

TYPES OF ESSAYS

Essays or compositions can be written in different ways and are usually classified into three main categories: **article, a report, and a letter.**

ARTICLES:

- **Descriptive essays** (about people, places, objects, etc)
- **Narrative essays or stories** about real or imaginary events which happened in the past.
- **Argumentative essays**, usually about controversial subjects, which include:
 - **opinion essays**, giving your personal opinion, and
 - **for-and-against essays**, giving the opposing arguments for both sides (*e.g. pros v. cons*)

REPORTS:

They are similar to articles but have a more formal, factual style, and each kind has its own special formal and features. Compositions in the form of reports include:

- **News reports** about recent events (*e.g. accidents, earthquakes, etc*), such as those found in newspapers
- **Assessment reports** discussing the suitability of a person, a place, a proposed plan, etc
- **Reviews** discussing a film, book, restaurant, etc and giving your opinion/ recommendation

LETTERS:

They are addressed to a specific person/group (*e.g. your parents, friends, etc*) for a specific reason (*e.g. to make a complaint, to apply for a job, etc*). Letters can be :

- **Friendly letters** to people we know or have a close relationship with ; often in informal style
- **Formal letters** to officials/managers/etc, about official/business matters, in formal style
- **Postcards** to friends or relatives

STEP 1.- PLAN THE LAYOUT OF YOUR COMPOSITION

First of all, organise your ideas into paragraphs. The layout of most types of writing consists of three parts: **an introduction, a main body and a conclusion.**

I Introduction

The main purpose of the introduction, this is a short, first paragraph, is to give the reader a general idea of the subject of the composition. It should call the reader's attention so that he/she wants to continue reading.

II Main Body

The main body usually consists of two or more paragraphs and it's aimed at developing points related to the subject of the composition. The number of paragraphs and the way you divide them depends on the specific topics of the composition. Each paragraph should deal with points related to the same topic. Whenever you discuss a new topic, you should begin a new paragraph. For example, in a for and against essay the main body should have two paragraphs: one discussing the points for, and another discussing the points against.

III Conclusion

The conclusion is a short final paragraph in which you can sum up the main idea of the subject, rephrase your point of view, make general comments, express your feelings, etc.

WRITING TIPS AND STRATEGIES

1.- PARAGRAPHS: 1 paragraph for each different idea.

Paragraphs develop the main idea this way:

- 1.- Introduce the main idea by means of a topic sentence (a sentence which shows the main idea of the paragraph; this way the readers have an idea of what the paragraph is about)
- 2.- The supporting sentences explain the main idea, give examples or reasons.
- 3.- (There may be a concluding sentence).

Example:

A lot of people think that singers and bands have got a very easy life. I couldn't disagree more with this opinion, as it's very far from the truth. Singers usually work for a long time every single day, sometimes under very hard conditions. They never know how much money they are going to make, as it depends on many things, such as the success that their songs have, the sale of their records and some other things. Many singers and bands are without work for months or even years. To make matters worse it's not easy for them to have a normal private life as magazines and newspapers follow them everywhere to get some sort of scoop and profitable information. These are some of the reasons why I can't share that opinion about how well and happily they live

Exercise:

- 1.- Underline the topic sentence.
- 2.- What are the supporting ideas.
- 3.- Are there any conclusions by the writer?

1.- NARRATIVES:

Narrative texts are usually written in the first-person (I/ we) or in the third . They deal with events, real or imaginary, which happened to someone or a group of people .

Narratives, as every kind of text should include:

- a) an introduction where the scene is presented** (who is/ was involved, time, place, etc) in an interesting way so it catches the reader's attention.
- b) a main body**, consisting of one or more paragraphs, where the story is developed and explained. Presenting the events in the order they happened, with a very clear sequence, is essential for the general understanding of the story.
- c) a conclusion** which includes what happened at the end of the story, as well as people's feelings, final comments or reactions. A surprising ending makes a long-lasting impression on the reader.

USUAL PATTERNS IN NARRATIVES:

- Past tenses.
- Connectors and particles which show sequence.
- a variety of adjectives or adverbs to make the story more attractive to the reader.

TIPS FOR WRITING NARRATIVES

- In order to attract the reader's attention, give interesting and catchy titles to your stories, or make the introduction attractive enough to rise interest in the reader .

