



Guidelines for Specific Types of Essays

Expository Essay: This literally means “to explain”. This kind of essay is used to explain to, or inform, the reader about a topic. The basic 5-paragraph essay can be used for this type of essay. *(Keep in mind that the body of the essay can have more than 3 paragraphs; if you have more to say about the topic, create more paragraphs using the same format).*

Narrative Essay: This is a story or account of event, and can be real or fictitious. Instead of using multiple paragraphs to explain concepts, or topics, you use the first (or first few) paragraphs to describe the situation and explain its significance to the reader. This is a more personal and dramatic essay, so there has to be some sort of action taking place. Here is a general guideline:

Paragraph 1: Describes an event or situation requiring a decision. The feelings of the character should be explained, as well as any conflict that arises. You may need multiple paragraphs to get the information across to the reader.

Paragraph 2: A decision or choice has been made; describe the thoughts leading up to that decision or choice. You may need multiple paragraphs to get the information across to the reader.

Paragraph 3: What was the outcome of the decision? Your reader will be looking for a conclusion in this ending paragraph(s), so make sure to do not leave questions unanswered.

Compare and Contrast Essay: This type of essay is asking you to take two things (such as books, articles, movies or type of music), compare them, and then explain how they are similar or different. For this type of essay you will use the

basic 5-paragraph template, but your thesis statement and topic sentences will relate to the way these two items are similar or different.

Book / Movie Review: This type of paper is different from other types of essays because it relies on your opinions. Here is the general outline:

Paragraph 1: Give the reader information about the book/movie (title, author, subject, main idea, when it was published, and the genre). As with other essays, your thesis statement belongs in this first paragraph.

Paragraph 2: Tell the reader about the main points of the book/movie (who, what, when, where, how and why).

Paragraph 3: Support your thesis statement in this paragraph. Share your thoughts, ideas and opinions about this book/movie, and provide examples.

Paragraph 4: As with other essays, restate your thesis in this concluding paragraph. Summarize your ideas and make a positive or negative recommendation.