

How to write an essay

Lesson 1

Definition of an Essay

The word "essay" derives from Latin meaning 'weighing out'. It comes from the French verb "*essayer*" means 'to test', 'try' or 'make a first attempt'¹. The essay is then an attempt to communicate information, convey a message, give opinion, or express feeling, and it usually presents an argument about a topic. A good essay should map out a single coherent argument, using supporting evidence and analysis to back up each point. In the university context, an essay is a task that gives the students an opportunity to

explore and clarify thoughts about a given topic and it is one of the most common types of assignment.

An essay is a piece of academic writing, several coherent paragraphs², that is written to convince the reader of something or to simply inform him about a particular topic. Essays are an intellectual exploration of a topic, involving looking at different arguments and evidence and developing the writer's perspective. In order for the reader to be convinced or adequately informed, the essay must include three important parts to make it flow in a logical way.

Parts of a good essay

Like the paragraph, the essay also consists of three parts:

- The introduction (or the introductory paragraph).
- The body (or the developmental paragraphs).
- The conclusion (or the concluding paragraph).

2 In a standard short essay, five paragraphs can provide the reader with enough information in a short amount of space.