Ejemplos:

- 1.- *"I can state without hesitation that travelling to Nigeria last summer was one of the most wonderful experiences I have ever had"* .
- 2.- *"One of the most fascinating/ amazing/ exciting/ terrifying stories in my life was....."*
events
experiences
- 3.- "If I had ever been told that I don't think that I would have believed it"
- 4.- Phrases or idioms: Would you believe it! (*ver para creer*)
- 5.-

2.- DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS:

Descriptions mainly refer to the description of a person, a place or even a process. In a descriptive text, things are described the way they are perceived at a specific moment either in the present or in the past, and there's always an intention when describing: - to clarify/ - to create a better understanding.

2.1.- Describing a person

A text or essay describing someone should include:

a) **Introduction:** a short paragraph which gives general information about the person, saying the name, when, where or how you first met.

“ I first met Mario ten years ago. It was on my first day at school when he sat down next to me and introduced himself. We've worked and played together ever since. No doubt, he has become my closest friend and I feel very lucky about that”

b) **Main body:** This is the part of the essay where it is relevant to describe:

- physical appearance (the way he or she is like and dresses, age,....)
- personal qualities (personality, abilities, hobbies, interests, habits)
- Your relationship with him/her or experiences you have shared.

“ Marco is now in his early twenties. He's tall , slim and dark-haired. He likes wearing casual clothes such as jeans , trainers and t-shirts. I guess the way he dresses shows much of his personality and his lifestyle.

He's outgoing, creative and self-confident as well . Besides, he's always willing to help others. As a result, people like him a lot and everyone in our group looks up to him. He's very good at interpersonal relationships and he gets on very well with most of the people. However, he is bossy and rude at times , which makes me feel a bit angry. But, anyway, nobody is perfect.

As for his hobbies and interest, he's very keen on extreme sports and this is why he always takes some days off at Christmas and in the summer to go climbing , bungee-jumping and sky-diving, as he finds these sports very exciting”

I have shared with him all kind of moments and we have helped each other every time we went through a bad time. This is probably why I consider him the best of my friends.

c) **Conclusion:** Here you write your comments, opinion and feelings for that person

“All in all, It's a pleasure when he is around and I really enjoy his company and the way he is. I hope that our friendship will last forever”

TIPS FOR WRITING DESCRIPTIONS OF PEOPLE:

- When describing a person the following information should be included: appearance, personality, hobbies, interests, abilities, relationship with you and others. (try to keep it balanced, so there's not much of physical description and just a couple of words describing their personality, for instance)

- Make sure you use a good variety of adjectives instead of those easy ones (good, bad, nice, big, important,). This way your essay will be more interesting (hard-working, cheerful, ambitious, outgoing, selfish, amusing, sensitive, sensible, open-minded , conceited, humble, thoughtful, polite).

- Introduce different word formation strategies: (long-legged; narrow-minded, restless, comparative forms, amazed/ amazing, etc).

- Use descriptive verbs: To look / To seem / To look like/ To wear/ To have / To be / To lack

- Use verbs/ phrases related to hobbies : *He likes / enjoys/ loves/*

He's very keen on

He's very fond of

He's very enthusiastic about

To feel like + Ving (apetecer, tener ganas de..)

- Use verbs/ phrases related to abilities She is very at good
She has a talent / a special ability for
She is gifted at

- Use phrases like:

- “ He/ she reminds me of my cousin/ my neighbour/ school friend, etc”
- “ Marta is very easy to live with / to play with , to work with , to have fun with..”
- “ He/She is the kind of person that
- “ I love/like/ hate the way he/she
- “ One of the things that impress me most about is
- “ He has/had the reputation for (V+ing).....”
- “ I find him/her/ his behaviour/attitude/appearance very
- “ I/He/She can't help V+ing every time (no puedo/e evitar.... cada vez que”

2.1.- Describing a place

The most frequent layout for a text which describes a place is:

- a) **Introduction:** Here you introduce the name of the place or building you have chosen and its location and the reason of your choice.

“If I were ever asked about a good place to spend some holidays in summer, I would definitely recommend ALMUÑECAR. Almuñecar is a small village in Granada, on the south east coast of Spain. It's located only 70 kms away from the capital city. It's a wonderful and charming seaside resort and the perfect destination for a peaceful summer holiday. ”

- b) **Main body:** You're expected to describe the main aspects of the place you have chosen (sights to see, most famous attractions, things to do, entertainment, nightlife, facilities, climate, etc)

“ Besides the 19 kms of coastiline, and the 26 different beaches with very clear water, where you can either lie in the sun and spend hours getting a tan or walk barefoot on the seashore, Almuñecar offers several tourist attractions which are worth visiting. Among these are “ San Miguel Castle”, which was originally built by the Romans in the 1st century BC and later changed into a fortress by the Moors, and lot of archaeological remains, such as the remains of a large fish factory, dating back over 2000 years.

