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5 elements of essay

College Writing 2.1x is an introduction to academic writing for English Language Learners, focusing on essay development, grammatical correctness, and self-editing. The five-week course includes a review of basic grammar terminology and understanding; writing effective sentences and paragraphs; introductions and conclusions; strategies for writing longer texts; and thesis statements. The course materials will be offered via readings and videos. An optional course workbook, in ebook form, may be used for additional writing work. Students will participate in online discussions as well as peer review. Students will complete an essay for this part of the course. In partnership with the U.S. Department of State UC Berkeley is partnering with the U.S. Department of State to extend the reach of College Writing 2X. Participating U.S. Embassies will host in-person, facilitated discussions sessions around the course content in order to maximize the learning experience. The State Department-supported EducationUSA network will also offer facilitated discussions in some locations for students interested in pursuing higher education in the United States. This partnership is part of the English Education Alliance (E2A), a global effort of the U.S. Department of State to address the global demand for 21st century English language skills. Basic grammar terminology and understanding How to write effective sentences and paragraphs How to tackle writing introductions and conclusions Strategies for writing longer texts and thesis statements Receive an instructor-signed certificate with the institution's logo to verify your achievement and increase your job prospectsAdd the certificate to your CV or resume, or post it directly on LinkedInGive yourself an additional incentive to complete the coursee2X, a non-profit, relies on verified certificates to help fund free education for everyone globally A "who am I" essay is a simple type of open-ended introductory essay. It is used in certain schools, workplaces and around the world to help members of a group introduce themselves through their writing. They are generally about a page long and easy to read. The writer should keep the essay short and simple for it to be the most effective for the reader. This essay serves as a basic introduction into a person's history with the subject (if they were assigned by a math class, a person would write about experiences with math) and insight into a person's abilities and personality. Depending on who assigned the essay, the writer will want to include different things: They can mention where they are from, their age, and whether they are in school for something. Include socialization habits — does the person like working with people? Is socializing difficult? The writer should talk about what they hope to get out of the class program, and why they joined. Another topic is likes and dislikes about the subject. Writers should keep out anything particularly personal that could be difficult or too much information for the reader. Do not include anecdotes. Because the essay is designed to be short and sweet, the writer should go through the writing and take out any extraneous information or run-on sentences. Hill Street Studios/Blend Images/Getty Images An essay's general statement is a broad introduction to the paper's topic. For example, a persuasive essay aimed at convincing the reader to take action against global warming might begin with a brief description of what climate change means. An essay's introductory paragraph is where the author provides the necessary context and background for the reader to understand the topic. After the general statement of the paper's topic comes the thesis statement. The thesis statement logically flows from the general statement and directly states the purpose of the essay. Instead of a general statement, the author can also choose to open with an anecdote, a quotation or a direct explanation of the topic's importance to the reader. A periodical essay is an essay (that is, a short work of nonfiction) published in a magazine or journal—in particular, an essay that appears as part of a series. The 18th century is considered the great age of the periodical essay in English. Notable periodical essayists of the 18th century include Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, Samuel Johnson, and Oliver Goldsmith. "The periodical essay in Samuel Johnson's view presented general knowledge appropriate for circulation in common talk. This accomplishment had only rarely been achieved in an earlier time and now was to contribute to political harmony by introducing 'subjects to which faction had produced no diversity of sentiment such as literature, morality and family life.'" (Marvin B. Becker, *The Emergence of Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*. Indiana University Press, 1994) "The largely middle-class readership did not require a university education to get through the contents of periodicals and pamphlets written in a middle style and offering instruction to people with rising social expectations. Early eighteenth-century publishers and editors recognized the existence of such an audience and found the means for satisfying its taste. . . . [A] host of periodical writers, Addison and Sir Richard Steele outstanding among them, shaped their styles and contents to satisfy these