

Favorite Activity

Informative/Explanatory Essays

Key Prompt Words: explain, explore, show, detail, define, demonstrate, tell why, talk about, write why

Purpose: To explain, inform, teach, or clarify a topic to the reader

Important Aspects: Audience

- Assume that the reader knows nothing about this topic
- Task
 - Be sure you are clear about your goal for your essay; are you
 - identifying the parts of an object?
 - communicating the steps of a process?
 - explaining the characteristics of something?

To set up an **Informative/Explanatory Essay**, consider the following outlines:

1. Introduction
2. Part #1
3. Part #2
4. Part #3
5. Conclusion

1. Introduction
2. Step #1
3. Step #2
4. Step #3
5. Conclusion

1. Introduction
2. Characteristic #1
3. Characteristic #2
4. Characteristic #3
5. Conclusion
- 6.

Organizing Informative/Explanatory Essays

Beyond the Obvious

It is important that you go beyond the obvious to teach your reader something new, HOWEVER, you must not skip or gloss over important steps of a process—even if you think it is easy or it is obvious to you!

Example of Informative/Explanatory Prompt:

Detail the steps you would need to take in planning a great birthday party for one of your friends.

Informative/Explanatory Thesis

Remember that in an Informative/Explanatory essay, you are explaining or teaching something to your audience. For Informative/Explanatory thesis statements, be sure to tell your audience what you are going to explain to them.

For Example:

Topic: How to make homemade ice cream.

Informative/Explanatory Thesis: Homemade ice cream is a delicious and refreshing treat that can be made in just a few simple steps.

Let's test this thesis.

1. Does this thesis offer a position or opinion?

The opinion that homemade ice cream is "delicious and refreshing" and can be made with just a few "simple" steps can be argued. Your reader may not know how easy it is, and will read the essay to see just how "simple" it is to make homemade ice cream. This positive opinion draws the reader in, as he/she wants to learn about this easy process.

2. Is the topic of the essay mentioned?

It is important to remember that the goal is to explain how to do something, and the thesis mentions that the reader will learn how to make ice cream.

Of course, you know that this thesis is just a simple thesis. If we want to write a "better" thesis statement, our thesis statement might look something like this:

With just a simple homemade ice cream machine, a few ingredients, and some patience, making delicious and refreshing homemade ice cream is a snap.

Some effective bridges, or transition words, to use when writing an Informative/Explanatory essay are those that indicate a succession or process:

about	after	afterward	at	at least	at the same time
before	during	immediately	finally	first	for example
for instance	earlier	in support of this	in fact	last	later
when	next	therefore	since	this shows	then
third	till	meanwhile	while	as a result	second

	Purpose	Organization	Elaboration of Evidence	Language and Vocabulary	Conventions
4	<p>The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * controlling idea or main idea of a topic is focused, clearly stated, and strongly maintained *controlling idea or main idea of a topic is introduced and communicated clearly within the context 	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure creating unity and complementarity: use of a variety of transitional strategies logical progression of ideas from beginning to end effective introduction and conclusion for audience and purpose strong connections among ideas, with some syntactic variety</p>	<p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response achieves substantial depth that is specific and relevant: use of evidence from sources is smoothly integrated, comprehensive, and concrete effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques</p>	<p>The response clearly and effectively expresses ideas, using precise language: use of academic and domain-specific vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</p>	<p>The response demonstrates a strong command of conventions: few, if any, errors are present in usage and sentence formation effective and consistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</p>
3	<p>he response is adequately sustained and generally focused: focus is clear and for the most part maintained, though some loosely related material may be present some context for the controlling idea or main idea of the topic is adequate</p>	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected: adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end adequate introduction and conclusion adequate, if slightly inconsistent, connection among ideas</p>	<p>The response provides adequate support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the use of sources, facts, and details: some evidence from sources is integrated, though citations may be general or imprecise adequate use of some elaborative techniques</p>	<p>The response adequately expresses ideas, employing a mix of precise with more general language use of domain-specific vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</p>	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions: some errors in usage and sentence formation may be present, but no systematic pattern of errors is displayed adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</p>
2	<p>The response is somewhat sustained and may have a minor drift in focus: may be clearly focused on the controlling or main idea, but is insufficiently sustained controlling idea or main idea may be unclear and somewhat unfocused</p>	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident: inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end conclusion and introduction, if present, are weak weak connection among ideas</p>	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes partial or uneven use of sources, facts, and details: evidence from sources is weakly integrated, and citations, if present, are uneven weak or uneven use of elaborative techniques</p>	<p>The response expresses ideas unevenly, using simplistic language: use of domain-specific vocabulary that may at times be inappropriate for the audience and purpose</p>	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions: frequent errors in usage may obscure meaning inconsistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</p>
1	<p>The response may be related to the topic but may provide little or no focus: may be very brief may have a major drift focus may be confusing or ambiguous</p>	<p>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure: few or no transitional strategies are evident frequent extraneous ideas may intrude</p>	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes little or no use of sources, facts, and details: use of evidence from the source material is minimal, absent, in error, or irrelevant</p>	<p>The response expression of ideas is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing: uses limited language or domain-specific vocabulary may have little sense of audience and purpose</p>	<p>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions: errors are frequent and severe and meaning is often obscure</p>

Informative/Explanatory Essay

Name:

Summarize the characteristics of an informative/explanatory essay:

You are going to spend the class period writing an essay about a favorite activity that you like to do. Your essay must be a minimum of two pages long, handwritten on lined paper. Before we begin, we will read a sample essay on football and complete the following.

