**Module objectives**

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| --- |
| **After successful completion of this course , students will be able to:** |
|
| * **Write well developed argumentative texts;** * **Write well developed personal stories and autobiographies;** * **Describe people, places and things meaningfully;** |
| * **argue persuasively and logically in writing;** |
| * **Evaluate written materials (e.g. articles, newspapers, books etc.);** |
| * **produce effective written texts of various purposes;** |
| * **Edit and revise different written texts;** |
| * **write well developed reports of various purposes (e.g. research, socio cultural events);** |
| * **Summarize various types of essays.** |
|  |

**Introduction**

## WHAT IS AN ESSAY?

## So far you have studied that paragraphs are groups of related sentences that develop a single main idea and all the sentences included in a paragraph,in one way or the other,deal with developing that main idea.

## Question:What is an essay for you? Can the above idea about the paragraph has any relationship with what you think about an essay? If yes,how?

## Definition:

An essay is an extended piece of writing with several paragraphs. It discusses, describes or analyses a topic directly or indirectly, seriously or humorously. It can describe personal opinions, or just report information. It begins with an introductory paragraph which includes a thesis statement that explains to the reader what the essay is about. A thesis statement for an essay is longer and more detailed than the topic sentence. It requires supporting details (paragraphs) that elaborate on the points made in the thesis statement. Essays contain at least three paragraphs: they're composed of an introductory paragraph (which includes the thesis statement), at least one supporting paragraph and a concluding paragraph that summarizes the content of the essay and reiterates the thesis statement with different phrasing. The conclusion paragraph usually revisits the points introduced in the supporting paragraphs to prove to the reader that, from the writer's point of view, the thesis statement was correct.

* **Ways of Generating Ideas**

1. Free writing: write whatever idea comes to your mind.
2. Branching: breaks into its components or parts. These component parts are the elements of the essay.
3. Brain storming: listing the main important points from what you know about the given topic.
4. Questioning: asking questions for the topic.

E.g. Dream

1. What is dream?

2. When do we dream?

3. How dream is interpreted?

4. When dream is frightening?

* **Planning Essay**

1. Selecting your topic.
2. Develop your thesis statement.
3. List and arrange your points.
4. Writing the first draft.
5. Edit your work.

* **Structure of the Essay**

1. Introduction- introduces the whole content
2. Body/ supporting paragraph/
3. Concluding paragraph: summarizing the important points of the essay

* **THE FORM OF AN ESSAY**

##### IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT THE ESSAY

* **INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH**

An introductory paragraph has certain purposes or functions and can be constructed using various methods.

* **Purposes of the Introduction**

An introductory paragraph should do three things:

1. **Attract the reader's *interest****.* Using one of the suggested methods of introduc­tion described below can help draw the reader into your paper.
2. **Present a *thesis sentence*** *—* a clear, direct statement of the central idea that you will develop in your paper. The thesis statement, like a topic sentence, should have a key word or words reflecting your attitude about the subject. For example, in the essay on the apple plant job, the key word is *dreadful.*
3. **Indicate *a plan of development****—*a preview of the major points that will support your thesis statement, listed in the order in which they will be presented. In some cases, the thesis statement and plan of development may appear in the same sentence. In some cases, also, the plan of development may be omitted.

* **The thesis statement found at the end of introductory paragraph.**
* **Approaches of Writing**

1. Deductive approach. From general to specific
2. Inductive approach. From specific to general

* **WAYS OF ARRANGING IDEAS**

1. **Emphatic order**: it is organized from the most important to the least or from the least to the most.
2. **Chronological order**: it is organized according to time order.
3. **Spatial order:** arranging or organizing ideas based on certain space. **E.g.** Bottom, top, out, in, behind, up, down, in front, before, after
4. **Size:** it is the way of arranging or organizing ideas based on quantity or size. E.g. small, big

**Writing conclusions**

The conclusion is the final paragraph in an essay. It has **three** purposes.

1. It signals the end of the essay. To do so, begin your conclusion with a clear signal, such as *To sum up, In conclusion, To conclude*.

2. It reminds your reader of your main points, which you can do in one of two ways: You can

. • summarize your main ideas.

• rewrite your thesis statement in other words.

3. It leaves your reader with your final thoughts on the topic. This is your opportunity to give a strong, effective message that your reader will remember.

### CHAPTER ONE: ARGUMENTATION

* + - 1. **INTRODUCTION**

In this kind of essay, we do not only give information but also present an argument with the PROS (supporting ideas) and CONS (opposing ideas) of an argumentative issue. We should clearly take our stand and write as if we are trying to persuade an opposing audience to adopt new beliefs or behavior. The primary objective is to persuade people to change beliefs that many of them do not want to change. Choosing an argumentative topic is not an easy task. The topic should be such that it should be narrowed down and it should contain an argument supported (with statistics, outside source citations, etc.

Sample Argumentative Essay

Skills vs. Knowledge in Education

Jonan Donaldson

Introduction

Main Idea One: The Other Side – Learning Information is needed for tests

1. Tests are the best way to compare students

b) Tests measure if you understand something

c) Not all students can have the same skills, but all can have the same knowledge

Main Idea Two: My Side 1 – Education is about understanding

1. Knowledge is limited, but imagination encircles the world (creativity)
2. Knowledge is what other people think about something, but understanding is what you think.
3. Everybody sees, hears, feels, and thinks differently, so each person will have a different understanding of the same thing.

Main Idea Three: My Side 2 – Skills are more important in the real world

1. Finding information
2. Organizing information
3. Analyzing information
4. Synthesizing information
5. Creating new information

Conclusion

Jonan Donaldson

Academic Writing

January 12th, 2010

Sample Argumentative Essay

Skills vs. Knowledge in Education

Education systems all over the world are based on the idea that students get and remember information from teachers and books. These systems test this knowledge with standardized tests which compare students to each-other. They only test the kind of information which is possible to measure in tests. The goal is gaining information, not developing skills by which to use and make information. Unlike the old style of education where people remembered things in order to pass tests and get higher scores than other students, the modern world calls for a new kind of education in which the focus is deep understanding, creativity, and information management skills.

Most education systems in the world are designed to make students remember things. One reason is that schools feel the need to compare students. They do this by giving tests. They want to be able to give grades and decide which students are smart and which are not. They function as a sorting mechanism for society. From the earliest grades, students are put on tracks that will decide their futures. Another reason schools like to make students remember things is that by doing so they will be able to test their knowledge and determine if they remember or not. They believe that if students remember things it is the same as understanding those things. Schools also like to impart knowledge because in this way, although students can have different individual skills, they can all have the same knowledge.

Einstein said “Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world” (Needle, 2007). All the knowledge in the world is useless unless you are able to use information in creative ways. Knowledge is what other people have created. Understanding is all about what you think about something. Everybody sees, hears, feels, and thinks differently. No two people in the world have the same understanding of the same thing. It is impossible to give tests on a point of view. Because of this, tests are illogical. The only reason tests exist is to label students as “smart” or “stupid.” There are many kinds of intelligence, however. One of the most famous researchers in the field of intelligence, Gardner, found at least seven different kinds of intelligence (Gardner, 1999). Intelligence and understanding are related. Unfortunately, tests only measure one type of intelligence.

In the modern world skills are more important than knowledge. If a person knows many facts, it is impressive, but not very useful. It is of much greater importance to be able to find information quickly, organize that information, analyze and understand the main ideas, put different pieces of information together (synthesize), and create new information. Together these skills make what we call information management and innovation, the skills which are most desired in the business world.

Most people in the world believe that education is about remembering things to take tests which measure one’s performance against other people who have studied the same information. However, this idea no longer matches the reality of the modern world in which knowledge is less important than creativity and deep understanding. To be successful in the age of technology, education must focus on helping students gain information management and innovation skills.

Sources Cited

Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Needle, Andrew, et al. (2007).Combining art and science in 'arts and sciences' education.*College Teaching* 55.3

**SELF-MANAGED ACTIVITY:**

**Write essays of at least three paragraphs on the following titles and give to your friend for feedback.**

* Cheating is beneficial for students.
* Stress is good for the human body.
* Polygamy is quite natural.

1. **FALLACIES IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING**

This topic discusses common logical fallacies that you may encounter in your own writing or the writing of others. The topic provides definitions, examples, and tips on avoiding these fallacies.

Most academic writing tasks require you to make an **argument**—that is, to present reasons for a particular claim or interpretation you are putting forward. You may have been told that you need to make your arguments more logical or stronger. And you may have worried that you simply aren’t a logical person or wondered what it means for an argument to be strong. Learning to make the best arguments you can is an ongoing process, but it isn’t impossible: “Being logical” is something *anyone* can do, with practice.

