

How to Write an Explanatory Essay

a sentence-by-sentence guide

Introductory Paragraph		
1	Hook	
2	Bridge statement: <small>This may show that... or This might prove that...</small>	
3	Thesis Statement: <small>What 3 main points are you explaining?</small>	
Body Paragraph #1		
1	Topic sentence	
2	Supporting Detail #1 <small>For example,...</small>	
3	Commentary	
4	Supporting Detail #2 <small>In addition,...</small>	
5	Commentary	
Body Paragraph #2		
1	Topic sentence	
2	Supporting Detail #1	
3	Commentary	
4	Supporting Detail #2	
5	Commentary	
Body Paragraph #3		
1	Topic sentence	
2	Supporting Detail #1	
3	Commentary	
4	Supporting Detail #2	
5	Commentary	
Concluding Paragraph		
1	Rephrase Thesis/claim <small>In summary</small>	
2	Bridge <small>How does your thesis statement connect to the concluding statement?</small>	
3	Concluding Statement <small>Make your reader think or smile!</small>	

Rephrasing is about varying word choice.

Strong WORD CHOICE is:

- specific, accurate, easy to understand
- natural, formula is not obvious, not robotic
- lively, strong verbs
- thesaurus is not overused
- clichés are avoided completely

REMEMBER:

- Expository writing is writing that explains.
- Use **transitions** at or above grade level standard such as:
 - to illustrate
 - in contrast
 - consequently
 - as a result
 - in the same way
 - in other words
 - put another way
 - even though
 - in addition
 - for example
 - plus
 - namely
 - that is to say
 - another
 - likewise
 - in fact
 - moreover
 - besides
 - in summary
 - finally
 - among
 - meanwhile

Keep this guide in the toolkit section of your binder for forever and ever. Do not throw away or recycle.

Introduction

Sentence #1: Hook

Get your reader's attention by using a quote about the topic. This quote can come from our reading during the unit, the list your teacher gave you, or another source you've found on your own.



You need to:

- Use quotation marks
- Give credit to the person who said the quote

Use SpringBoard pages 138 number 5 if you want a reminder about how to write this sentence.

Sentence #2: The Bridge



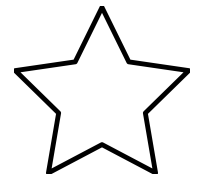
Write **ONE** sentence that explains the meaning of your quote and that acts as a “bridge” to your thesis statement—how are the two connected? Possible sentence starters are:

- This shows that . . .
- This illustrates how . . .
- This points out that . . .

Sentence #3: Thesis Statement

Write **ONE** sentence.

- Begin the sentence with your prompt
- List the topics of your three body paragraphs



****Do not write: “I am going to write about....” Because you do NOT announce your intent in a formal piece of academic writing****

Body Paragraphs

A body paragraph is one of the middle paragraphs in any essay. Each paragraph develops one of the main points you want to make to support your thesis statement.

Topic Sentence

Write one sentence that clearly states one key idea from your thesis.

Supporting Detail #1

Write a specific detail that supports your topic sentence. Supporting details for explanatory essays are: reasons, details, and examples. Do not make these up. Use actual examples that exist in the texts we read during this unit, real life, movies, etc. When you are borrowing from text or a movie, you need to reference your source.

Commentary on Supporting Detail #1

An explanation of how your supporting detail supports your topic sentence.

Supporting Detail #2

Write another specific detail that supports your topic sentence. Supporting details for explanatory essays are: reasons, details, and examples. Do not make these up. Use actual examples that exist in the texts we read during this unit, real life, movies, etc. When you are borrowing from text or a movie, you need to reference your source.

- Begin this sentence with a transition like “In addition...”

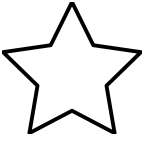
Commentary on Supporting Detail #2

An explanation of how your second supporting detail supports your topic sentence.

- ❖ Repeat this structure each time you write a new body paragraph
- ❖ Begin each body paragraph with a transition word or phrase

Conclusion

Sentence #1: Restate thesis



Begin the conclusion with a transition word or phrase.

Rephrase the thesis statement from your introduction. Be sure to write it in a new way. Don't repeat the exact words.

Sentence #2: Bridge

The bridge is the connection between your thesis and why your reader should care about what you had to say. It explains what the topic means to you, other people, or the world.



Sentence #3: Concluding Statement



Try to end with a sentence that makes your reader think or smile!

Avoid: "The End." "That is all I have to say." "That's my definition of"

Refer back to the quote you used as a hook. Remind the reader what the quote means and why the topic of the essay matters.

****Never introduce new information in the conclusion****

SpringBoard page 141 #4 & page 142 #6 have sample conclusions you can look at for help.