Highlight the topic sentences in pink.

Highlight concrete details in yellow.

Highlight commentary in green.

Identify two transition words and underline them.

Identify any vocabulary related to football and circle the words.

Highlight the entire conclusion in pink. Explain how this conclusion relates to the topic in a new and interesting way:

Now, identify the topic that you are going to write about:

Football

What I like doing best is playing football, mainly because it is one of my best sports. One of the greatest things about it, in my opinion, is the anticipation, wondering what the other players are thinking about what you might do. Football is a physical game, of course, but it's the mental aspect that I appreciate the most.

At times football can get grueling, which makes the game even more exciting. The first time you make contact with another player (even with all that equipment) you get very sore. That is true for everyone, but in time you get used to the aches and pains. After awhile, you develop mental discipline, which allows you to ignore some of the pain. The mental discipline then allows you to go all out, to unload everything you have, every play. That's how you win games, everyone going all out, giving 110%.

The game takes concentration, just as much as any other sport, if not more. You develop this aspect in practice. That is why it is so important to have hours and hours of it. Mentally, you have to get over the fear, the fear of eleven madmen waiting for chance to make you eat dirt. And that comes through practice. Once you overcome the fear, you can concentrate on the more important things, like anticipating the other guy's next move. Studying the playbook and talking with other players also helps.

During the game, your mind clears of all thoughts. These thoughts become instinct. You have to react, and react quickly, and you develop reactions and instinct in practice. For example, when you're carrying the ball or about to make a tackle, you want to make sure you have more momentum than the other guy. If you don't you'll be leveled. But, you should react instinctively to that situation by increasing your momentum.

Playing defense, all you want to do is hit the man with the ball, hit him hard. Right when you unload for a stick, all your body tightens. Then you feel the impact. After you regain your thoughts, you wonder if you're all right. You wait for your brain to get the pain signal from the nerves. Even so, if you do get that signal, which is always the case, you keep right on playing. You can't let that experience shake your concentration.

On offense, while playing receiver, you can actually "hear" the footsteps of the defensive back as you're concentrating on catching the ball. What separates the men from the boys is the one who "hears" the footsteps but doesn't miss the ball. That's mental discipline, concentration.

Football is very physical or else it wouldn't be fun. But it is also a mental game and that is why it's challenging. You can get hurt in football if you screw up and ignore the right way to do things. However, mental discipline and concentration, which you develop during hours of practice, helps you avoid such mistakes.

Topic :

INFORMATIVE WRITING PLANNER

Paragraph #1: The Introduction
(attention getter, thesis statement, & preview of main points)

Paragraph #2: Topic Sentence

Paragraph #3: Topic Sentence

Paragraph #4: Topic Sentence

Supporting Evidence
(Facts & Examples)

Supporting Evidence
(Facts & Examples)

Supporting Evidence
(Facts & Examples)

Supporting Evidence
~~(Facts & Examples)~~
Commentary

Supporting Evidence
~~(Facts & Examples)~~
Commentary

Supporting Evidence
~~(Facts & Examples)~~
Commentary

Paragraph #5: The Conclusion



Commentary

Commentary

Commentary

Directions: As you read the informative essay, write any corrections to spelling or grammar and mark any places you have confusion. In addition, complete the following checklists and information.

1. _____ Make sure the essay has a minimum of five clearly defined paragraphs. If not, write on the essay where you see a good place for a paragraph as you are reading.
2. _____ Each paragraph only has one topic they are discussing.
3. _____ **Body paragraph one**
 - a. Write the topic:
 - b. Write one concrete detail from this paragraph:
 - c. Write one commentary from this paragraph:
4. _____ **Body paragraph two**
 - a. Write the topic:
 - b. Write one concrete detail from this paragraph:
 - c. Write one commentary from this paragraph:
5. _____ **Body paragraph three**
 - a. Write the topic:
 - b. Write one concrete detail from this paragraph:
 - c. Write one commentary from this paragraph:
6. _____ The conclusion restates the main ideas using new words.
7. Give one suggestion on how to improve the conclusion:
8. Title:

Give one suggestion on how to improve the title:

9. Read the introductory paragraph and check all that apply:

- a. _____ a simple, boring fact
- b. _____ no interesting attention grabber
- c. _____ unclear about the direction of the essay
- d. _____ makes you want to read more
- e. _____ clear attention grabber (question, statement, fact, quote, etc.)
- f. _____ clear direction for the essay

10. Give one suggestion on how to improve the attention grabber:

11. Write the most interesting thing you learned from reading this essay:

12. Give one suggestion about how the author could make this paper stronger:

13. Check all that apply for this paper:

- a. _____ the paper is well-organized
- b. _____ the paper is confusing
- c. _____ the paper is easy to read
- d. _____ the paper is awkward to read
- e. _____ the paper provided evidence to support the main idea
- f. _____ the paper stayed on topic
- g. _____ the paper taught me a lot about the topic
- h. _____ the paper had lots of commentary on the topic
- i. _____ the paper had only a few spelling or grammar mistakes
- j. _____ the paper had a clear connection to the title