Each argument you make is composed of *premises* (this is a term for statements that express your reasons or evidence) that are arranged in the right way to support your *conclusion* (the main claim or interpretation you are offering). You can make your arguments stronger by:

1. **using good premises** (ones you have good reason to believe are both true and relevant to the issue at hand),
2. making sure your premises **provide good support for your conclusion** (and not some other conclusion, or no conclusion at all),
3. checking that you have **addressed the most important or relevant aspects** of the issue (that is, that your premises and conclusion focus on what is really important to the issue), and
4. **Not making claims that are so strong or sweeping that you can’t really support them**.

This topic describes some ways in which arguments often fail to do the things listed above; these failings are called fallacies. If you’re having trouble developing your argument, check to see if a fallacy is part of the problem.

**WHAT ARE FALLACIES?**

Fallacies are defects that weaken arguments. By learning to look for them in your own and others’ writing, you can strengthen your ability to evaluate the arguments you make, read, and hear. It is important to realize two things about fallacies: first, fallacious arguments are very, very common and can be quite persuasive, at least to the casual reader or listener. You can find dozens of examples of fallacious reasoning in newspapers, advertisements, and other sources. Second, it is sometimes hard to evaluate whether an argument is fallacious. An argument might be very weak, somewhat weak, somewhat strong, or very strong. An argument that has several stages or parts might have some strong sections and some weak ones. The goal of this handout, then, is not to teach you how to label arguments as fallacious or fallacy-free, but to help you look critically at your own arguments and move them away from the “weak” and toward the “strong” end of the continuum.

**So what do fallacies look like?**

For each fallacy listed, there is a definition, an example, and a tip on how to avoid committing the fallacy in your own arguments.

* 1. **Hasty generalization**

**Definition**: Making assumptions about a whole group or range of cases based on a sample that is inadequate (usually because it is atypical or too small). Stereotypes about people (“librarians are shy and smart,” “wealthy people are snobs,” etc.) are a common example of the principle underlying hasty generalization.

**Example**: “My roommate said her philosophy class was hard, and the one I’m in is hard, too. All philosophy classes must be hard!” Two people’s experiences are, in this case, not enough on which to base a conclusion.

**Tip**: Ask yourself what kind of “sample” you’re using: Are you relying on the opinions or experiences of just a few people, or your own experience in just a few situations? If so, consider whether you need more evidence, or perhaps a less sweeping conclusion. (Notice that in the example, the more modest conclusion “*Some* philosophy classes are hard for *some* students” would not be a hasty generalization.)

* 1. ***Post hoc* (also called false cause)**

This fallacy gets its name from the Latin phrase “*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*,” which translates as “after this, therefore because of this.”

**Definition**: Assuming that because B comes after A, A caused B. Of course, sometimes one event really does cause another one that comes later—for example, if I register for a class, and my name later appears on the roll, it’s true that the first event caused the one that came later. But sometimes two events that seem related in time aren’t really related as cause and event. That is, correlation isn’t the same thing as causation.

**Examples**: “President Jones raised taxes, and then the rate of violent crime went up. Jones is responsible for the rise in crime.” The increase in taxes might or might not be one factor in the rising crime rates, but the argument hasn’t shown us that one caused the other.

**Tip**: To avoid the *post hoc* fallacy, the arguer would need to give us some explanation of the process by which the tax increase is supposed to have produced higher crime rates. And that’s what you should do to avoid committing this fallacy: If you say that A causes B, you should have something more to say about how A caused B than just that A came first and B came later.

1. **Weak analogy**

**Definition**: Many arguments rely on an analogy between two or more objects, ideas, or situations. If the two things that are being compared aren’t really alike in the relevant respects, the analogy is a weak one, and the argument that relies on it commits the fallacy of weak analogy.

**Example**: “Guns are like hammers—they’re both tools with metal parts that could be used to kill someone. And yet it would be ridiculous to restrict the purchase of hammers—so restrictions on purchasing guns are equally ridiculous.” While guns and hammers do share certain features, these features (having metal parts, being tools, and being potentially useful for violence) are not the ones at stake in deciding whether to restrict guns. Rather, we restrict guns because they can easily be used to kill large numbers of people at a distance. This is a feature hammers do not share—it would be hard to kill a crowd with a hammer. Thus, the analogy is weak, and so is the argument based on it.

If you think about it, you can make an analogy of some kind between almost any two things in the world: “My paper is like a mud puddle because they both get bigger when it rains (I work more when I’m stuck inside) and they’re both kind of murky.” So the mere fact that you can draw an analogy between two things doesn’t prove much, by itself.

Arguments by analogy are often used in discussing abortion—arguers frequently compare fetuses with adult human beings, and then argue that treatment that would violate the rights of an adult human being also violates the rights of fetuses. Whether these arguments are good or not depends on the strength of the analogy: do adult humans and fetuses share the properties that give adult humans rights? If the property that matters is having a human genetic code or the potential for a life full of human experiences, adult humans and fetuses do share that property, so the argument and the analogy are strong; if the property is being self-aware, rational, or able to survive on one’s own, adult humans and fetuses don’t share it, and the analogy is weak.

**Tip**: Identify what properties are important to the claim you’re making, and see whether the two things you’re comparing both share those properties.

1. **Appeal to authority**

**Definition**: Often we add strength to our arguments by referring to respected sources or authorities and explaining their positions on the issues we’re discussing. If, however, we try to get readers to agree with us simply by impressing them with a famous name or by appealing to a supposed authority who really isn’t much of an expert, we commit the fallacy of appeal to authority.

**Example**: “We should abolish the death penalty. Many respected people, such as actor Guy Handsome, have publicly stated their opposition to it.” While Guy Handsome may be an authority on matters having to do with acting, there’s no particular reason why anyone should be moved by his political opinions—he is probably no more of an authority on the death penalty than the person writing the paper.

**Tip**: There are two easy ways to avoid committing appeal to authority: First, make sure that the authorities you cite are experts on the subject you’re discussing. Second, rather than just saying “Dr. Authority believes X, so we should believe it, too,” try to explain the reasoning or evidence that the authority used to arrive at his or her opinion. That way, your readers have more to go on than a person’s reputation. It also helps to choose authorities who are perceived as fairly neutral or reasonable, rather than people who will be perceived as biased.

1. ***Ad populum***

**Definition**: The Latin name of this fallacy means “to the people.” There are several versions of the *ad populum* fallacy, but what they all have in common is that in them, the arguer takes advantage of the desire most people have to be liked and to fit in with others and uses that desire to try to get the audience to accept his or her argument. One of the most common versions is the bandwagon fallacy, in which the arguer tries to convince the audience to do or believe something because everyone else (supposedly) does.

**Example**: “Gay marriages are just immoral. 70% of Americans think so!” While the opinion of most Americans might be relevant in determining what laws we should have, it certainly doesn’t determine what is moral or immoral: there was a time where a substantial number of Americans were in favor of segregation, but their opinion was not evidence that segregation was moral. The arguer is trying to get us to agree with the conclusion by appealing to our desire to fit in with other Americans.

**Tip**: Make sure that you aren’t recommending that your readers believe your conclusion because everyone else believes it, all the cool people believe it, people will like you better if you believe it, and so forth. Keep in mind that the popular opinion is not always the right one.

1. ***Ad hominem* and *tuquoque***

**Definitions**: Like the appeal to authority and *ad populum* fallacies, the *ad hominem* (“against the person”) and *tuquoque* (“you, too!”) fallacies focus our attention on people rather than on arguments or evidence. In both of these arguments, the conclusion is usually “You shouldn’t believe So-and-So’s argument.” The reason for not believing So-and-So is that So-and-So is either a bad person (*ad hominem*) or a hypocrite (*tuquoque*). In an *ad hominem* argument, the arguer attacks his or her opponent instead of the opponent’s argument.

**Examples**: “Andrea Dworkin has written several books arguing that pornography harms women. But Dworkin is just ugly and bitter, so why should we listen to her?” Dworkin’s appearance and character, which the arguer has characterized so ungenerously, have nothing to do with the strength of her argument, so using them as evidence is fallacious.

In a *tuquoque* argument, the arguer points out that the opponent has actually done the thing he or she is arguing against, and so the opponent’s argument shouldn’t be listened to. Here’s an example: imagine that your parents have explained to you why you shouldn’t smoke, and they’ve given a lot of good reasons—the damage to your health, the cost, and so forth. You reply, “I won’t accept your argument, because you used to smoke when you were my age. You did it, too!” The fact that your parents have done the thing they are condemning has no bearing on the premises they put forward in their argument (smoking harms your health and is very expensive), so your response is fallacious.

**Tip**: Be sure to stay focused on your opponents’ reasoning, rather than on their personal character. (The exception to this is, of course, if you are making an argument about someone’s character—if your conclusion is “President Jones is an untrustworthy person,” premises about her untrustworthy acts are relevant, not fallacious.)

1. **Appeal to pity**

**Definition**: The appeal to pity takes place when an arguer tries to get people to accept a conclusion by making them feel sorry for someone.

