

How to Write a Free Response Question

Essay Writing Outline and Guide

Students write essays in school to answer a question. Their answer is an opinion stated in the form of a thesis. Next, students prove their opinionated thesis statement with evidence and careful reasoning (which is called an argument). This argument leads the reader to a conclusion that matches the writer's original thesis.

The Parts of an Essay

The Thesis

Essays must include a thesis. The thesis is a one, two or three sentence answer to question. Thesis statements can be simple or sophisticated. The more information and explanation given in a thesis the better it will be. Writing a good thesis requires a lot of understanding of a subject. Study!

The Argument:

An argument requires facts (names, dates, places, events, quotes, lists, books, legislation, treaties, wars) and explanations of how the facts prove the opinion stated in the thesis. Most good essays have a cycle of facts followed by explanation followed by more facts followed by more explanation and so on.

The Conclusions:

A conclusion is stated as a result of facts and explanation. A writer cannot have a conclusion without evidence (facts) and analysis (explanation). Each paragraph you write should end with a sentence that states the conclusion proven by the facts and explanation in the paragraph. Then the entire essay will *conclude* with a *conclusion* that is based on the facts and explanation in the previous paragraphs.

Essay Outline:

Here is an outline to help you see how an essay is set up. Essays begin with an opinion that needs to be proven (called the thesis). the structure of the facts and explanation that lead to a conclusion in an essay.

How to Write an Introduction:

Restate the question as a sentence or a sentence introducing the time period or topic. Then briefly state your opinionated answer to the question. This thesis must include at least three reasons. A sophisticated thesis will include three reasons, a fact or explanation for each reason as well as short phrases showing how each reason leads to the next reason.

How to Write the First Body Paragraph:

The first sentence must explain your first reason in your thesis. This is your topic sentence. The next sentences must include facts and explanations that argue for and prove that your topic sentence answers the question. Give a sentence of facts and then a sentence of explanation that specifically explains how your facts prove your opinion is true and answers the question. Repeat this fact then explanation cycle at least 3 times or until you have proven your topic sentence. Then write a concluding sentence that specifically relates your topic back to the question. Think of this concluding sentence as another thesis. Restate the topic sentence with at least three reasons that you have proven with evidence.

How to Write the Second Body Paragraph:

The first sentence must explain your second reason in your thesis. Follow the same steps as in the first body paragraph to finish this paragraph.

How to Write the Third Body Paragraph:

The first sentence must explain your third reason in your thesis. Follow the same steps as in the first body paragraph to finish this paragraph.

How to Write your Conclusion:

The first sentence should state the conclusion your facts and arguments have proved to the reader. The rest of your this paragraph should explain why your conclusion is important. Does it explain something important about the time period? Does it lead up to the next time period? Does it relate an important idea about history in general? Say something thoughtful. If you cannot think of anything thoughtful then clearly state your conclusion in a sentence or two and stop.

Tips:

Never use I or you (Unless specifically told that it is allowed.).

Do not use contractions in formal writing.

Organization is one of the most important parts of good writing. Make sure to organize from the first paragraph on.