readers' tastes and interests. Magazines—those medleys of borrowed and original material and open-invitations to reader participation in publication—struck what modern critics would term a distinctly middlebrow note in literature."The most pronounced features of the magazine were its brevity of individual items and the variety of its contents. Consequently, the essay played a significant role in such periodicals, presenting commentary on politics, religion, and social matters among its many topics." (Robert Donald Spector, Samuel Johnson and the Essay. Greenwood, 1997) "The formal properties of the periodical essay were largely defined through the practice of Joseph Addison and Steele in their two most widely read series, the "Tatler" (1709-1711) and the "Spectator" (1711-1712; 1714). Many characteristics of these two papers—the fictitious nominal proprietor, the group of fictitious contributors who offer advice and observations from their special viewpoints, the miscellaneous and constantly changing fields of discourse, the use of exemplary character sketches, letters to the editor from fictitious correspondents, and various other typical features—existed before Addison and Steele set to work, but these two wrote with such effectiveness and cultivated such attention in their readers that the writing in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* served as the models for periodical writing in the next seven or eight decades." (James R. Kuist, "Periodical Essay." *The Encyclopedia of the Essay*, edited by Tracy Chevalier. Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997) "By 1800 the single-essay periodical had virtually disappeared, replaced by the serial essay published in magazines and journals. Yet in many respects, the work of the early-19th-century 'familiar essayists' reinvigorated the Addisonian essay tradition, though emphasizing eclecticism, flexibility, and experientiality. Charles Lamb, in his serial *Essays of Elia* (published in the *London Magazine* during the 1820s), intensified the self-expressiveness of the experientialist essayistic voice. Thomas De Quincey's periodical essays blended autobiography and literary criticism, and William Hazlitt sought in his periodical essays to combine 'the literary and the conversational.'" (Kathryn Shevelov, "Essay." *Britain in the Hanoverian Age, 1714-1837*, ed. by Gerald Newman and Leslie Ellen Brown. Taylor & Francis, 1997) "Writers of the popular periodical essay have in common both brevity and regularity; their essays are generally intended to fill a specific space in their publications, be it so many column inches on a feature or op-ed page or a page or two in a predictable location in a magazine. Unlike freelance essayists who can shape the article to serve the subject matter, the columnist more often shapes the subject matter to fit the restrictions of the column. In some ways this is inhibiting because it forces the writer to limit and omit material, in other ways, it is liberating, because it frees the writer from the need to worry about finding a form and lets him or her concentrate on the development of ideas." (Robert L. Root, Jr., *Working at Writing: Columnists and Critics Composing*. SIU Press, 1991) Knowing how to write an essay is a skill that you can use throughout your life. The ability to organize ideas that you use in constructing an essay will help you write business letters, company memos, and marketing materials for your clubs and organizations. Anything you write will benefit from learning these simple parts of an essay. Purpose and Thesis Title Introduction Body of Information Conclusion Here are five steps to make it happen. Echo / Cultura / Getty Images Before you can start writing, you must have an idea to write about. If you haven't been assigned a topic, it's easier than you might think to come up with one of your own. Your best essays will be about things that light your fire. What do you feel passionate about? What topics do you find yourself arguing for or against? Choose the side of the topic you are "for" rather than "against" and your essay will be stronger. Do you love gardening? Sports? Photography? Volunteering? Are you an advocate for children? Domestic peace? The hungry or homeless? These are clues to your best essays. Put your idea into a single sentence. This is your thesis statement, your main idea. STOCK4B-RF / Getty Images Choose a title for your essay that expresses your primary idea. The strongest titles will include a verb. Take a look at any newspaper and you'll see that every title has a verb. Your title should make someone want to read what you have to say. Make it provocative. Here are a few ideas: America Needs Better Health Care Now The Use of the Mentor Archetype in _____ Who Is the She-Conomy? Why DJ Is the Queen of Pedicures Melanoma: Is It or Isn't? How to Achieve Natural Balance in Your Garden Expect to Be Changed by Reading _____ Some people will tell you to wait until you have finished writing to choose a title. Other people find that writing a title helps them stay focused. You can always review your title when you've finished the essay to ensure that it's as effective as it can be. Hero-Images / Getty Images Your introduction is one short paragraph, just a sentence or two, that states your thesis (your main idea) and introduces your reader to your topic. After your title, this is your next best chance to hook your reader. Here are some