**Examples**: “I know the exam is graded based on performance, but you should give me an A. My cat has been sick, my car broke down, and I’ve had a cold, so it was really hard for me to study!” The conclusion here is “You should give me an A.” But the criteria for getting an A have to do with learning and applying the material from the course; the principle the arguer wants us to accept (people who have a hard week deserve A’s) is clearly unacceptable. The information the arguer has given might *feel* relevant and might even get the audience to consider the conclusion—but the information isn’t logically relevant, and so the argument is fallacious. Here’s another example: “It’s wrong to tax corporations—think of all the money they give to charity, and of the costs they already pay to run their businesses!”

**Tip**: Make sure that you aren’t simply trying to get your audience to agree with you by making them feel sorry for someone.

1. **Appeal to Ignorance**

**Definition**: In the appeal to ignorance, the arguer basically says, “Look, there’s no conclusive evidence on the issue at hand. Therefore, you should accept my conclusion on this issue.”

**Example**: “People have been trying for centuries to prove that God exists. But no one has yet been able to prove it. Therefore, God does not exist.” Here’s an opposing argument that commits the same fallacy: “People have been trying for years to prove that God does not exist. But no one has yet been able to prove it. Therefore, God exists.” In each case, the arguer tries to use the lack of evidence as support for a positive claim about the truth of a conclusion. There is one situation in which doing this is not fallacious: if qualified researchers have used well-thought-out methods to search for something for a long time, they haven’t found it, and it’s the kind of thing people ought to be able to find, then the fact that they haven’t found it constitutes some evidence that it doesn’t exist.

**Tip**: Look closely at arguments where you point out a lack of evidence and then draw a conclusion from that lack of evidence.

1. **False dichotomy**

**Definition**: In false dichotomy, the arguer sets up the situation so it looks like there are only two choices. The arguer then eliminates one of the choices, so it seems that we are left with only one option: the one the arguer wanted us to pick in the first place. But often there are really many different options, not just two—and if we thought about them all, we might not be so quick to pick the one the arguer recommends.

**Example**: “Caldwell Hall is in bad shape. Either we tear it down and put up a new building, or we continue to risk students’ safety. Obviously we shouldn’t risk anyone’s safety, so we must tear the building down.” The argument neglects to mention the possibility that we might repair the building or find some way to protect students from the risks in question—for example, if only a few rooms are in bad shape, perhaps we shouldn’t hold classes in those rooms.

**Tip**: Examine your own arguments: if you’re saying that we have to choose between just two options, is that really so? Or are there other alternatives you haven’t mentioned? If there are other alternatives, don’t just ignore them—explain why they, too, should be ruled out. Although there’s no formal name for it, assuming that there are only three options, four options, etc. when really there are more is similar to false dichotomy and should also be avoided.

1. **Begging the question**

**Definition**: A complicated fallacy; it comes in several forms and can be harder to detect than many of the other fallacies we’ve discussed. Basically, an argument that begs the question asks the reader to simply accept the conclusion without providing real evidence; the argument either relies on a premise that says the same thing as the conclusion (which you might hear referred to as “being circular” or “circular reasoning”), or simply ignores an important (but questionable) assumption that the argument rests on. Sometimes people use the phrase “beg the question” as a sort of general criticism of arguments, to mean that an arguer hasn’t given very good reasons for a conclusion, but that’s not the meaning we’re going to discuss here.

**Examples**: “Active euthanasia is morally acceptable. It is a decent, ethical thing to help another human being escape suffering through death.” Let’s lay this out in premise-conclusion form:

Premise: It is a decent, ethical thing to help another human being escape suffering through death.

Conclusion: Active euthanasia is morally acceptable.

If we “translate” the premise, we’ll see that the arguer has really just said the same thing twice: “decent, ethical” means pretty much the same thing as “morally acceptable,” and “help another human being escape suffering through death” means something pretty similar to “active euthanasia.” So the premise basically says, “active euthanasia is morally acceptable,” just like the conclusion does. The arguer hasn’t yet given us any real reasons *why* euthanasia is acceptable; instead, she has left us asking “well, really, why do you think active euthanasia is acceptable?” Her argument “begs” (that is, evades) the real question.

Here’s a second example of begging the question, in which a dubious premise which is needed to make the argument valid is completely ignored: “Murder is morally wrong. So active euthanasia is morally wrong.” The premise that gets left out is “active euthanasia is murder.” And that is a debatable premise—again, the argument “begs” or evades the question of whether active euthanasia is murder by simply not stating the premise. The arguer is hoping we’ll just focus on the uncontroversial premise, “Murder is morally wrong,” and not notice what is being assumed.

**Tip**: One way to try to avoid begging the question is to write out your premises and conclusion in a short, outline-like form. See if you notice any gaps, any steps that are required to move from one premise to the next or from the premises to the conclusion. Write down the statements that would fill those gaps. If the statements are controversial and you’ve just glossed over them, you might be begging the question. Next, check to see whether any of your premises basically says the same thing as the conclusion (but in different words). If so, you’re probably begging the question. The moral of the story: you can’t just assume or use as uncontroversial evidence the very thing you’re trying to prove.

**ACTIVITY**

**Spot which types of fallacies are in the following sentences? You can use one answer twice.**

**Appeal to pity Post hoc Weak analogy**

**Appeal to ignorance False Dichotomy Hasty generalization**

**Appeal to authority Begging the question**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_You will get pregnant if you kiss a boy. I have seen Hanna kiss boys three times, and now she is pregnant.
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_There is no proof that the secretary “leaked” the news to the papers, so she can’t have done it.
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Your honor, how can the prosecution dare try to send this poor, defenseless child to jail for the murder of his father and mother. Have a hearth; the boy is now an orphan.
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_I am a good worker because Sammy says so. How can we trust Sammy? Simple: I will promise for him.
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_A black cat crossed Joe’s path yesterday, and he died last night.
6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_My paper is like a mud pond because they both get bigger when it rains.
7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Even though it is only the first day, I can tell this is going to be a boring course.
8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_We can either stop using car or destroy the earth.
9. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_We should stop the death punishment. Many respected people, such as actor gentleman good-looking, have publicly stated their position to it.

**CHAPTER TWO: EXPOSITION**

### INTRODUCTION

**Expository essay is** an informative piece of writing that presents a balanced analysis of a topic. The writer explains or defines a topic based on facts, using statistics, comparison and contrast, examples, process, and cause and effect to the intended audience. It can also be used to give a personal response to a world event, political debate, football game, work of art and so on.

1. **Important characteristics of expository essay:**

To keep reader’s attention, you should:

* Have a well-defined thesis. Start with a thesis statement/research question/statement of intent. Make sure you answer your question or do what you say you set out to do. Do not wander from your topic.
* Provide evidence to back up what you are saying. Support your arguments with facts and reasoning. Do not simply list facts, incorporate these as examples supporting your position, but at the same time make your point as succinctly as possible.
* The essay should be concise. Make your point and conclude your essay. Don’t make the mistake of believing that repetition and over-stating your case will score points with your readers.

1. **MODEL EXPOSITORY ESSAY**

**UNDERSTANDING AND SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF ILLITERACY**

We can send a people to the moon, should not every person on earth have the ability and opportunity to read and write well? Knowing how to read and write, or being literate, is a prerequisite for succeeding in today’s technologically advanced and quickly evolving global society. Every person needs to acquire literacy in his/her early development, because reading and writing are useful skills in so many daily activities, from reading newspapers, medicine bottles, and product warning labels, to writing letters, emails, and reports. Being literate also develops the mind, imagination, and critical thinking skills. However, many people in the world are not literate, and many do not even have the opportunity to become literate in their lifetime. In fact, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the international organization that collects data for the United Nations, estimated in 2004 that 800 million people (nearly 1 in 6 people in the world) are illiterate, and more than 65% of those numbers are women. This number is increasing as well, due to the high birth rates in illiterate societies. Therefore, in order to understand more about this significant phenomenon, a few of the causes, effects, and solutions to illiteracy will be discussed.

One of the major causes of illiteracy is poverty and the subsequent lack of access to reading and writing materials. Realistically, students who would have gone on to continue their education past the 5th year sometimes quit school in order to work on the farm or in a factory in order to assist with the family income.  Also if a family is poor, food and the basic necessities of life take precedence before books can be purchased.  Related to this issue is Maslow’s theory on the hierarchy of needs. Maslow, a well-known psychologist, wrote that people deprived of basic needs, such as shelter, food, clothes, and basic safety, are less likely to develop themselves with higher education (University of Tennessee Website, 2004). In other words, economic instability can affect the ability of a population to become literate.

The effects of illiteracy often negatively impact a nation’s ability to develop its human resources. Countries with a high illiteracy rate are more likely to be disadvantaged in the global economy. If a populace is not literate, it cannot be as involved in high tech jobs. New careers in the sciences, mathematics, and technology are primarily established in countries that have literate populations. Another major effect of illiteracy is not having access to basic information that is distributed via books, newspapers, or the Internet. This type of information could include practical advice to increase the quality of life, such as how to participate in microfinance projects. In short, illiteracy does not encourage positive social change, personal growth, or the preservation and development of language and culture.

