



Essay Writing

Mark Koester



Essential Elements

Most important elements of essay writing

- Analysis
- Ideas
- Supporting Details
- Arguments
- Organization.

Good Essay Writing...

- As we have seen by looking at a few examples of essay writing, good essays are a combination of good analysis of the question/problem, good ideas and details related to the problem, good arguments, and good organization.
- Before you starting writing about any subject it is important to think some...

Essay Prompts

- Nearly all essay writing tests will present you with a statement, situation, or scenario and ask you to take a position and support it.
- Here's an example:

Some television shows are dramas, some are situation comedies, and some are “reality” shows that deal with real people in real situations. Which type of television show do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

The Answer? It Depends.

- As you can see, the topic is general enough for anyone to write about. There's no right or wrong answer; the point is for you to state your preference and explain why that is your preference.
- While the essay prompts are all of this general “take a position” type, they can be organized into five more specific categories:
 - 1. Agree or disagree with a statement.
 - 2. Take a position and explain it.
 - 3. Describe and explain a characteristic.
 - 4. Respond to a “What if?” situation.
 - 5. Explain a cause or effect.



English Tests

- There are dozens of English language tests for foreigners today. But if you want to study abroad, the choices are much smaller. Specifically, depending on the country you are interested in, you need to take one of the *college entrance exams for foreigners*.
- If you want to go to England, Australia or New Zealand, you'll need to take the **IELTS**. If you are interested in going to the USA or Canada or several other programs abroad, you'll need to take the **TOEFL iBT**.
- And if you are interested in doing Masters studies, you'll most likely need to take the **GRE**. Or if it is an MBA program you'll need to take the **GMAT**.



TOEFL

- These exams measure your ability to write in standard academic English.
- All of these exams test your English ability in all the key areas, including reading, writing, speaking and listening as well as certain “integrated” activities that test you in multiple skills at the same time.
- The TOEFL has two writing sections: Independent Writing task and Integrated Writing task.
- Integrated Writing asks you to see if you understood different resources (listening and writing)

TOEFL Independent Writing

- In the TOEFL Independent Writing, students are asked to write an essay on a given general question.
- The purpose of this Writing task is to measure the students' ability to state their opinions or express their comments on topics which are based on their personal knowledge and experience.
- The students should also support their ideas and opinions with examples or details. Students are given 30 minutes to write their essays. The essay should be approximately 300 words.

Essay Structure

- The basic structure of any essay is:
 - an introduction,
 - a body and
 - a conclusion.
- Last class we looked at the structure of most essay writing, especially essay writing for standardized tests. That is the classic 5-paragraph essay.
- In essay writing, it is important to use proper structure when writing in order to keep your ideas clear and understandable.

5-paragraph Essay

- Paragraph 1: this is your introduction where you tell your reader what the general subject is and what you are specifically going to talk about in your essay (thesis statement)
- Paragraph 2-4: these paragraphs present separate examples, arguments and details that support your claim or thesis.
- Paragraph 5: this is where you repeat your claim and what it is the best answer and finally you try to give a good conclusion or ending.

Thesis Statement

- *Going Off Topic!* One of the biggest and easiest mistakes to make when writing an essay is to try to talk about too many things or to start talking about one subject and suddenly talk about something else.
- *Concise.* Having a clear yet simple thesis statement (or central claim that you will support) will help you a lot in writing your essay.
- *Defendable.* The best (and safest!) choice when preparing a thesis statement is chose a topic or argument that you can defend.

Essay Writing Tips

- Learn Vocabulary...
- Linking or Transition Words and Phrases...
- Learn the essay structure well and follow this structure (introduction, body, and conclusion) when you write your essays.
- Support Your Essay with examples, details and arguments
- Practice Organizing Your Essay. Before starting your essay writing, take a few minutes to make an outline of your essay. Don't worry if this seems like a waste of time, because a basic outline of what you want to write about will improve your ability to write clearly and completely. It will help keep your essay coherent and well-organized.