examples: Women are the chief buyers in 80 percent of America's households. If you're not marketing to them, you should be. Take another look at that spot on your arm. Is the shape irregular? Is it multicolored? You could have melanoma. Know the signs. Those tiny wasps flying around the blossoms in your garden can't sting you. Their stingers have evolved into egg-laying devices. The wasps, busying finding a place to lay their eggs, are participating in the balance of nature. Vincent Hazaf / PhotoAlto Agency RF Collections / Getty Images The body of your essay is where you develop your story or argument. Once you have finished your research and produced several pages of notes, go through them with a highlighter and mark the most important ideas, the key points. Choose the top three ideas and write each one at the top of a clean page. Now go through your notes again and pull out supporting ideas for each key point. You don't need a lot, just two or three for each one. Write a paragraph about each of these key points, using the information you've pulled from your notes. If you don't have enough for one, you might need a stronger key point. Do more research to support your point of view. It's always better to have too many sources than too few. Anna Bryukhanova/E Plus / Getty Images You've almost finished. The last paragraph of your essay is your conclusion. It, too, can be short, and it must tie back to your introduction. In your introduction, you stated the reason for your paper. In your conclusion, you should summarize how your key points support your thesis. Here's an example: By observing the balance of nature in her gardens, listening to lectures, and reading everything she can get her hands on about insects and native plants, Lucinda has grown passionate about natural balance. "It's easy to get passionate if you just take time to look," she says. If you're still worried about your essay after trying on your own, consider hiring an essay editing service. Reputable services will edit your work, not rewrite it. Choose carefully. One service to consider is Essay Edge. Good luck! The next essay will be easier. The term essay comes from the French for "trial" or "attempt." French author Michel de Montaigne coined the term when he assigned the title *Essais* to his first publication in 1580. In "Montaigne: A Biography" (1984), Donald Frame notes that Montaigne "often used the verb *essayer* (in modern French, normally to try) in ways close to his project, related to experience, with the sense of trying out or testing." An essay is a short work of nonfiction, while a writer of essays is called an essayist. In writing instruction, essay is often used as another word for composition. In an essay, an authorial voice (or narrator) typically invites an implied reader (the audience) to accept as authentic a certain textual mode of experience. "An essay is a composition, usually in prose, . . . which may be of only a few hundred words (like Bacon's "Essays") or of book length (like Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding") and which discusses, formally or informally, a topic or a variety of topics."(J.A. Cuddon, "Dictionary of Literary Terms". Basil, 1991) "Essays are how we speak to one another in print — caroming thoughts not merely in order to convey a certain packet of information, but with a special edge or bounce of personal character in a kind of public letter."(Edward Hoagland, Introduction, "The Best American Essays: 1999". Houghton, 1999) "[T]he essay traffics in fact and tells the truth, yet it seems to feel free to enliven, to shape, to embellish, to make use as necessary of elements of the imaginative and the fictive — thus its inclusion in that rather unfortunate current designation 'creative nonfiction.'"(G. Douglas Atkins, "Reading Essays: An Invitation". University of Georgia Press, 2007) Montaigne's Autobiographical Essays"Although Michel de Montaigne, who fathered the modern essay in the 16th century, wrote autobiographically (like the essayists who claim to be his followers today), his autobiography was always in the service of larger existential discoveries. He was forever on the lookout for life lessons. If he recounted the sauces he had for dinner and the stones that weighted his kidney, it was to find an element of truth that we could put in our pockets and carry away, that he could put in his own pocket. After all, Philosophy — which is what he thought he practiced in his essays, as had his idols, Seneca and Cicero, before him — is about 'learning to live.' And here lies the problem with essayists today: not that they speak of themselves, but that they do so with no effort to make their experience relevant or useful to anyone else, with no effort to extract from it any generalizable insight into the human condition."(Cristina Nehring, "What's Wrong With the American Essay." Truthdig, Nov. 29, 2007) The Artful Formlessness of the Essay"(Glood essays are works of literary art. Their supposed formlessness is more a strategy to disarm the reader with the appearance of unstudied spontaneity than a reality of composition. . . . "The essay form as a whole has long been associated with an experimental method. This idea goes back to Montaigne and his endlessly suggestive use of the term *essai* for his writing. To essay is to attempt, to test, to make a run at something without knowing whether you are going to succeed. The experimental association also derives from the other fountain-head of the essay, Francis Bacon, and his stress on the empirical inductive method, so useful in the development of the social sciences."