How can illiteracy be overcome? One of the best solutions to solving the stubborn problem of literacy is to teach parents to read, so that they can in turn teach their children. In a document published by the Departments of Education of Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, and others, Judith Schickendanz explains that “Children learn about written language in a … socially mediated way…. Children also learn about the functions of written language as they observe and help parents make lists, write letter to family members or friends, or read menus in a restaurant” (1999). If the adult women are educated first, each generation will be able to read and write, since mothers are the first educators of children. The women will teach their children, both male and female, who will in turn teach their children. Once more people in a society are literate, that society tends to develop further capacities, and further value literacy.

In conclusion, illiteracy has many interrelated causes and effects. In many countries literacy rates are increasing, notably in India, due to literacy campaigns (EFA, 2000). Economic development of many of these countries is also increasing in a similar fashion. Thus, one could easily argue that the increase in literacy is directly correlated with positive economic growth. In the past, education was not required, but in this day, universal education is becoming a necessity. Therefore, innovative solutions should be implemented to take advantage of this unique time in history.

**Sample Compare Contrast Essay**

**Two Restaurants**

Have you eaten at Linda’s Restaurant lately? If you haven’t, you have missed all the great improvements that she has added to her beautiful and inviting restaurant. I used to be a regular customer at José’s Restaurant down the corner. But after discovering all of the new secrets at Linda’s, I said: *No way José!* The more affordable prices, the great service, and the improved facilities are some of the reasons why I prefer Linda’s restaurant over José’s.

First of all, you feel more relaxed eating at Linda’s because of the reasonable prices. For example, salads cost $3.50 and sandwiches are at a low $4.00. On the other hand, both of these items cost $4.50 at Jose’s Restaurant. At Linda’s, you can eat soup for just $3.00, but you have to pay $3.50 at José’s for the same soup. Last but not least, drinks and desserts cost $1.50 and $2.00 at Linda’s, whereas at Jose’s they go up to $2.00 and $3.00 respectively.

In addition to the lower prices, Linda’s Restaurant offers a better service. For instance, it opens from 7 a.m to 9 p.m. giving its customers two extra hours that they cannot have at José’s. Although both restaurants have a convenient drive-in service, Linda has added a home delivery service to satisfy her customers at their homes. During rush hours, Linda has three cashiers working to speed up the line but José has only two, which usually slows down the line and makes the customers become inpatient.

Finally, the improved facilities at Linda’s Restaurant make the place more comfortable than José’s. To begin with, when you get there, you have 20 parking spaces available at Linda’s, different from the only 10 limited lots at José’s. Once inside the restaurant, there is a lot more space and room because Linda has expanded the place to accommodate 12 tables with 48 chairs, while José has kept his 8 tables and 32 chairs. Linda also bought a brand new central air conditioner that brings an absolute coolness to her restaurant. On the contrary, José still has his traditional ceiling fans, which sometimes become an annoyance to the customers. To top it off, Linda constructed a colorful playground for kids, which has become her customers’ favorite attraction. Now, they can eat and relax while their children play. At José’s Restaurant, the kids look over the window trying to see the colorful playground at the other side of the street.

In conclusion, Linda’s Restaurant has considerable advantages over José’s. Little by little, all of José’s customers are going to run away and jump into Linda’s air conditioner the way I did. If José doesn’t do anything to improve his restaurant in the near future, he is going to be out of business!

**Cause and Effect Essay Sample**

**Activity**

* 1. Identify the thesis statement of the following text.
  2. Write the outline of the essay

**Why are Cities Becoming Overcrowded?**

The fact that the world’s cities are getting more and more crowded is well-known. Cities such as Tokyo, Sao Paolo, Bombay and Shanghai are now considered ‘mega-cities’, because of their enormous size and huge populations. There are two main reasons why these and other cities are becoming so crowded; one economic, the other socio-cultural.

First, the primary cause of cities becoming so crowded is economic. As a country develops, its cities become the engines of development, thus jobs are available in these areas. Frankfurt, Istanbul, Bombay and Sao Paolo are all the economic centers of their countries. For example, Tokyo was the motor for

Japan’s rapid economic development in the 1960’s and 70’s; as a result, its population increased rapidly. People moved to Tokyo because they could find employment and establish economic security for themselves and their families there.

Second, another factor in the huge increase in urban populations is the socio-cultural factor. Thousands of people migrate to the cities not only for jobs but also for educational and personal reasons. The better universities are always located in big cities and this attracts thousands of students every year, and these students stay on and work in the city after they graduate. Moreover, young people will move to the city as the villages and rural areas are more custom and tradition oriented. Therefore, young people believe this is an obstacle to their personal freedom.

In conclusion, economic and cultural factors are the major causes of huge urban population. People will always move to the areas which provide opportunity and to the places which can give them the freedom they desire.

**The following example is an outline for an effect essay about the effects of the computer on life.**

**Thesis statement:** The two main areas in which computers have brought about a profound change in our lives are in the economic field and in the field of communications.

**1st body:** economic effects

1. computers in business
2. computers and national economies

**2nd body:** effects on communication

1. e-mail
2. globalization

**Write an essay based on the above outline.**

**CHAPTER THREE: DESCRIPTIONS**

### INTRODUCTION

**DESCRIPTIVE WRITING**

The purpose of descriptive writing is to present to your reader the characteristics or qualities of an object, place, or person. If a piece of descriptive writing is successful, it will give your reader a sensory and emotional experience similar to the one you associate with the person, place, or thing being described. You want to give the reader the feeling that he or she is there with you.

Good descriptive writing uses all five senses (as does the imagery good writers use). You should use specific and vivid verbs, nouns, and adjectives in describing your subject; in fact, write mainly with verbs and nouns. As we discussed with other writing, good descriptive writing shows the reader what you mean; it does not tell him or her what to feel or think. You want to give a clear impression of your subject. Of course, no two people perceive anything in exactly the same way. But you want to get as close as possible to that reality.

The first task in being a good descriptive writer is being a good observer. That is also probably the key to all good writing – and all good reading, too. Before describing your subject, list details about it and all the impressions you have of it. Be as specific and evocative as possible. Then see how these many impressions can be unified into one, single, clear, focused effect. As with the other essays you have written, you should aim to limit your subject to keep your focus specific: as always, it is better to say a lot about a small topic than to say a little bit about many things.

Your thesis statement should state the overall effect that your subject has on you and the central impression you have of it. (I have listed some good and bad sample thesis statements below.) Use the entire first paragraph to explain exactly what your thesis is. The body of your essay will then support and illustrate that central impression through the use of specific, clear, and vivid details. Develop the items you include logically so that you reveal a pattern. Your conclusion should draw all the details together to create a final unifying impression.

Start thinking about someone or something you want to describe during the Thanksgiving vacation. Start making notes about it. Think about the central impression you want to share with your reader. Brainstorm; free write; get ideas down; start organizing the ideas; write several drafts. We will work on the essay after the vacation. The essay is due **Thursday, 30 November**. A sample descriptive essay is included with this sheet. The essay is worth **100 points**. Do your best.

**BAD THESIS STATEMENTS**

Clifford has a nice smile.

My room is really comfortable.

I like our place in the country.

I want to tell you about my grandfather.

**GOOD THESIS STATEMENTS**

Everything about Robert’s appearance is relaxed and friendly.

Even today, a Mexican village reflects the old culture.

My father’s gold watch typifies his personality.

A bicycle is a simple, elegant, and beautiful machine.

Sample Descriptive Essay

**A bicycle is an elegant, simple, and beautiful machine**. In an age of incredible technological advances and complicated machines, the bicycle has a straightforward design and is decidedly low-tech. Its mechanisms are simple and few; its form can be considered a work of art. A bicycle in motion integrates into the environment. While it is over 100 years old, the bicycle is truly a tool for the future.

First of all, a bicycle has almost no internal working parts. With most so-called modern conveniences, we throw a switch and something mysterious happens in the inner recesses of the machine. With a bicycle, however, everything that makes it work is fully exposed, visible to the unaided eye, and easily maintained. And these working parts are simple, straightforward, and clean. The most sophisticated machinery on a bicycle is the gear change mechanism – the derailleur. The derailleur is a parallelogram operated by springs and moved by pushing and pulling wires; there are no internal working parts to confuse matters. Simple. The rest of the bicycle is the development of classic simple machines: levers, wheels, pulleys. Even the most un mechanical person can learn to repair and maintain a bicycle. Its simplicity is part of its beauty.

