

Tips For Writing a Good English Essay

1, Getting Ideas

The first step in writing an essay is having something to say. If you have several topics to choose from, **first brainstorm** (list as many ideas or examples which you can think of about that topic) then look at your ideas and decide which is the most interesting or which you have the most information and examples for. **Then think of more arguments which support your idea.** Make sure you have a definite opinion concerning the topic but this does not have to be a simple yes or no. It could be a "not always" or an "it depends on...."

2, Structure

A good essay is built from good coherent paragraphs. The first line of each paragraph should be indented and you can also put a space between them. Your **essay should probably consist of at least four or five paragraphs, including an introductory paragraph and a concluding paragraph.**

The Introductory Paragraph.

Above all, your **introductory paragraph must include a clear statement of your opinion about the topic. It must tell what your essay is about.** You could write, "It is my opinion that traveling by train is better than traveling by car." However this might not be the best first sentence for your essay. Remember that the first paragraph needs to catch the reader's attention. There will be lots of other essays about the same topic and yours needs to stand out. You might, for instance, start by describing a busy street in your town, the smell of car exhaust and the sounds of honking horns and screeching tires. Then you can bring out your topic sentence.

The Body

Everything in the essay should relate to the thesis statement. For instance, if you are writing about how you feel that more people should travel by train than by car today, you should not waste a lot of time and energy writing about the history of locomotives (where they were invented, who invented them, etc.) This does not directly relate to your topic.

The body of your essay should be divided into paragraphs. **Each different idea deserves its own paragraph.** Paragraphs should have begin with words or phrases which lead the reader along such as "in my opinion" "furthermore" "however" "in spite of" "firstly" "the second reason" so that the transitions between ideas are smooth. The first sentence should be a topic sentence which states the main idea and is more general than the statements which follow. Part of organizing your essay is making sure that each paragraph adds something to the essay and that each clause or sentence is linked effectively to something that has been written before.

Supporting sentences should be full of details, reasons, examples, facts or illustrations. Specific examples and vivid illustrations will make your essay more interesting to read and more convincing and it will stand out better from the others. Do not just say, for instance, that driving a car is more expensive. Say how much it costs to buy enough gasoline to go from Bratislava to Košice and how much the train ticket costs. Talk about how much it costs to buy or repair a car. Talk about how much it costs the government to repair roads. If you want to say that trains are safer, do not just say that you know someone who has been in two car

accidents. Say that your neighbor, Mr. Koreň, has been in a couple of accidents and describe how he felt. Examples from your own life or personal experiences are often more interesting.

You can make your essay more convincing by saving your best idea until the last paragraph of the body. You might use a phrase such as “and finally” “last but not least” “most importantly” or “but the main reason for”

The Concluding Paragraph

In the concluding paragraph you should summarize what you have said and restate the thesis in new words. You can also appeal to the reader’s emotions or draw a conclusion based on the information in the body. It is important to remember that **the concluding paragraph should contain no new information.** The introductory and the concluding paragraphs are the best places to grab your reader’s attention and they are the parts that the reader is most likely to remember. This is your chance to use sensational language and be dramatic. It should create closure for the essay and the reader should feel complete.

3, An Example of an Essay

Title	A Double Standard
Introductory Paragraph	The Women’s Movement has helped improve the lives of women in the United States in many ways. We can work at jobs formerly closed to us. We are more likely to get pay comparable to that of men. We are less likely to hear us men call “baby” and more likely to have them treat us as adults. But the Women’s movement hasn’t had much impact on my family, especially on the way my brother and I are treated. <i>Thesis Statement</i> <i>Just because he is male he has many privileges and advantages that are denied me just because I’m female.</i>
First Supporting Paragraph	Even though he is two years younger than I, he is much more free to stay out late and to come and go as he pleases. If I come home late after midnight, my dad throws a fit. He wants to know where I’ve been, who I was with, and who drove me home. Even if I tell him I went to a church meeting and had a pizza afterwards with several girlfriends, he tells me that if it happens again I won’ be allowed out of the house after dark for a month. Meanwhile, my brother is coming home at one or two in the morning, and all my dad says the next day is, “Well, did you have a good time last night?”
Second Supporting Paragraph	It irritates me that my brother doesn’t have to do nearly as much work around the house as I do. I am expected to set the table for all meals, help Mom with the cooking, and wash the dishes by myself. On Saturdays, it’s my job to mop and wax the kitchen floor and vacuum all the rugs. And what does Little Brother do? Once in a while he carries out the garbage. He’s supposed to keep the lawn mowed, but somehow he always seems to have baseball practice or some other crucial activity just when the grass gets a bit long. So Dad does it, saying he needs the exercise anyway.
Third Supporting Paragraph	Then there’s the matter of the car. You can guess who gets to use it and who doesn’t. He drives to classes. I take the bus to my morning job and the bus to my afternoon classes. I told my friend Shauna that I thought I could get the car to take us to the new Spielberg movie on Saturday night. But Brother gets the car to drive his buddies to a rock concert at the auditorium. Mother said it was too dangerous for him to take the bus to that part of town.
Conclusion	It isn’t fair that my brother has more freedom than I, that he gets out of household chores, and that he monopolizes use of the car. Whoever said it’s a man’s world must have been peeking into our house.