

How to Write an Essay

The 5 paragraph essay



Structure

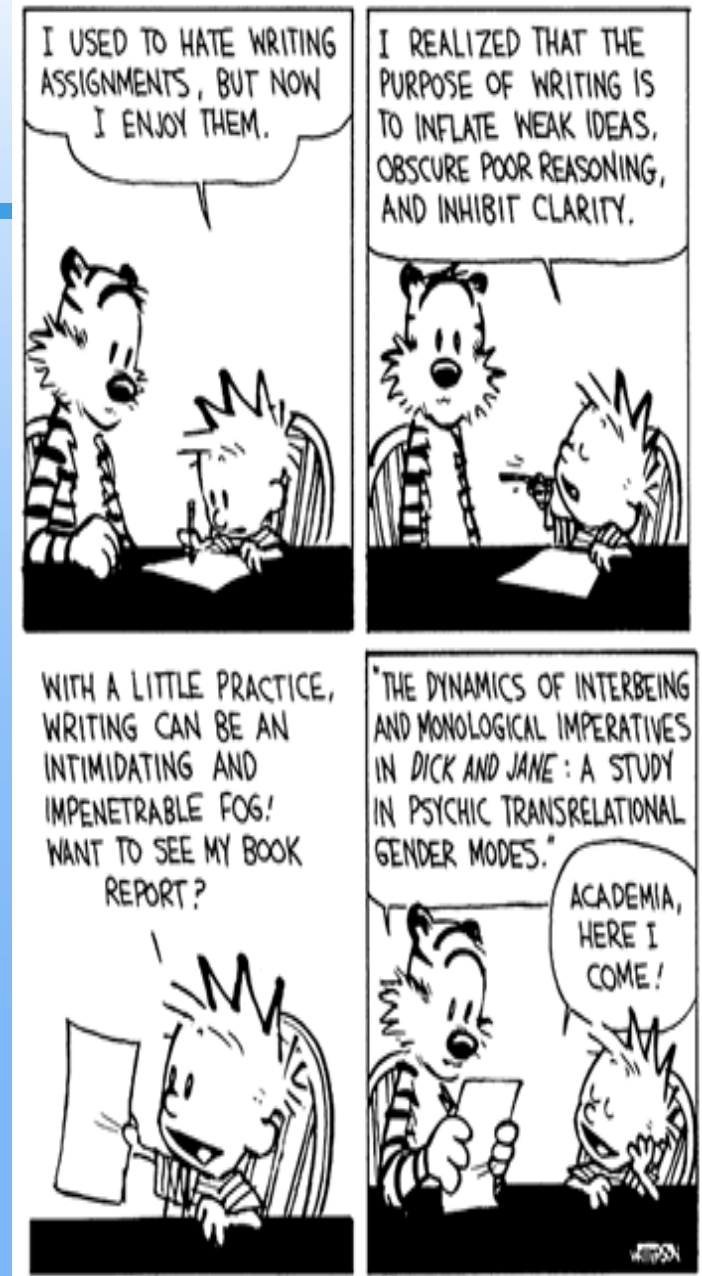
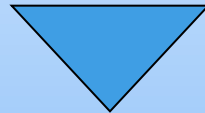
Introduction

Body Paragraph 1

Body Paragraph 2

Body Paragraph 3

Conclusion



Introduction

- Introduce your topic in the first line: General statement introducing *text* and author. Italicize text when typing.
- Introduce your three points using three sentences. Make sure to keep this order when introducing your body paragraphs.
- Write your thesis statement which must be an argument

A good thesis:

- It is not a topic sentence like Scout matures with the help of others.
- It should be argumentative, which means that it should be possible for you to prove whether your statement is right or wrong.
- Be Specific: Avoid dealing with generalities:
 “This essay will talk about the power of love in *Romeo and Juliet*.”
- Well supported: Your body paragraphs will be used to support your thesis

Bad vs. Good Thesis Statements

BAD

- Fear and Ignorance in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
→ This is a topic not a thesis! ←

GOOD

- ✓ In Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, fear and ignorance keeps prejudice and discrimination alive.

Remember: You are not a literary critic so don't write: *To Kill a Mockingbird* is an enduring testimony to the genius of Harper Lee.

Your thesis should never say a work is good or bad.
Take it for granted that the text you are reading has literary merit. (That's why you are reading it in English class)

Structure of Body Paragraphs using Point, Proof, Analysis (PPA)

Introduce your first topic statement (this should correspond to your introduction)

- ▣ **Point:** Make your first point.
- ▣ **Proof:** Support your statement using a “direct” or indirect quotation. Make sure you follow MLA format.
- ▣ **Analysis:** How does your quotation support your point which ultimately backs up your thesis?

Make your second/third point- prove and analyze

Concluding sentence: should also transition to next body paragraph

Please note, you will need 2-3 PPAs per body paragraph and three body paragraphs.

Conclusion

- Restate your thesis using different words; make it interesting for the reader
- Summarize your three arguments
- Concluding statement; this should have an impact on the reader and be conclusive: Scout's narrative shows the danger of ignorance
- Don't try to summarize your whole essay
- Don't add anything that you haven't already talked about.

MLA: In Text Citations and the Work Cited Page Entries

Book entries in your Work Cited Page generally require:

- the author name, work title, publication city, publisher, year published, and publication medium, such as print.

- Ex: (Author Known)

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. New York: Penguin Group, 2006. Print.

- Ex: (Author Unknown)

Oxford Essential World Atlas. New York: Penguin Group, 2006. Print

MLA: In Text Citations and the Work Cited Page Entries

■ **Author named in a signal phrase**

Philosopher Stephen C. Pepper refers to this phenomenon as a “cumulative collaboration of evidence”(49).

■ **Author not named in a signal phrase**

This phenomenon is best referred to as a “cumulative collaboration of evidence”(Pepper 49).

Writing Tips

- Avoid personal pronouns- use one, the reader, society, etc.
- Double-space using size 12 font
- Do not use contractions- use should not, can not, will not, etc.
- Avoid asking questions; the reader won't answer
- Do not begin a sentence with numerals (400 – write out four hundred)
- Always write out numerals under 10.
- Avoid beginning a sentence with “because”, “and”, “or”
- Never end a sentence in a preposition “of”
- Write in the present tense

Quotations: Introducing and Integrating

Quotations and proof:

- Within the world of essays, quotations rarely ‘prove’ anything. What good quotations usually do is support a particular interpretation. Yet one of the most frequent mistakes writers make is to say that a particular quotation “proves” some claim. Here are some verbs that persuade better than *prove*:

- ❖ suggests
- ❖ implies
- ❖ testifies to
- ❖ indicates
- ❖ argues (that, for)
- ❖ shows demonstrates
- ❖ supports
- ❖ underscores

Set off Quotations: Do's and Don'ts

- Use a complete statement, not a fragment, to signal the quotation.
- Punctuate the signal statement with a colon.
- Indent on the left (10 spaces or TAB key twice).
- Don't put quotation marks around the set-off quotation (except for single quotations around dialogue in short story/novel).
- Put a space after the quotation's terminal punctuation and then supply the parenthetical reference (see the examples above; note that this differs from punctuating short quotations).

Transition Words and Phrases

- **Using transitional words and phrases**
helps papers read more smoothly, and at the same time allows the reader to flow more smoothly from one point to the next.
- **Transitions enhance logical organization and understanding**
and improve the connections between thoughts. They indicate relations, whether within a sentence, paragraph, or paper.