The bicycle also presents an image of perfect symmetry and cleanliness. It has a wheel in front and back, pedals and handlebars on either side, and a few tubes connecting everything together. Further, the lines of these tubes are clean, straight, uncomplicated: basically, another parallelogram. When no one is sitting on it, a bicycle is unobtrusive and understated. It takes up very little room and does not leak gas, water, or radiator fluid: it just stands there. The fact that it requires no power source (except the rider) adds to the beauty and simplicity of the bicycle. It is not pushing the point too far to say that the bicycle is a work of art; it certainly is an excellent example of human ingenuity.

When someone is riding a bicycle, however, we see its true elegance and power. The person riding a bicycle moves gracefully. There is very little noise and no pollution. A bicycle maneuvers where other vehicles could never go. As a bicyclist speeds by, a bystander hears only a gentle whoosh. Unlike trucks, cars, and motorcycles, the bicycle barely makes an impact on the scenery; it seems almost as much a part of the environment as the natural elements. Except for a person walking alone, it is the most unobtrusive form of transportation.

Most of us have ridden a bicycle since we were five or six – a fact that adds to its simple beauty. As we face overcrowded roads, increased pollution, and soaring energy prices, the bicycle presents a modest yet powerful alternative to the hectic pace of life in the 21st century. In an age of over-complication, over-sophistication, and larger-than-necessary tools, the bicycle is welcome relief from the drudgery and complexity of life in the technological age.

underlined sentences – topic sentences

**bold** – thesis statement

**Activity: Read the following excerpt from descriptive essays and understand how these essays can be written:**

I have always been fascinated by carnival rides. It amazes me that average, ordinary people eagerly trade in the serenity of the ground for the chance to be tossed through the air like vegetables in a food processor. It amazes me that at some time in history someone thought that people would enjoy this, and that person invented what must have been the first of these terrifying machines. For me, it is precisely the thrill and excitement of having survived the ride that keeps me coming back for more.

My first experience with a carnival ride was a Ferris wheel at a local fair. Looking at that looming monstrosity spinning the life out of its sardine-caged occupants, I was dumbstruck. It was huge, smoky, noisy and not a little intimidating. Ever since that initial impression became fossilized in my imagination many years ago, these rides have reminded me of mythical beasts, amazing dinosaurs carrying off their screaming passengers like sacrificial virgins. Even the droning sound of their engines brings to mind the great roar of a fire-breathing dragon with smoke spewing from its exhaust-pipe nostrils.

The first ride on one of these fantastic beasts gave me an instant rush of adrenaline. As the death-defying ride started, a lump in my throat pulsed like a dislodged heart ready to walk the plank. As the ride gained speed, the resistance to gravity built up against my body until I was unable to move. An almost imperceptible pause as the wheel reached the top of its climb allowed my body to relax in a brief state of normalcy. Then there was an assault of stomach-turning weightlessness as the machine continued its rotation and I descended back toward the earth. A cymbal-like crash vibrated through the air as the wheel reached bottom, and much to my surprise I began to rise again.

Each new rotation gave me more confidence in the churning machine. Every ascent left me elated that I had survived the previous death-defying fall. When another nerve-wracking climb failed to follow the last exhilarating descent and the ride was over, I knew I was hooked. Physically and emotionally drained, I followed my fellow passengers down the clanging metal steps to reach the safety of my former footing. I had been spared, but only to have the opportunity to ride again.

My fascination with these fantastic flights is deeply engrained in my soul. A trip on the wonderful Ferris wheel never fails to thrill me. Although I am becoming older and have less time, or less inclination, to play, the child-like thrill I have on a Ferris wheel continues with each and every ride.

**CHAPTER FOUR: NARRATION**

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a narrative report is to describe something. Narrative essays are generally written in the first person, that is, using I. However, third person (he, she, or it) can also be used. Narratives rely on concrete, sensory details to convey their point. These details should create a unified, forceful effect, a dominant impression. More information on the use of specific details is available on another page. Narratives, as stories, should include these story conventions: a plot, including setting and characters; a climax; and an ending. It offers writers a chance to think and write about themselves.

**Narrative Essays:**

* Always make a plan!

Think about this—the character who tells a story is called a narrator, right? Sound familiar?

**Narratives tell stories**! So, it makes sense that you should look for the following **keywords:** *Tell about a time when, write about a time when, tell a story, write a story….*

* **Narratives DO NOT follow the standard 5 paragraph rules**! A narrative contains 3 sections.

1. Before—tells what happened before your big moment!

--Always begin your narrative with someone, in a place, doing something!

--A good idea is to open your story with dialogue (a character talking)

1. During—contains the “Big Moment”

--use the “second-hole” rule. (yourBig Moment should not happen until after the second hole of your paper)

1. After—make sure you don’t “chop-off” your ending! Leave adequate time and space to have an actual resolution.

* **Remember to use Dialogue!**

--Speakers’ exact words are always surrounded by quotation marks!

--Commas and periods go INSIDE quotation marks!

--Indent each time the speaker changes!

* **Limit the time frame that your story covers**! Which of the following situations could yield a more descriptive two-page story? One that covers the next 5 minutes of my life or the next 5 weeks? The next five minutes of course—you’d be able to add many more details and descriptions during those two pages without leaving out things and skipping time gaps! Keep this in mind as you create your story!
* **Use time transition words to keep your story flowing!** Essay graders will look for time-markers in your paper. Use transitions such as suddenly, after, before, during, at that moment, seconds later, yesterday, today, etc.
* **Push your paper’s grade over the edge with colorful vocabulary!**

**Activity:**

**Use the following guideline and write a five paragraph narrative essay**

* + - 1. **Abebech Gobena Children's Club Director (biographical essay)**
* Name:
* Age:
* Date of Birth:
* Father's Name:
* Father's Occupation:
* Mother's Name:
* Mother's Occupation:
* Address:
* Name of School:
* Sports:
* Hobbies:
* Any Special Interest

**Self-managed Activity:**

* 1. Here are some popular essay topic examples for your narrative essay type. Select three of them and write narrative essays. The essay topic you choose should be interesting and important to you, because the best essays are written on the topics that really matter to the writer.
* First Day at College
* The Moment of Success
* A Memorable Journey
* The Biggest Misunderstanding
* The Difficult Decision
* The Trip of Your Dreams
* The Day You Decided to Change Your Life

**An example of an autobiographical essay/personal narrative**

[Written by a student in the Labour Studies program, used with permission]

My name is Carlo, and I was born in June, 1958, in Italy. Our family, made up of my mother, father, and a brother, emigrated to Noranda, Quebec, when I was five years old. I encountered my first, but not last, taste of racism when kids in the neighborhood laughed at my poor command of English. As fast as I could I learned not only English, but French as well. I became trilingual, speaking fluent French and English, as well as Italian. In the process, I made new friends from a lot of different cultural backgrounds.

We then moved to Toronto, Ontario, where my Dad got work in a rubber factory. From my earliest days, I knew our family had to struggle for every penny. My Mom baked pizza which my brother sold by the slice, door to door. I caddied at the local golf courses and brought home all the money that I made. I hated it when other kids made fun of working people, like garbage collectors, who cleaned up trash for a living.

When I was in grade six, I was ill in hospital for two months with a kidney infection, and it changed my whole life. I seriously took up playing guitar. I began to do photography, and joined the audiovisual club. I discovered I was artistic with an interest in graphic art, although I didn’t always agree with the kind of art assignments the teacher gave us. However, I had no idea what to do after high school graduation. Thinking electronics was the wave of the future, I enrolled in and graduated with a diploma from George Brown College in Instrumentation Technology. I was hired on by Ontario Hydro as an apprentice.

Life was magical for a single guy in Toronto at this time. I made quite a bit of money. I enjoyed meeting and socializing with many new friends from a variety of different cultures. During this time, I met and married my wife, Valerie, a Registered Nurses’ Assistant, and soon we had two wonderful children, a daughter, Carla and a son, Nicholas. With new family responsibilities, I felt there was not enough opportunity for advancement at work. My wife and I thought of places we would like to live such as the east coast. But there were no jobs there. We finally decided to move to northern B.C. when I was offered a job with a forestry company.

Because of the children’s activities, I soon became involved in the community coaching children’s hockey and soccer, and being a scout leader. At work, I joined the Pulp Mill Recreation Club, eventually becoming president. There were a lot of things that needed changing. I decided I wanted our company to start a wellness program and researched to prove to them that healthy employees tremendously reduced absenteeism and health costs to the company. I wanted the company to reward those who kept themselves fit and began to lobby for this through our union.

I soon became elected as union safety captain, then later became a shop steward. I began to run for executive positions rising through the ranks from financial secretary to environmental vice president, chief shop steward, first vice president, and finally becoming president, a position I held for two years.