(Phillip Lopate, "The Art of the Personal Essay". Anchor, 1994) Articles vs. Essays" [W]hat finally distinguishes an essay from an article may just be the author's gumption, the extent to which personal voice, vision, and style are the prime movers and shapers, even though the authorial 'I' may be only a remote energy, nowhere visible but everywhere present."(Justin Kaplan, ed. "The Best American Essays: 1990". Ticknor & Fields, 1990) "I am predisposed to the essay with knowledge to impart — but, unlike journalism, which exists primarily to present facts, the essays transcend their data, or transmute it into personal meaning. The memorale essay, unlike the article, is not place or time-bound; it survives the occasion of its original composition. Indeed, in the most brilliant essays, language is not merely the medium of communication; it is communication."(Joyce Carol Oates, quoted by Robert Atwan in "The Best American Essays, College Edition", 2nd ed. Houghton Mifflin, 1998)"I speak of a 'genuine' essay because fakes abound. Here the old-fashioned term poetaster may apply, if only obliquely. As the poetaster is to the poet — a lesser aspirant — so the average article is to the essay: a look-alike knockoff guaranteed not to wear well. An article is often gossip. An essay is reflection and insight. An article often has the temporary advantage of social heat — what's hot out there right now. An essay's heat is interior. An article can be timely, topical, engaged in the issues and personalities of the moment; it is likely to be stale within the month. In five years it may have acquired the quaint aura of a rotary phone. An article is usually Siamese-twinned to its date of birth. An essay defies its date of birth — and ours, too. (A necessary caveat: some genuine essays are popularly called 'articles' — but this is no more than an idle, though persistent, habit of speech. What's in a name? The ephemeral is the ephemeral. The enduring is the enduring.)"(Cynthia Ozick, "SHE: Portrait of the Essay as a Warm Body." *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 1998) The Status of the Essay"Though the essay has been a popular form of writing in British and American periodicals since the 18th century, until recently its status in the literary canon has been, at best, uncertain. Relegated to the composition class, frequently dismissed as mere journalism, and generally ignored as an object for serious academic study, the essay has sat, in James Thurber's phrase, ' on the edge of the chair of Literature.' "In recent years, however, prompted by both a renewed interest in rhetoric and by poststructuralist redefinitions of literature itself, the essay — as well as such related forms of 'literary nonfiction' as biography, autobiography, and travel and nature writing — has begun to attract increasing critical attention and respect."(Richard Nordquist, "Essay," in "Encyclopedia of American Literature", ed. S. R. Serafin. Continuum, 1999) The Contemporary Essay"At present, the American magazine essay, both the long feature piece and the critical essay, is flourishing, in unlikely circumstances..."There are plenty of reasons for this. One is that magazines, big and small, are taking over some of the cultural and literary ground vacated by newspapers in their seemingly unstoppable evaporation. Another is that the contemporary essay has for some time now been gaining energy as an escape from, or rival to, the perceived conservatism of much mainstream fiction..."So the contemporary essay is often to be seen engaged in acts of apparent anti-novelization: in place of plot, there is drift or the fracture of numbered paragraphs; in place of a frozen verisimilitude, there may be a sly and knowing movement between reality and fictionality; in place of the impersonal author of standard-issue third-person realism, the authorial self pops in and out of the picture, with a liberty hard to pull off in fiction."(James Wood, "Reality Effects." *The New Yorker*, Dec. 19 & 26, 2011) The Lighter Side of Essays: "The Breakfast Club" Essay Assignment"All right people, we're going to try something a little different today. We are going to write an essay of not less than a thousand words describing to me who you think you are. And when I say 'essay,' I mean 'essay,' not one word repeated a thousand times. Is that clear, Mr. Bender?"(Paul Gleason as Mr. Vernon)Saturday, March 24, 1984Shermer High SchoolShermer, Illinois 60062Dear Mr. Vernon,We accept the fact that we had to sacrifice a whole Saturday in detention for whatever it was we did wrong. What we did was wrong. But we think you're crazy to make us write this essay telling you who we think we are. What do you care? You see us as you want to see us — in the simplest terms, in the most convenient definitions. You see us as a brain, an athlete, a basket case, a princess and a criminal. Correct? That's the way we saw each other at seven o'clock this morning. We were brainwashed...But what we found out is that each one of us is a brain and an athlete and a basket case, a princess, and a criminal. Does that answer your question?Sincerely yours,The Breakfast Club(Anthony Michael Hall as Brian Johnson, "The Breakfast Club", 1985)

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