison and contrast, definition, example, the analysis of cause and effect, etc.” (Purdue OWL).
- “Some confusion may occur between the argumentative essay and the expository essay. These two genres are similar, but the argumentative essay differs from the expository essay in the amount of pre-writing (invention) and research involved. The argumentative essay is commonly assigned as a capstone or final project in first year writing or advanced composition courses and involves lengthy, detailed research” (Purdue OWL).
- Both Essays Contain (from Purdue OWL):
 - 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
 - Evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal)
 - A bit of creativity
 - A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided

*Which types of essays
have you written?*



Exposition

Essay	Description	Example
Argumentative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on research• Uses factual evidence• Reaches a conclusion• More opinion-oriented• For or against	Was the COVID-19 pandemic good or bad for the mental health of Canadians?
Expository	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on research• Uses factual evidence• Reaches a conclusion• More fact-oriented• More neutral	How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the mental health of Canadians?
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on feeling and experience• Can use factual evidence• Can reach a conclusion• More self-oriented• More reflective	How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact my mental health?

Can an expository essay be argumentative?

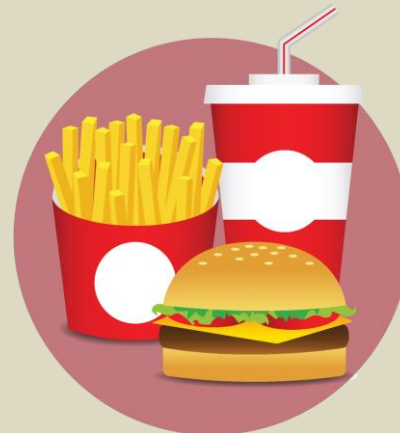
Participation

- Re-state each research question as an expository essay topic:
 - *What narrative techniques make Euphoria a great show?*
 - *Do I have extra-sensory perception?*
 - *In what ways did the government of Canada poorly respond to the Russia-Ukraine conflict?*
 - *What programs exist in the United States to alleviate student debt?*



Participation

- Create an expository essay topic based on each subject:
 - Social media
 - Online learning
 - Fast food
 - Dolly Parton



Influence

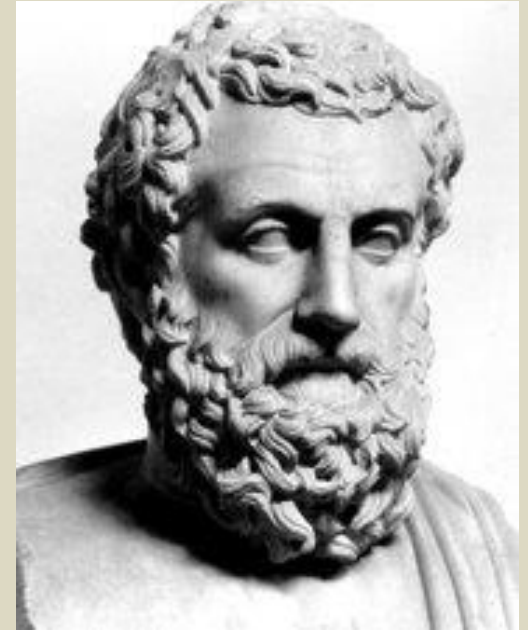
- Influence (from political scientist Andrew Heywood)
- It is the ability to influence and persuade actors of a desirable action.
- It could involve giving a reward, but it could also involve convincing an actor that a course of action is a good one.
- “Appeals to the intellect”
 - It is a good argument that makes sense to people.
- “Appeals to the passions”
 - The argument appeals to people’s emotions.
- “Appeals to self-interest”
 - The argument convinces people a given option will yield benefits.
- “Appeals to groups solidarity”
 - The argument convinces people a given option will help the group.

{in•flu•ence} v.
1. to affect the nature, development,
or condition of;

*Make an argument
about COVID-19 based
on each appeal.*

Influence

- Ethos – appealing to your own expertise, character and trustworthiness
- Pathos – appealing to the beliefs, values and emotions of your audience
- Logos – appealing to logic, evidence and reason



Aristotle (384 BCE-322 BCE)

Which will work best in university writing?

Free Speech



- John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)
 - The Harm Principle: It is only reasonable to restrict speech that causes physical harm to others.
 - “Only conflict that might do harm to others . . . is susceptible to the authority of the state or society.”
 - It is good for others to challenge your beliefs.
 - Having to reaffirm what you hold true prevents your beliefs from becoming “dead dogma.”
 - You have the opportunity to change the minds of other people (and make sure you are correct).
 - Context is important.
 - Provocative speech in a newspaper editorial is okay.
 - Provocative speech to a pitchfork-wielding crowd is probably not okay.

What type of speech can cause physical harm?

Free Speech

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982

Guarantee of Rights and Freedoms

1. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Fundamental Freedoms

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (d) freedom of association.

*What is a
reasonable
limit?*

University Essay Writing

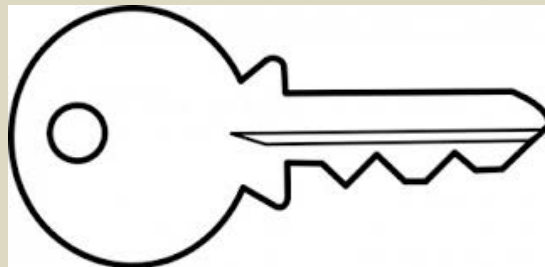
1. Communicate information clearly and persuasively
2. Make compelling arguments
3. Use the best evidence available



*When is
information
persuasive?
When are
arguments
compelling?
What is the
“best
evidence?”*

University Essay Writing

1. Be specific with arguments and evidence (who, what, when, where, why and how)
2. Consider opposing viewpoints
3. Acknowledge the complexity of issues/ideas (without retreating)
4. Write with clarity and organization
5. Document where your information comes from



*Why is documenting
your sources
important?*

Conclusion

- Barack Obama (Ezra Klein Show, June 1, 2021)
 - The best way to win an argument is to summarize your opponents argument better than they can.
 - If you aren't willing to understand someone else's argument, how can you expect them to understand yours?
 - Modern discourse: History has led us to a particular point with a particular future, and if you don't understand that, you are a opponent who needs to be vanquished
 - Older discourse: We can disagree vigorously about ideas, but at the end of the day we can respect each other and find common ground.

Other sources consulted: *The Brief Pearson Handbook*, Scribbr, Nigel Warburton's *A Very Short Introduction to Free Speech*, PBS Newshour Extra