In my trade, I constantly must upgrade my skills, so I took advantage of many learning opportunities to do so through the company. This helped our union come into the 21st century, because I insisted we buy computers and subscribe to e-mail, connecting our members to other locals throughout the province. I also edited the union newsletter, keeping the members informed of all aspects of the local’s business. I used desktop publishing to produce our newsletter before anyone in Head Office knew what it was. Using my background in art and photography, I brought our publication from a crude photocopied rag to a sophisticated communication tool. For my efforts, I won two Canadian Association of Labour Media Awards, one for the best cartoon in Canada, depicting flexibility in the workplace, and one for the best editorial story of less than 500 words for a Union Newsletter. I also use my desktop publishing abilities for community fund raising activities.

I lost an opportunity to be union president for a third year because of an unpopular decision our local executive made in connection with implementing a contract that upheld the recognition of seniority rights. Reflecting back, I would not do anything differently. We took the task at hand, looked at the contract, discussed among the executive, asked for the opinions of our area rep, the Western Region Vice President, and our lawyer. Then we made our decision and stood by it, even though it meant I lost the presidency by nine votes. Now, two and a half years later, we are being proven right through the labour board.

Because of this event, I found myself with extra time on my hands. This opportunity made it possible for me to concentrate on pursuing university studies and my social work for unions. I enrolled at AU in the Labour Studies program. I continue with the newsletter, putting forth social and political issues that organized labor is facing today. I support the unions in the community and am involved in organizing them as they have never been organized before. I am even more committed to fighting for social justice than I have been all along, and am keen to move along this route in the future.

* 1. Identify the main features of the above autobiographical narrative.

**My "Eight Cow" Bracelet**

"Beauty is only skin deep" was a phrase I heard quite often during my awkward childhood. When I was a baby, I had two chins, Michelin Tire legs, and hairthat stuck straight up even though it was easily over two inches long. My mom would often dress me in only a diaper on hot days inspiring my uncle to label me with the name of "Marshmallow Butt." It was a name he was quite fond of calling me,even years later. As I grew, the double chin turned into one and a half, the legsstretched into colonial columns, and the hair eventually lay flat. This all happenedjust in time for puberty-acne and my first training bra when I was only ten. It wasduring this transitional point in my life that my father began to teach me a valuable and significant lesson regarding beauty and the power of words.

      During my childhood, my family indulged in a weekly ritual we called familynight. We used this time for various activities. We would hold family councilswhere we truly believed we had a say in important subjects. We would play games andhave lessons such as "being kind to your family" or some other moral issue of thetime. Sometimes we would sing songs, hear stories from Dad who could rival Mark Twain any day, or spend an hour to two eating ice cream and playing at the park.

      I am the second child and oldest daughter in a family of ten children, so these weekly "get-togethers" rarely went without some type of fiasco. These fiascoes varied from kicking at one another as Mom was teaching us about "Doing Unto Others" or my older brother Bill and I having a hair pulling fight, not just a tug-of-the-hair fight, but a fist-full, pull-as-hard-as-you-can, you-let-go-firsthair fight. It was for one of these activities that my dad brought home a movieentitled Johnny Lingo. The story was simple, but for a shy ten-year-old girl whohad long, stringy, brown hair, big brown eyes, a freckled face, and who looked as though the Pillsbury Dough Boy was her closest relative, it was a story filled withmagic and hope.

      The movie told of a girl named Mohana. Mohana was, quite frankly, the ugliest girl on the island. She was all "skin and bone." She rarely washed her hair and never combed it. She spent all her time hiding in the woods so no one could see her and make fun of her. Even her father called her "Mohana, you ugly." One day, the most handsome young man in the area, Johnny Lingo, came to the island and chose Mohana for his wife. He gave her father *eight* cows as a gift in exchange for Mohana. No one had ever given more than four cows as a gift for marriage. This was a great demonstration of devotion and love towards Mohana. A year later when Johnny and Mohana returned to the island, Mohana's father came to visit them. He hardly recognized his daughter. She now had long, shining, beautifully combed hair.She had put on some weight, and even her personality had developed some self-assurance and confidence. Johnny Lingo told Mohana's father that he bought her a silver and pearl inlaid mirror and comb set and had told her every day that she was beautiful. He said that Mohana had always had the beauty inside her; he just helpedher discover it.

      It wasn't until a few years later that I realized the significance of that movie andthe lesson that my father was trying to teach me. We lived in a rural town where work was very hard for my dad to find. Consequently, he had to leave home to work. I was just finishing my hardest year in high school, the sophomore yearwhen my dad took a job in Page, Arizona. I turned sixteen that summer. That was also the summer that I received my "eight cow bracelet."

      Dad was a man who always had a ready smile on his face. For as long as I have known him, he has had crow's feet at the corner of his eyes from smiling. His hands always seemed big and strong to me, and as he got older, I began to see where I got my physical attributes. He always loved working early in the morning out in our garden when the dew was still on the leaves of the tomatoes and peas. I enjoyed going out there with him. It was a time when we could spend some quality moments together. He would teach me which bugs were not good for the garden as we cleared plump green tomato worms off the tomato plants. He taught me which insects we needed in the garden as we left the spider webs strung between the corn stalks. I learned about rainbows. I learned about life.

     One particular August morning, Dad took me to sit down at our woodpile. There were always two or three stumps to sit on, and Dad would sit there and watch the garden as he irrigated. He pulled a small bundle wrapped in one of his red "farmer" handkerchiefs out of his pocket. He simply opened up the cloth to expose a turquoise and silver Indian cuff bracelet. It was slender, no more than a half inch in width. The silver had no engravings on it. It was simple and delicate. Centered across the top of the bracelet were eight round turquoise stones set into the silver. Dad asked me, "Do you know what this is?" I looked at him and smiled, "A bracelet?" His ready smile came back at me. "This is your eight cow bracelet." When I must have given him one of my most confused looks, he explained how the bracelet would remind me of my worth. I was worth more than anyone else was on the "island." I had an inner beauty that was just waiting to come out, and I was important to him. At that time, I couldn't remember ever loving my father more.

      A lifetime again later, I still remember that day. I remember the sun beating down on my head, the smell of wet dirt, the sound of our water pump whirring softly as the family inside the house started getting ready for the day. I remember the love in my father's eyes, and I know that I am an "eight cow woman."

**Questions on Technique**

1. **Does the opening paragraph create an interest that makes you want to read the rest of the essay? Why or why not?**
2. **What is the thesis (theme) of this essay?**
3. **Where does the actual narration begin?**
4. **Give three examples of description in this essay.**
5. **Does the description contribute anything to this essay? If so, what?**

**CHAPTER FIVE: WRITING REPORTS AND SUMMARIES**

* 1. **REPORT WRITING**
  2. **Introduction**:

In academic area, from the day you walk into university until the day you leave, there are many reports you’ll have to write. As a student, these reports might be essential in your university life –but it’s true that you’ll have to write them after leaning university, as a professional. Your reports might range from simple work assessment report to the high order technical reports which are common form of workplace communication. You may have to write a report to a “client” or an assessing manager. Thus, report writing is an essential skill for professionals; master it now and writing reports won’t have to be a pain in your future carrier. Before you go to the detail, do the following brainstorming activity.

**Activity: Discuss the following questions in groups of three.**

1. Have you ever read or written report?
2. What makes report different from essay writing?
3. What are some of the things you need to be careful as you complete report?
4. What could the purposes of report be?
5. On what kinds of topic do people write report?

* A report is a structured written presentation directed to interested readers in response to some specific purpose, aim or request. It communicates information which has been compiled as a result of research and analysis of data and/or issues.

Report can cover a wide range of topics, but usually they focus on transmitting information with a clear purpose, to a specific audience. They should also be well written, clearly structured and expressed in a way that holds the reader’s attention and meets their expectations. There are many varieties of reports, but generally their function is to give an account of something, to answer a question, or to offer a solution to a problem.

A report generally differs from an essay in that it is designed to provide information which will be acted on, rather than to be read by people interested in the ideas for their own sake. Because of this, it has a different structure and layout.

**A Report**

* Presents information
* Is meant to be scanned quickly by the reader
* Uses numbered headings and sub-headings
* May not need references and bibliography/reference list
* Uses short, concise paragraphs and dot-points where applicable
* Uses graphics wherever possible (tables, graphs, illustrations)
* May need an abstract( sometimes called an executive summary)
* May be followed by recommendations and/or appendices
  1. **Characteristics of an Effective Report**

Report writing is a part of the job of those delivering development such as experts, policy makers, planners, development administrators and researchers. These professionals are often required to analyze and synthesize ground realities based on primary data that are very often generated by them. They also draw further information from secondary sources. Considering the data and information gathered, they reach at a certain conclusion and recommend specific actions for implementation. Rational, clear and persuasive writing helps the writer to present facts as facts and thus attracts the attention of his reader.

A good report is a document that is accurate, objective, and complete. Thus, a report is:

* appropriate to its purpose and audience;
* accurate;
* logical
* clear and concise; and
* Well organized with clear section headings.

**Activity**

1. When one says a report should be rational, what does it mean?
2. How can the organization of your report be maintained? List some techniques of organizing a report in general.
3. What is the importance of knowing the audience of report?

