**How to write an essay**

5 Paragraph Essay

**Paragraph 1:** Introduction (thesis statement must be clear)

**ANT**

* **A**ttention: grab the attention of the reader with an introductory sentence.
* **N**ecessary Information: Introduce the title of the work and the author as well as any other important necessary information to set up your readers for your essay.
* **T**hesis: the thesis statement wraps up the entire paper in one statement. Thesis statements let the reader know what the writer will be discussing and more importantly why the topic is important. This should always be your last sentence of your introduction.

**Paragraph 2:** First Argument/Point Discussed

**Paragraph 3:** Second Argument/ Point Discussed

**Paragraph 4:** Third Argument/Point Discussed

* Topic Sentence: Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence – a sentence to introduce what your argument is.
* Provide a Quote/Evidence: Each argument you are trying to make should be supported by textual evidence both through your interpretation and through direct quotes from the work.
* Analysis: Analyze the quote, explain why it is important and what is it proving or supporting. DO NOT provide a quote and not explain its purpose – every piece of evidence you provide must be fully explained

and developed.

**Paragraph 5:** Conclusion

**REC**

* **R**ephrase/Restate Thesis: Your first sentence of your conclusion should restate your thesis after you have reworded it (change the wording – you do not want it to be identical to your thesis).
* **E**xplain Significance (Discuss the importance): Explain the significance/importance the arguments/evidence you have been analyzing.
* **C**onclude/Clincher: Wrap up the essay with a final sentence that gets your point across and leaves the readers reflecting on what you have wrote.

**Rules for a Formal Essay:**

* DO NOT use first person (“I”, “me”, “us”, etc.)
* Write in the present tense
* Do not use contradictions
* Avoid summarizing – explain plot when needed, but remember we have all read the story so there is no need to repeat it all again. Only use the plot in a way to prove your point or support evidence = make sure examples/plot usage as specific as possible
* Use transition words between paragraphs (on following page)
* Use MLA style of documentation (on following page)
* ALWAYS include a Works Cited page

**Formal Writing Mistakes:**

* Use of vague or doubtful vocabulary (ex. Things, stuff, something, very, just, maybe, could be, etc.)
* Repetition of “throughout the poem/play/novel” – this is inferred
* Avoid using phrases such as: “this quote shows…” OR “In this quote”
* NEVER use the phrase “in conclusion” as it is extremely informal

**Transition Words:**

Link your ideas – To create coherent paragraphs, you need to link your ideas clearly. The following are transition words (conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs) to use when you are shifting ideas:

And

Also

Again

Further

In addition

Addition to a previous idea

Similarly

Likewise

More

Moreover

But

Although

Despite

However

In spite of

Change from a previous idea

Nevertheless

Rather

Yet

By contrast

On the other hand

Even so

Accordingly

Consequently

Hence

Summary or Conclusion

So

Therefore

Thus

For this reason

The word “shows” and “says” is constantly used in essays

* This quote shows…
* The character shows…
* The symbol shows…
* This quote says…

**Refrain from over using and repeating words – here is a list of words that can replace the word “shows”:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Asserts * Claims * Clarifies * Compares to * Conflicts with * Connotes * Contrasts * Conveys * Creates * Defends * Delineates * Demonstrates * Depicts * Develops * Differs * Emphasizes * Equates * Establishes * Evokes * Exaggerates * Exemplifies * Exhibits * Expresses | * Highlights * Illuminates * Illustrates * Implies * Indicates * Intensifies * Justifies * Parallels * Portrays * Presents * Proves * Represents * Reveals * Signifies * Strengthens * Suggests * Supports * Symbolizes * Validates * Vindicates |

**MLA Format:**

**Header:**

First and Last Name

Ms. Mercier

ELA B30

Date

Creative Title Goes Here

**DO NOT TITLE YOUR ESSAY “Hamlet Essay” or “Position Paper” - be more creative**

**Formatting:**

* Times New Roman or Calibri Font
* Size 12 Font
* No extra spaces between paragraphs
* Double spaced
* Remain in the present tense (ex. “it is” NOT “it was”)
* Indent each paragraph (hit the TAB key)

**Titles (Novels/Movies/Plays)**

* *Italicize* a title when you are referring to a novel, movie or play or underline if you are physically writing it out.
* Put the title in “quotation marks” if it is a short story, essay, poem, etc.

\*If it has a spine, it gets underlined\* which means it could stand on a bookshelf by itself – think of the shelf as an underline.

\*If it has no spine then think of it as needing to be propped up my its two corners, like quotation marks. \*

Works Cited

Locate the following information within your work (novel, play, poem, etc.):

* Author
* Title of source
* Title of container
* Other contributors
* Version
* Number
* Publisher
* Publication date
* Location

Each element should be followed by the punctuation mark shown here. In the current version, punctuation is simpler (only commas and periods separate the elements), and information about the source is kept to the basics.

Author

Begin the entry with the author’s last name, followed by a comma and the rest of the name, as presented in the work. End this element with a period. The title of the source should follow the author’s name. Depending upon the type of source, it should be listed in italics or quotation marks.

Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. Knopf, 1994.

This is a fantastic resource for Citations – MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html>

\*When in doubt, double check with this site\*