As far as leisure time is concerned, Almuñecar has a great variety of facilities and resources; for instance, in the old part of town there are lots of the typical souvenir shops, open-air markets, bars and cafeterias with lively atmosphere and so on. On the suburbs there's also a large modern shopping centre where you can find anything at reasonable prices.

The nightlife in Almuñecar is exciting. Young people usually go out partying no sooner than 11PM and they get back home after breakfast. It's amazing how they have fun and how the nights out are part of their lives.

- c) **Conclusion or final paragraph** .- Comments or recommendation are the normal ways to conclude this kind of essay.

- “It doesn't matter how old you are or where you are from, Almuñecar offers such a whole range of activities and natural and historical resources that it makes it hard to turn it down”

- “ Almuñecar is the ideal choice to escape from the city and enjoy the sights, the relaxing atmosphere and the fresh air”

IPS FOR WRITING DESCRIPTIONS OF PLACES:

- The most relevant points to be included in a descriptive essay when describing a place are: name, location, main sights, nightlife, climate, population, entertainment, cultural offer, leisure activities, historical facts and buildings, tourist attractions and services.

- Phrases to describe location:

- It's located.....
- (in the) South/East/North/West; north-east south-west, etc
- In the middle, in the centre, in the heart of.....
- It's kms away from.....

- Useful phrases and words: - magnificent views; breathtaking sights; local festivities; welcoming local people; inhabitants; fascinating historical sites;

- Other phrases and vocabulary:

“ For anyone visiting the town , the (Roman bridge, for instance) is a must.

“ If you're planning to go there, you can't miss the Gothic church”

“ The town centre has.....”

“ The most fascinating part of the city is”

“ The city is well-known for its local festivities.”

“ The nightlife in the town is incredible/lively/ exciting”

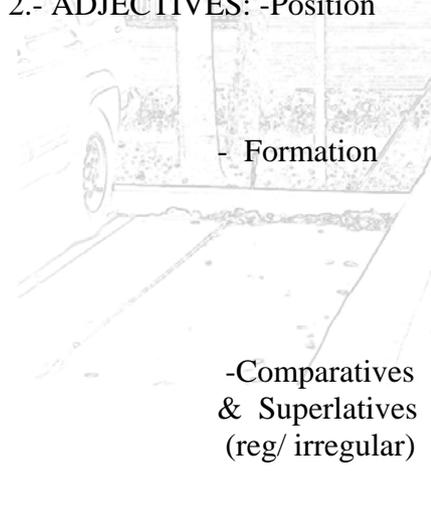
“ What impressed me most about was/were”

“ It's the perfect place to run away from crowds, hectic life and stress”

- Some places you can mention when describing a town or city:

- art galleries, open-air market, old town (casco antiguo), monuments, local small shops, fair, souvenir shops, tourist office.....

USUAL PATTERNS IN DESCRIPTIONS :

1.- EXISTENTIAL PATTERNS	→ There is a beautiful view from the top of the tower”
<p>2.- ADJECTIVES: -Position</p>  <p>- Formation</p> <p>-Comparatives & Superlatives (reg/ irregular)</p>	<p>→ Before the noun.- <i>I like romantic songs.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.- Noun + ed : <i>My father is blue-eyed.</i> 2.- Noun + less (lack of).- <i>This film is endless</i> 3.- Noun + ful .- <i>beauty>beautiful; harm> harmful</i> 4.- Noun + y/ly: <i>noise>noisy; trick>tricky;sun>sunny</i> <i>love>lovely; friend> friendly.</i> 5.- Noun + ish: <i>child> childish; snob> snobbish</i> 6.-Verb + able/ible:<i>changeable;reliable; unforgettable</i> 7.- Verb + (s)ive : <i>impressive; attractive; permissive</i> 8.- Ed/ing: <i>bored/boring; excited/exciting; tired/tiring</i> <p>Madrid is as beautiful as Paris Madrid is cheaper than Paris; Maths is more difficult than Physics Scotland is the most beautiful country in the world Mark is the worst singer of the century</p>
3.- RELATIVE CLAUSES	<p>- Sue is the woman who bought that car. - Sue, who bought that car, is very rich</p>
4.- PLACE PREPOSITIONS & ADVERBS	<p>- There was a house on top of the mountain, far away from the crowd and next to a beautiful lake.</p>
5.- VOCABULARY	<p>Physical appearance, mood, character, size, weight, material, shape, age, colour, etc.</p>

3.- ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS

Argumentation is the process of supporting or weakening another statement whose validity is in question.

1.- What is the usual order of presenting an argument?