Essay Outlines

- Before starting your written response allow 2-5 minutes to make an outline of your essay.
- Do not worry that the time is running, a good outline will save you lots of troubles and time while writing.
- The essay outline should include the major ideas for the paragraphs in 2-3 main phrases per paragraph, as well as some examples and supporting details.
- Do not write complete sentences, but some words and phrases that may help you follow that outline and add additional information to develop a well-organized and coherent essay.

Sample Outline

- 1: Intro:
 - Thesis:
- 2: Idea #1:
 - Support / Detail
- 3: Idea #2:
- 4: Idea #3:
- 5: Conclusion

How should children spend their time?

Topic 112: Make an essay outline



How should children spend their time?

- 1: Intro: With development education and knowledge has become more and more important. But play / creativity are also important
 - Thesis: So time should be balanced between play and learning without going to extremes
- 2: Idea #1: If a student only studies and never plays, they'll never develop creativity
 - Many students today cannot think for themselves
 - Miss opportunities too develop their own interests and find their talents
- 3: Idea #2: Pressure on Students can hurt their abilities
 - Students feel a lot of pressure for society which can hurt their development and even make them do bad things like addictions, drinking or suicide
- 4: Idea #3: But if you don't get a good education you won't be able to find a good job so you must study too.
 - For example, kids that don't get to go to school at an early age do not develop as well as kids that start earlier.
- 5: Conclusion: We must balance these two extremes in order to develop fully

In our rapidly changing world people begin to understand more and more that nothing is so valuable but knowledge. Education has become an important part of people's life. Due to this some people think that children should begin their formal education at a very early age and should spend most of their time on school studies. But others believe that young children should spend most of their time playing. To my mind these two views should be balanced so as not to go to the extremes.

The first point of view that children should start early on their studies make me assume that it can be harmful and damaging for a child's physical development and personality. As a teacher I have seen the result of beginning education too early. Children are deprived of the enjoyment of their childhood years and their intrinsic desire to play. Some children cannot concentrate on their study and keep playing at school. Besides, the children who are not allowed to play and are forced to study can begin to detest the education process and the teachers. So, to force children to study at an early age can spoil the whole picture.

When facing the question of early education it is also important to note that children who begin to study at an early age are often overloaded by studying material and homework, which they are not ready to cope with. Besides some parents neglect their children and do not pay enough attention to the children's problems at school thinking that they are still young.

The second opinion that children should play instead of study also has disadvantages. In this case children are not well prepared for their school life at all. They have no idea what he is going to do at school. In addition, research shows that early education can benefit children's brain development and prepare them better for the futures school education. The most important time for early education could be missed if parents do not send their children to school at an appropriate age.

In conclusion I would like to point out that that early education and play should be well balanced so that their enjoyment of childhood that is once in a lifetime would not be deprived. It is quite important for governments to design and implement an appropriate primary education system so that young children can have chances to both learn and play at school.

The Answer? It Depends.

- As you can see, the topic is general enough for anyone to write about. There's no right or wrong answer; the point is for you to state your preference and explain why that is your preference.
- While the essay prompts are all of this general “take a position” type, they can be organized into five more specific categories:
 - 1. Agree or disagree with a statement.
 - 2. Take a position and explain it.
 - 3. Describe and explain a characteristic.
 - 4. Respond to a “What if?” situation.
 - 5. Explain a cause or effect.

#1: Agree or Disagree

- This is probably the most common kind of essay prompt on the TOEFL exam. You will be presented with a statement and be asked to agree or disagree with that statement. Here are some examples:
- *Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Sometimes, you have to lose in order to win. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.*

#1: Agree or Disagree

- *Do you agree that money is the root of all evil? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.*

Final Exam

- Many students have asked me what will be on the final exam. So just so you know well in advance, here is what will be on your final exam:
 - ✓ **Basic Vocabulary** on elements of story and story writing and on the elements of essay writing (plot, conflict, thesis statement, etc.)
 - ✓ **Grammar Questions:** Since we spent several weeks practicing and reviewing verb tense, there will be several questions on the test checking proper verb usage (past, present, future and conditional)
 - ✓ **Essay Writing:** Like we have been working on in class, there will be an essay writing section on the exam where you will express your opinion in essay form on a familiar topic or question. (1-2 pages or around 300 or so words)