



Process Essay Checklist

- ⇒ Does your thesis clearly state what will be explained/described?
- ⇒ Are your steps organized appropriately and in chronological order?
- ⇒ Do you have enough detail that the reader can understand your process?
- ⇒ Do you avoid distracting details that might keep the reader from understanding the process?
- ⇒ Do you use transitional words from step to step to ensure the reader understands when a new idea is beginning?
- ⇒ Do you define unfamiliar terms for the reader?
- ⇒ Is it clear from your thesis whether the reader should know how to complete this process after he/she has finished reading the paper?

Works Cited

- Fawcett, Susan. *Evergreen: A Guide to Writing with Readings*. 9th ed. Boston: Wadsworth/ Cengage, 2011. Print
- Kirsznner, Laurie and Stephen Mandell. *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide*. 9th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004. Print.



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Process



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Process

The process essay includes two types of essays: the how-to essay and the explanation essay. These types of essays are essential in helping the reader understand how to complete a task or to explain how an event occurred or something works.

What Is the How-To Essay?

The how-to essay helps the reader understand how something is done, enabling him or her to complete the task. Once the reader has finished a well-written how-to essay, he or she should have the knowledge to proceed with the task described.

The thesis statement for a how-to essay should clearly explain the goal or task the reader should be able to accomplish after finishing the paper.

i.e., When writing an essay for college, it is important to follow the stages of writing, prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing, in order to craft a well-written paper.

What Is the Explanation Essay?

The explanation essay tells the audience how an event occurred or how something works. After completing the explanation essay, the audience should be able to understand a concept or event better, but will not know how to do something.

The thesis statement for the explanation essay should clearly identify what is going to be explained: how something works, how it happens, or how it came to be.

i.e., Orson Scott Card had a complex process when writing his novel *Speaker for the Dead* which included many failed attempts and new beginnings as he revised.

Outline for a How-To Essay:

Introduction:

- Thesis: make sure the thesis clarifies what it is he/she will be learning how to do

Body Paragraph(s):

- Organize the paragraphs chronologically according to the order that the reader is expected to complete the steps
- Don't skip steps, even if you consider them to be understood. Assume that the reader has never attempted this task before and ALL steps are required.
- Give plenty of detail
- Define any terms the reader may not understand
- Write these steps in paragraph format. Avoid listing steps out in bullets or numbered steps.
- Use transition words to help the reader understand when you are moving on to a new step

Conclusion:

- Wrap up your paper: make sure to address why the reader would want to complete these steps, i.e., if you are explaining how to change the oil in a car, it might be helpful to point out how much money changing your own oil can save.

Transitions for a Process Essay:

Beginning a Process

first
initially
the first step
the first stage

Ending a Process

finally
last
the final step

Continuing a Process

afterward
after that
later
meanwhile
next

then
second
third
the second stage
the next step

Outline for a Explanation Essay:

Introduction:

- Thesis: make sure your thesis establishes what it is that you want the reader to understand better and why

Body Paragraph(s):

- Organize the paragraphs chronologically according to the order of events or steps so the reader can fully comprehend how something works, how it happens, or how it came to be
- Don't skip steps
- Give plenty of detail
- Define any terms the reader may not understand
- Use transition words to make each stage clear for the reader

Conclusion:

- Wrap up your paper: make sure you remind the reader of what he or she should be learning here and why it may be relevant

NOTE: While details are important in a process essay, make sure you do not include unnecessary details that will distract the reader.

NOTE: Before you start to write, think of your process as a series of pictures. Visualizing what you will be describing or explaining will enable you to make it clear for your reader.

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