Generally, rational conclusion and persuasive recommendations seldom fail to be appealing to the reader. On the other hand, if a report lacks those above mentioned elements, it is very likely to be misunderstood and/or misrepresented by the readership. A report can be defined as well written only when the writer systematically and consistently articulates his/her views and makes a convincing presentation in such a way that would attract, excite and attract the reader.

* 1. **TYPES OF REPORTS**

Reports are classified according to **1)** their style, **2)** their purpose, and **3)** format/structure. Based on their style reports can be **formal** or **informa**l. Formal reports are long, analytical and impersonal. They contents of formal reports are title page, an abstract, table of contents, bibliography and appendix. Examples of formal reports are annual report of a company and external proposal. Informal reports on the other hand are shorter than formal reports and have no preliminary parts (such as title page, abstract…) and supplementary parts (such as bibliography and appendix). Informal reports are concerned with everyday matters that require little background. *Sales report* in which the writer summarizes sales for a specific period and *internal proposal* which is used to analyze an internal problem and recommend a solution are two examples of informal reports.

Formal reports based on their purpose can be categorized into two: *informational and interpretive (analytical)*. An **informational report** contains only the data collected or thefacts observed in an organized form. In other words, its objective is to present information orfacts and includes very little analysis. It does not contain any conclusions orrecommendations. It is useful because it presents relevant data put together in a form inwhich it is required by the management or concerned body to take decisions.

**An interpretive(analytical) report**, like an informational report, contains facts but it also includes anevaluation or interpretation or analysis of data and the reporter’s conclusions. It may alsohave recommendations for action. An interpretive report which consists principally ofrecommendations is also called *recommendation or recommendatory report.*

Formal and informal reports can be written using different formats. Formal reports are written in manuscript format.

Informal reports are short, each containing one to three pages of narrative and occasionally attachments such as drawings, photographs, and calculations. Short reports such as these are often written as *memorandums, sometimes as letters, and occasionally as semiformal reportswith a title at the top of the page.* They may be transmitted using electronic mail. There are different types of informal reports. We will see some of them as follows. To make the concept clear let us discuss some types of informal reports as follows.

**Incident Reports**

An incident report (sometimes called an occurrence or accident report) describes an event that has happened, explains how and why it occurred, and indicates what effect the event had and what has been done about it. It may also suggest that corrective action be taken, or what should be done to prevent the event from recurring.

**Field Trip Reports**

Trip reports are written whenever people leave their usual place of work to do something elsewhere. Their reports can cover many kinds of events, such as:

* What did the report writer set out to do?
* What was actually done?
* What could not be done, and why?
* What else was done?

**Reporting Conference Attendance**

The trip report compartments can be used to describe attendance at a conference or meeting.

The most difficult one to write is the Trip Activities compartment, and the most efficient way to organize it is to divide it into sub compartments that focus on

* What you expected to gain, learn, or find out by attending the conference,
* What the program promised would be covered,
* What sessions you attended and why you chose them (this is important for a conference
* With several simultaneous sessions),
* What you gained or learned by attending these sessions,
* What you gained or learned from meeting and talking to other persons attending the conference, and
* What other activities you attended.

**Inspection Reports**

An inspection report is similar to a field trip report in that its writer has usually gone somewhere to inspect something. Other typical situations that would require you to write an inspection report include:

* examination of a building to determine its suitability as a storage facility,
* inspection of construction work, such as a bridge, building, or road,
* checks of manufactured items, to assure they are of the required quality, and
* Inspection of goods ordered for a job, to check that the correct items and quantities have been received.

**Progress Reports**

Progress reports keep management informed of work progress on projects that span a lengthy period, which can vary from a few weeks for a small manufacturing contract to several years for construction of a hydroelectric power station and transmission system.

There are two types of progress reports:

**Occasional progress reports** are written at random intervals and usually concern shorter-length projects.

**Periodic progress reports** are written at regular intervals (usually weekly, biweekly, or monthly) and concern projects spanning several months or years.

Before we move on to the next section which deals with the structure of a report, it is important to define what a technical report is. By definition, a **technical report** is a formal report designed to convey technical information in a clear and easily accessible format. It is divided into sections to allow different readers access different levels of information.

The following section explains the commonly accepted format for a technical report; explains the purpose of the individual sections; and gives hints on how to go about drafting and refining a report in order to produce an accurate professional document.

* 1. **THE STRUCTURE OF A REPORT**

A technical report contains the following things: *front matter, main body, and back matter*.

Each of these parts has its own sub-components.

**FRONT MATTER**

**Title page**

The title page of the research report normally contains four main pieces of information: *the report title*; *the name of the person*, *company*, or *organization for whom the report has been prepared*; *the name of the author and the company or university which originated the report; and the date the report was completed.*

**Acknowledgements**

Unless you have given credit elsewhere, mention diligently the names of persons and organizations that have helped you in the production of the report. When you include published material and the list of sources is very long, use a separate page for the purpose.

Clearly indicate that permission has been taken for the reproduction of copyright material, if any.

**Table of Contents**

Most reports will contain a *Table of Contents* that lists the report’s contents and demonstrates how the report has been organized. You should list each major section in your Table of Contents. Sometimes you may want to use additional descriptive headings throughout your report and for your Table of Contents. Using descriptive headings can help readers to see how your report is organized if the section headings are not clear enough. This is likely to be true especially if most of your report is contained in one long section called Body or Discussion that includes everything from the materials and methods you used to the results you found and the conclusions you draw. In this case, it might be best to include additional headings to indicate where readers can look specifically to read about your materials and methods or conclusions.

**List of illustrations**

A separate list of illustrations is given immediately after the table of contents if there are a large number of tables and figures. Its layout is the same as that of the table of contents and it gives information about the number, title, and page reference of each illustration.

**Abstract**

An abstract is an accurate representation of the contents of a document in an abbreviated form”. An abstract can be the most difficult part of the research report to write because in it you must introduce your subject matter, tell what was done, briefly explain the methodology you used and present selected results, all in one short (about 150 words) paragraph. As a result, you should usually write the abstract last. You will need to write an abstract when your dissertation for a higher degree (M.S. or Ph.D.) is accepted, when you submit an article for publication, or when your report will be disseminated to an audience that needs a summary of its contents. An abstract serves an important function in a research report; it communicates the scope of your paper and the topics discussed to your reader and, in doing so, it facilitates research. Abstracts help scientists to locate materials that are relevant to their research from among published papers, and many times scientists will only read a paper’s abstract in order to determine whether the paper will be relevant to them.

**MAIN BODY**

The section of your report called the body matter contains: introduction, main body and conclusion/recommendations. I discuss what each of the sub-section are concerned with how we have to consider it.

**Introduction**

The importance of the Introduction in all forms of exposition is that it prepares the reader to receive, with the greatest economy of effort, what the writer intends to present. Reports, like any form of exposition, attempt to make information and ideas clear and convincing. The Introduction permits you to launch immediately into the task of relating your readers to then subject matter of the report. Specifically the Introduction makes clear the precise subject to be considered, indicates the reasons for considering the subject, and lays out the organization and scope of the report. This is where you tell the reader what you plan to tell and why and how you will tell it.

The Introduction should focus your readers' attention on the subject to be treated. It should enable them to approach the body of the report naturally and intelligently. Your prospective readers and subject material will influence both your point of view in writing the Introduction and the amount of material you use. The union of reader and subject must be achieved with a firm, but not heavy, hand. Readers should never be confused, unpleasantly surprised, or disappointed with what they are told throughout the report.

**The (Main) Body of Your Report**

The body is usually the longest part of the research report, and it includes all of the evidence that readers need to have in order to understand the subject. This evidence includes details, data, and results of tests, facts, and conclusions. Exactly what you include in the body and how it is organized will be determined by the context in which you are writing. Be sure to check the specific guidelines under which you are working to see if your readers are expecting you to organize the body in a particular way. In general, the body of the research report will include three distinct sections:

* a section on theories, models, and your own hypothesis
* a section in which you discuss the materials and methods you used in your research
* a section in which you present and interpret the results of your research. You will usually use a heading to identify the beginning of each of these sections.

**Conclusions**

The conclusion gives the overall findings of the study. It is important to realize that conclusion' does *not* just mean `the last bit of the report'. Your conclusions should really be statements that can be concluded from the rest of the work. A conclusion is not a summary. (You can include a summary as well, if you like). When I mark students' reports, one of the questions I ask about them is `do the conclusions follow from the body of the report?'

