

# Four Different Types of Essay Writing

## 1) Descriptive Essay □ describes something

- ◇ Uses good descriptive words to paint a picture of a person, place, thing or moment.
- ◇ Often captures the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch) as well as emotion
- ◇ You want the reader to experience and feel what you do when you think of this thing
- ◇ For longer descriptive essays, pick two or three general qualities of the person, place, or thing, and write a paragraph for each, describing the quality in more detail using specific examples.
- **Important: Make sure your description has a POINT. What do you want the reader to understand about the person, place, thing, idea, moment that you are describing?**

Here are some ideas, or you can think of your own topic:

- Describe a place that is memorable for you. It could be a place where you are happy and relaxed, or one where you are excited or anxious or scared. Describe details that help create those feelings.
- Describe your favorite food or restaurant (or your least favorite); what details make it your favorite?
- Describe a person you know or one that left an impression on you.
- Remember a time when you were happy, excited, angry, or scared? What do you remember about it?

## 2) Narrative Essay □ tells a story

- ◇ It can be about something that actually happened or something you made up.
- ◇ Narratives essays usually describe the five W's: Who, What, Where, When, Why  
For example: characters (who is involved), action or plot (what happened before, during, and after the main event), setting (where and when it took place), and sometimes the motive of the characters (why something happened)
- **Important: Make sure your narrative has a POINT. What lesson did you learn from this experience? What is the moral of your story?**

Some sample narrative essay topics might include:

- Think of a time when you (were scared, first drove a car, received a gift you didn't like, got a ticket, etc.)
- What event from your childhood is the most vivid? Or a decision that you had to make? What happened?
- Tell a story about an unforgettable experience you had and how it affected you.

## 3) Analysis (or Expository) Essay □ explains something

- ◇ It explains an idea or situation and goes **deeper into the WHY**
- ◇ It may explain or define what something means or why something happened
- ◇ It may compare two or three things and explain the similarities and differences
- **You need to have a main point, and support it with facts and examples**

Some sample expository essay topics might include:

- Explain what the author meant when he said, "Be careful what you wish for" (or pick a favorite quote)
- Explain the difference between a want and a need. (Compare and contrast)
- Explain what it takes to be a good parent. Or explain what it takes to be successful.
- Describe some of the *causes and effects* of an historical event or an event that happened in your life.
- Think of something you know about pretty well (sports, job, hobby, or something else) and explain it or explain how it differs from something else.

## 4) Persuasive Essay □ tries to convince or persuade the reader about something

- ◇ It usually requires that you take a stand on some issue and explain your reasons
- ◇ It usually requires some research, though you can include personal experiences
- It has □ **a thesis statement** (your main point; your opinion stated in one sentence)
  - **arguments** (*reasons, facts, and examples*) that support and explain your opinion
  - **a conclusion** and summary of your main points

Some sample persuasive essay topics might start with:

- Do you think technology has had mostly a positive or a negative effect on society? Why?
- Human cloning is wrong. Do you agree or disagree?
- Should the legal drinking age be lowered to 18? Why or Why not?
- A cause or issue that you care about (e.g., immigration, the environmental, legal rights, treatment of animals, children's issues, equal rights, gun control – or something else you are interested in.)

## Parts of a Strong Paragraph:

### ❑ A TOPIC SENTENCE

- o It is the main point you want to make in that paragraph
- o It's usually near the beginning of the paragraph, but could be at the end of the paragraph, too.
- o Keep it short and don't go into details just yet

### ❑ SUPPORTING DETAILS and Explanations

- o Help the reader understand what you mean
  - ◇ give examples
  - ◇ explain what you mean in more detail
  - ◇ give evidence
- o Pretend the reader says to you, "I don't get it. What do you mean? Can you give me an example?"
- o Be sure to just stick to the topic of this paragraph – all of your examples should support the topic sentence of this paragraph.

### ❑ A CONCLUDING SENTENCE

- o Sum up your main point.
- o Pretend the reader says to you, "Why is this important?"
- o What did you learn or what can be learned from this?
- o This should relate to what you said in your topic sentence.

For example:

Topic Sentence ❑

Supporting Details ❑

Concluding Sentence ❑

Eating well is an important part of leading a healthy life. *This can include eating a variety of fruits and vegetables every day, and avoiding food with a lot of fat, sugars, or salt. One way to do this is to snack on an apple or banana when you are hungry, instead of chips or cookies. Eating well also means eating regularly. It's not good for you to skip breakfast and lunch and then eat a big dinner. Doing that can affect your blood sugar and make you tired or dizzy. **If you eat well, your body will have the nutrients it needs to build healthy muscles and to fight off disease.***

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Steps to writing a strong paragraph or essay: Think of POWER

- Plan** your essay: Think about what point you want to make, what examples to use
- Organize:** Think about the order in which you want to write about your ideas
- Write:** Now start writing your essay
- Edit/Evaluate:** Read it over to check that it makes sense and that you answered the question or made the point that you wanted to make
- Revise:** Correct any errors and parts that may be confusing