

“Handout: Elements of an Expository Essay”

The key components and techniques listed below will help you prepare for and organize information for writing your expository essay.

Key Components of an Expository Essay

- Expository writing defines and explains.
- Introductory or lead paragraph invites the reader to explore the topic.
- Thesis statement reveals overall purpose of the writing.
- Body consists of three or more points, descriptions, or examples.
- Concluding paragraph restates the thesis and offers the reader the opportunity to reflect further on the topic.

Techniques

- Show – Don’t tell.
- Paraphrase relevant facts or stories.
- Organization varies: chronological, order of importance, or order of familiarity.
- Address separate aspects of the topic in each paragraph.
- Paragraphs elaborate on key components.
- Specific details and examples support the main idea of each paragraph.
- Proofread and delete unrelated or unnecessary information.

Sample Expository Essay Outline

Pizza is my favorite food because . . .

- I There are several reasons why pizza is my favorite food.
- II It is tasty.
 - A A variety of cheese tops a pizza nicely.
 - B Red or white sauce goes well with all the toppings.
 - C Pepperoni is my favorite topping.
- III It is fun to eat.
 - A Cheese stretches from the plate to my mouth.
 - B Sharing is easy.
 - C A single pizza can have a variety of toppings.
- IV It is worth paying for.
 - A Order in.
 - B Have a party.
 - C Great leftovers.
- V Pizza is my favorite food because it is tasty, fun to eat, and worth paying for.