**Recommendations**

You may or may not need to include a section titled “Recommendations.” This section appears in a report when the results and conclusions indicate that further work needs to be done or when you have considered several ways to resolve a problem or improve a situation and want to determine which one is best. You should not introduce new ideas in the recommendations section, but rely on the evidence presented in the results and conclusions sections. If you find that you need to include a recommendations section you have another opportunity to demonstrate how your research fits within the larger project of science, and the section can serve as a starting point for future dialogue on the subject. It demonstrates that you fully understand the importance and implications of your research, as you suggest ways that it could continue to be developed. Do not include a recommendations section simply for the sake of including one; this will waste your readers’ time and take up unnecessary space in your report.

**BACK MATTER**

The back matter of your report contains references, list of appendices, glossary, and index.

**References**

The reference list is placed at the end of the report. It is arranged in alphabetical order of authors' surnames and chronologically for each author. The reference list includes only references cited in the text. The author's surname is placed first, immediately followed by the year of publication. This date is often placed in brackets. The title of the publication appears after the date followed by place of publication, then publisher (some sources say publisher first, then place of publication). There are many other minor differences in setting out references (eg use of commas, colons, full stops) depending upon personal preferences or house styles. The important thing is to check for any special requirements or, if there are none, to be consistent.

Some lecturers require only a reference list. Others require, in addition, a bibliography. While the reference list includes only those texts cited in the body of your paper, a bibliography includes all material consulted in the preparation of your report.

Notice that the titles of books, journals and other major works appear in italics (or are underlined when handwritten), while the titles of articles and smaller works which are found in larger works are placed in (usually single) quotation marks.

**Appendices:** The appendices are where the author will usually place any material that is not directly relevant to the report, and will only be read by small number of people. I usually use appendices for mathematical proofs, electrical circuit diagrams and sections of computer programs. You should place information in an Appendix that is relevant to your subject but needs to be kept separate from the main body of the report to avoid interrupting the line of development of the report. Anything can be placed in an appendix as long as it is relevant and as long as you made reference to it in the body of your report. You should not include an appendix simply for the sake of including one, though. An appendix should include only one set of data, but additional appendices are acceptable if you need to include several sets of data that do not belong in the same appendix. Label each appendix with a letter, A, B, C, and so on. Do not place the appendices in order of their importance to you, but rather in the order in which you referred to them in your report. You should also paginate each appendix separately so that the first page of each appendix you include begins with 1.

***Glossary***

A glossary is a list of technical words used in the report and their explanations. If, however, the number of such words is small, they are generally explained in the footnotes. Whether you should include a glossary in your report will depend upon who is going to read your report. If the reader’s field of expertise is the one to which your report relates, there is no need for a glossary. But if the audience is drawn from other areas, it is advisable to give a glossary.

**Index**

The index is intended to serve as a quick guide to the material in the report. It enables the reader to locate easily any topic, sub-topic or important aspect of the contents. There is a need for giving and index only in bulky reports where the Table of contents cannot do this job. Entries in the index are made in alphabetical order and cross-referenced. All page numbers on which information about an entry is available are mentioned against it.

**Précis writing**

A précis is the shortened form of a passage. A précis is not an outline but a summary or digest. A précis shears away all elaborations of thought & gives only what is left, in such a way as to make the summary a complete composition. It does not, therefore, skeletonize the original composition so much as it reduces its scale.

A good précis should be complete in itself. It should be able to convey the ideas expressed in the original passage so that a reader who does not have enough time to read the original one should have no trouble in getting the message. A précis should be brief, clear & precise. A good précis should give ideas, facts or points in the order in which it appears in the original. A précis should not be a number of disjointed simple sentences.

**How to Write a Précis?**

* First, write an outline of the main ideas – those you see as important. Think of it in this way – you are summarizing the lecture for a friend who missed the class & the material will be on an upcoming test. Also, you may want to include a brief statement about the tone, audience or purpose of the article.
* Second, put your outline into sentence/paragraph form
* Third, count the number of words and make necessary changes.
* Fourth, suggest a suitable title.

**EXAMPLE:**

The time has come when men must no longer think that the ideal of peace is a distant ideal or one which can be postponed for future generation to come. This is the accepted hour and this is the time of salvation in which if men do not beat the swords into plough-shares & their spears into punning hooks. They will find themselves quite incapable of doing so when armaments have greatly increased. It is the duty of those who have known the horrors of war to lead the way, for the time has come when the generation is growing up, which knew not the tragedy of that great experience & where ignorance is bliss. They will consider it folly to be over-cautious. ‘Give peace in our time’ is a supplication which we must heartily endorse not only that the world may be safe for democracy but that the arts of peace may be cultivated & developed for the good of all men.

**PRECIS**

**HEADING:** Urgent need of peace.

It is time for people to think & solve the problem of peace. For this, disarmament should be brought about. The experiences of those who have already suffered the horrors of war, should give direction to this. They should lead the coming generation in establishing peace & avoiding the horrors again.

**Memo**

The basic function of a memo is to solve a specific problem by making the reader aware of specific information. A memo can be written to persuade others to take action or give specific feedback on a particular matter. When written properly, memos can be very effective in connecting the concern or issue of the writer with the best interests of the reader. A memo can be as simple as one paragraph to arrange a meeting or complex enough to need several pages with subheadings. Here are examples of both.

Memo (short for memorandum) is a business-oriented style that is best suited for interoffice or inter colleague correspondence. More informal in tone and organization than a letter, memos are generally used to provide or ask for information, announce a new policy, update on personnel transfers, or for any other internal issues.

**Elements of an Effective Memo**

An effective memo:

* grabs the reader's attention
* provides information, makes a recommendation, or asks for action
* supports your position or explains benefits to reader
* mentions next steps and deadlines

**Types of Memos**

There are four types of memos you might have to write, each with its own organizational format: information, problem-solving, persuasion, and internal memo proposal.

Information Memo

* used to deliver or request information or assistance
* first paragraph provides main idea
* second paragraph expands on the details
* third paragraph outlines the action required Problem-solving Memo
* suggests a specific action to improve a situation
* first paragraph states the problem
* second paragraph analyzes the problem
* third paragraph makes a recommendation

When making a recommendation, include not only the positive details but also the drawbacks and diffuse them yourself

Persuasion Memo

* used to encourage the reader to undertake an action he or she doesn't have to take
* first paragraph begins with an agreeable point
* second paragraph introduces the idea
* third paragraph states benefits to the reader
* fourth paragraph outlines the action required
* fifth paragraph ends with a call to action

Internal Memo Proposal

* used to convey suggestions to senior management
* first paragraph states reason for writing
* second paragraph outlines present situation and states writer's proposal
* third paragraph describes advantage(s)
* fourth paragraph mentions and diffuses disadvantage(s)
* fifth paragraph ends with a call to action

**Memo Parts**

More informal in appearance and tone than a letter, a memo is set up in a special format. Headings, lists, tables or graphs are often used to make the information more readable.

All memos consist of two sections: the heading and the body. The heading indicates who is writing to whom, when, and why. The heading should include the following parts:

1. To

* lists the names of everyone who will receive the memo
* includes the first and last name and titles or departments of the recipients for formal memos, memos to superiors, or if everyone on the list does not know each other
* if all recipients know each other's names and positions, use just the first initial and last name of each recipient
* can be listed alphabetically or by rank
* if it is not possible to fit all the names in the To: area, use the phrase "See distributionlist"
* at the end of the memo add the word "Distribution" and then list the names of the people who will receive a copy of the memo
* arrange the names by rank, department or alphabetically

1. From

* lists the name of the writer(s) in the same way as the name(s) of the recipient(s)
* there is no complimentary close or signature line, but authors initial their names on the From: line

1. Date

* lists the month, date, and year the memo was written
* do not use abbreviations
* avoid using numbers for months and days

1. Re: or Subject

* indicates the main subject of the letter
* should be as specific and concise as possible

1. Cc or c

* Lists those readers who should have a copy of the memo for their information or reference but are not expected to carry out the same action as the recipients listed in the To: line
* "cc" can also be placed at the end of the memo below the distribution list (if used)

The body of the memo conveys the message and generally consists of 4 parts:

1. Introduction

* states the general problem or main idea

1. Statement of facts

* states the facts or discusses the problem or issue

1. Argument

* explains importance or relevance of facts

1. Conclusion

* summarizes the main idea, suggests or requests action
* memos do not have a complimentary close or signature line
* memos end with a call to action

**Examples of Memo**

**Example 1**

Your Name

Your Address

Your Town, Your State Zip Code/Postal Code

Memo

To: Name(s) of recipients

CC: Name(s) of people receiving carbon copies

From: Name of sender

Date: Month, day, year

Re: Need for New Memo Format

I've noticed we don't seem to be able to communicate important changes, requirements and progress reports throughout the company as effectively as we should. I propose developing one consistent memo format, recognizable by all staff as the official means of communicating company directives. While I know this seems like a simple solution, I believe it will cut down on needless e-mail, improve universal communication and allow the staff to save necessary information for later referral. Please talk among yourselves to determine the proper points of memo writing and return the input to me by 12 p.m. on September 30. I will then send out a notice to the entire staff regarding the new memo format.

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