- **Introduction:** The topic is presented by making a general remark about the topic. At this point, opinions shouldn't be provided:

“One of the most controversial topics in our country these days is advertising in public television. The fact that a new law which bans advertisements on TV has been passed by the Spanish government has given rise to this controversy”

- **Main body:** In this part the writer presents the points for and against (in two different paragraphs); the proofs or evidence are explained with facts, arguments, advantages and disadvantages. To list points, to express cause, consequence, contrast, to provide examples, are the most common ways to develop an argumentation.

“Those who defend a state television without advertising argue that publicity on TV damages its quality and it has a very bad influence on young viewers, who turn out to be, in most of the cases, the main target of the advertising companies. According to the people in favour of a free-commercial television, we all already pay our taxes for public services like this and therefore/as a consequence, there's no need to get the money from advertising”.

As for the advantages of advertising on television those who support it claim / assure that commercials do no harm to viewers. Banning advertising is not the best way to prevent our children from buying things and consumerism. Besides, advertising is everywhere and what people must learn is how to deal with publicity. An additional advantage is that advertising plays an important role in society: to inform people. How would we know the different products if there were no adverts?. On top of that, if advertising can cover most of the expenses television has, why not take advantage of that? The money we save because of advertising could be set aside to cover other needs.

- **Conclusion** (In short, In conclusion, to conclude; to sum up; all in all; all things considered,..)

" All in all, and although I can see powerful reasons on both sides, I think we should better not hide advertising to our children or students but show them instead how to face it and analyse it by means of critical thinking and certain techniques “

2.- What must we know to produce argumentation?

Different ways (by means of connectors and expressions) to show :

- Reason, cause and purpose,
- Adding information and giving examples.
- Sequence or listing arguments or points,
- Personal opinion.
- Contrast and comparison.
- Conclusion.
- Rephrasing.

LINGUISTIC FUNCTIONS:

1.- Listing points (enumerar)

- First/ Firstly/First of all.
- Second/ Secondly
- Third/thirdly
- Finally/ Lastly/ last but not least.

2.- Giving examples

- For example
- For instance
- such as (como, tales como)

3.- Giving personal opinions

- I agree with (something or somebody)
- I agree that.....
- I agree strongly
- up to a point / to a certain extent
- I disagree = I don't agree
- To my mind / In my opinion / In my view
- From my point of view.

4.- Making generalizations

- In general
- Broadly speaking=Roughly speaking
- Basically

5.- Expressing contrasts

- But
- However=Nevertheless (sin embargo)
- Whereas=While (mientras)
- On the one hand.....On the other hand
- Although/ even though +-Clause
- Despite = In spite of + Ving + noun.
- Despite/ In spite of the fact + Clause.

6.- Giving conclusions

- In short
- To sum up -In conclusion

7.- Rephrasing ideas

- In other words.
- That is to say
- To make a long story short (colloq)

8.- Saying obvious things

- Obviously/ No doubt
- There is no need to say that.....
- I needn't say that... ; -Everybody knows.....

9.- Adding extra Information

- Besides: además
- Furthermore: Es más,...
- What's more: Es más
- In addition (to this),...

10.- Expressing cause

- Because / as (conjunción)+ Clause
- Because of + Noun
- Due to (prep)
- Owing to + Ving-
- This is why + Clause
- (have) a reason + Inf: una razón para

11. Expressing consequence or result

- so + adj/adv + **that**.....
- **so much /so many** + noun + that.....
- **such** (a) + (adj) + noun + **that**
- As a consequence ...
- As a result , como consecuencia
- Consequently
- So: por lo tanto; por consiguiente
- Therefore/ Thus: por lo tanto

12.- Expressing purpose (finalidad)

- In order to
- To +Infinitive (mismo sujeto)
- So as (not) to
- so that/ so + Clause (normalmente distinto Sujeto)

13.- Expressing probability

- probably: probablemente
- To be likely to: ser probably
- In all probability:con toda probabilidad
- There's a good chance that: es muy probable

14.- Expressing a condition

- If: si
- Unless: a menos que
- as long as/provided/providing: con tal que
- Otherwise: de lo contrario.
- On the condition that. Con la condición de que
- In case: por si acaso

ARGUMENTATIVE TOPICS

- Advantages and disadvantages of being an only child.
- Advantages and disadvantages of being a working mother.
- Childhood is certainly not the happiest time of your life.
- Capital punishment is the only way to deter criminals.
- Examinations have a very bad influence on education.
- Parents are too permissive with their children nowadays.
- The space race is the world's biggest money waster.
- Pros and cons of living in a large modern city.
- Advertising performs a useful service to the community.