



The Lantern English Co.
The Advanced Writer

The Expository Essay Fast Track – Syllabus

Course Description: In this class, students learn about the expository essay in our standard eight-week format. Expository thesis development will be at the forefront of this class, as students learn to inform readers about meaningful topics while utilizing research & citation skills. Students will use their skills in expository writing to construct a definition essay, a classification essay, a compare/contrast essay, a cause and effect essay, and a problem and solution essay. Students should be prepared to write six essays in this class (one essay per week, Lessons 3-8).

Course Outline:

Week One: The Expository Thesis

Week Two: Review of Sources and Citations

Week Three: The Expository Essay

Week Four: The Definition Essay

Week Five: The Classification Essay

Week Six: The Compare and Contrast Essay

Week Seven: The Cause and Effect Essay

Week Eight: The Problem and Solution Essay

Grading Information: All assignments will be graded using *The Advanced Writer* Grading Rubric and averaged to receive a final course grade.



The Expository Essay Fast Track

Lesson Three: The Expository Essay

SAMPLE LESSON

In Lesson 1, we discussed that expository writing is meant to inform, explain, describe, or define. Expository essays focus on giving information to the reader; they do not give opinion, create debate, or attempt to persuade towards any particular view.

An expository essay can be written using any of the standard organizational structures or a combination of structures. Remember, these organizational structures are chronological order, classification, order of space/details, order of importance, cause and effect, compare and contrast.

WRITING AN EXPOSITORY ESSAY –

1. Choose and/or narrow your topic. This is an idea with which you are already quite familiar, but it bears repeating. If the assignment gives you a topic, narrow it to make it more focused and interesting. If you must choose your own topic, write about something about which you have either some knowledge or passion or both.

Also, make sure you choose and narrow a topic that is appropriate to the essay length requirements. If the assignment is for a two-page essay, trying to write about “The History of the Civil War” is not wise. You would never be able to adequately cover the topic in such a small amount of space. On the other hand, if the assignment is for a lengthy essay, do not choose too small of a topic that it becomes difficult to fill up the pages with information.

2. Write a thesis. Once you have a specific topic, you must formulate a working thesis. Remember, this thesis lays the groundwork for your essay. It needs to be strong, clear, and logical—stating a focused idea for your paper. This thesis should appear in your introduction.

3. Choose appropriate supporting sources. Think about what information needs are created from your particular thesis. Then consider what sources will best meet these needs and help you develop and support your thesis. Remember to balance your source use with your own ideas and analysis. Remember to properly cite any sources used.

4. Write a clear, purposeful introduction. Remember the concepts we learned in *Essay Basics* and *Growing the Essay* for writing introductions. Your introduction should always include a hook, a bridge, and a thesis (in this order). Be straightforward with what you intend to expose in the essay while still engaging the reader. Keep the introduction unified and focused. Omit weak qualifiers such as, “I hope you learn this” or “I hope after reading this, you...”

5. Use transitions words, phrases, and sentences: Remember that transitions help the reader understand the connection between each idea and paragraph. Use logical transitions that clearly show where you are going in the essay each step of the way. Consider it this way: “[t]ransitions are the mortar that holds the foundation of the essay together. Without logical progression of thought, the reader is unable to follow the essay’s argument, and the structure will collapse.” (1)

6. Give good details and specific examples. Use of strong detail and examples helps the reader engage with and understand the topic.

7. Write a strong conclusion. Remember the concepts we learned in *Essay Basics* and *Growing the Essay* for writing conclusions. Your conclusion should restate the thesis, summarize the main points, and provide the reader with a strong finish. Do not merely reword your introduction. Help the reader to see how everything comes together in the end. Avoid using weak qualifiers such as, “I hope you enjoyed my essay” or “I hope you learned this.”

MORE TO CONSIDER –

The ideas above are all pretty simple and straightforward. If you completed our *Essay Basics* and *Growing the Essay* classes, you have already written a number of expository essays and should not find the concept very complicated. So, what makes this class more challenging? What is the next step?

To progress in your writing of expository essays, you should focus on analyzing your topics – thinking critically about them. Explaining how to bake a chocolate cake is not going to fill up a three-page essay, for example. Throughout this class, you will need to develop thesis statements that demand some critical

thinking, some analysis, some research. You can still write about things that interest you or that you have some knowledge about, but you will need to go beyond surface details.

To think about something critically for expository writing means that you will consider all of the parts or elements of the topic; you will examine and think about the topic carefully, so you can understand it completely, determine meaning, identify causes, identify possible results, or identify potential solutions.

We can use these questions to help:

- What are the facts?
- What is the meaning?
- Why is this important?
- What are the reasons behind this?
- What are the possible solutions?
- What examples can I give to show the meaning, importance, reasons, solutions, etc?

Assignment 3: Using the thesis you chose and the works cited list you created last week, write a three (3) to five (5) page expository essay. Remember that your essay should inform, explain, describe, or define. Do not provide your opinion or create debate.

Ensure that the essay is formatted properly. Write your name and the date in the upper left-hand corner. Add a title centered above the essay. Properly format the paragraphs with an indented first line or a full space between each paragraph, and left-align the text. Justified text is optional but not required. Content should be typed in one of the standard fonts, size 12, double spaced.

We have attached two examples for your review as well.

Essay requirements:

- three to five pages
- standard font, size 12
- double spacing
- at least **five primary or secondary sources** for citation
- works cited list, MLA style
- proper use of either in-text citations or parenthetical citations, MLA style

Source –

1. “Expository Essays.” *Purdue Online Writing Lab*, Purdue University,
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/essay_writing/expository_essays.html.