

Research notes

- Born
- Childhood
- Novels

evidence

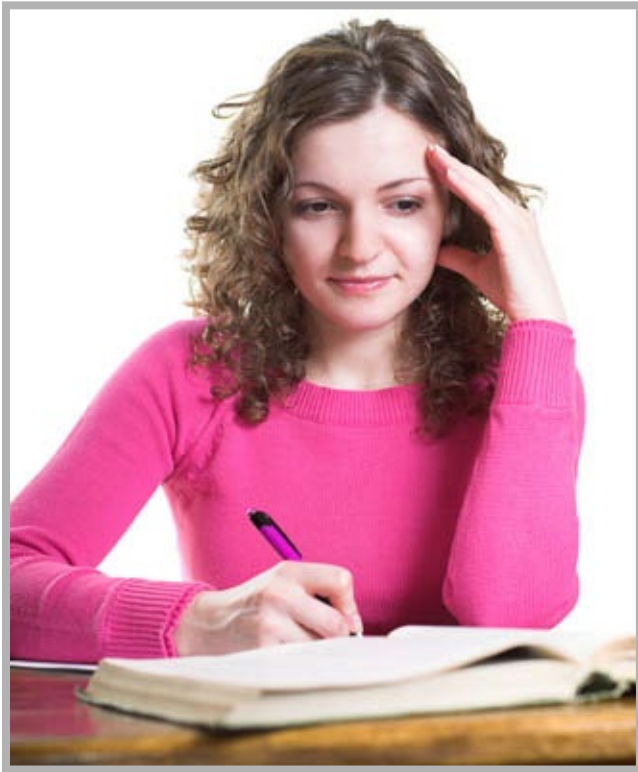
initial  
ideas

# Writing an Essay



# What is an essay?

An essay is an extended piece of writing in which you explore your ideas on a text or a particular topic.



A short essay may be four or five paragraphs long, while a long essay may be eight or ten pages long.

Essays require formal language and they need to be very well organized, so your points come across clearly.



These are some useful tips to follow when writing an essay for class.

- **Planning** – deciding what points you will make and how you will support them.
- **Drafting** – putting your points and supporting information into paragraphs.
- **Re-drafting** – after getting some feedback from your teacher, making improvements on your first draft.



# Steps to writing an essay

There are a number of important steps to writing an essay.

These include:

- **deconstructing** the question
- exploring ideas
- planning
- Point-Evidence-Analysis charts
- organizing points
- writing.



# The question

Before beginning your essay, it is important to understand the important parts of the question. This applies to both regular essays for class and essays in exams.

For example:

You are looking at how the **writer** uses language and dramatic devices to create a mood.

You are looking for a **number** of ways.

In what ways does Shakespeare create a mood of evil in Act I of Macbeth?

You are looking for the theme of evil.

You are focusing on Act I.

Read these example essay questions and press on the important parts to see what you should consider.

Who is **most** responsible for Eva Smith's death? **Discuss** at least **three** characters.

Explore **Hardy's** portrayal of the characters, Alec and Angel. Is **Alec** wholly villainous? Does **Angel** live up to his name?





A good step to take next is to explore your ideas on the question. This will enable you to decide on the points you will discuss in your essay.

You can do this in a number of ways:

- by drawing a spider diagram
- by using bullet points
- by drawing a chart.



# Point-Evidence-Analysis charts

Once you have generated points you want to make about your essay topic, it is time to find supporting quotations. It can be very helpful to work with a chart.

A good PEA chart will have 3–4 columns.

For example:

Point	Evidence or supporting quotation	Analysis	Language





Once your chart is completed, most of your essay is finished! All you need to do is take the information from your chart and write it into paragraphs.



Before starting to write the paragraphs, it is a good idea to organize the points from your chart into categories. This will ensure your discussion of the topic is logical and cohesive.



# Steps to writing an essay

Plan

To check for fluency and consistency  
in grammar, tone and style

Re

When you actually come to writing  
your essay, there are a number of  
steps you can take.

D

Proo

See if you can match each of these  
steps to the correct definition.

Pre

Press **start** to begin.

**start**

Edit

To look for any spelling  
and printing mistakes



**solve**



You shouldn't need to write a lengthy introduction for your essay. The bulk of your analysis and discussion should be in the body of your essay.

It is, however, important to tell your reader some key points, to be summarized in your thesis:

- The title of the literary work(s) you will be writing about
- The name of the author(s)
- A concise outline of what you will be discussing in your essay



**For example:** In William Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth*, many characters contribute to Macbeth's downfall: the witches, Lady Macbeth and Macbeth himself.

It is important to write a strong conclusion for your essay.

In your conclusion you should:

- answer the question by referring back to the key words
- summarize the arguments for and against
- explain your opinion, with evidence to justify your thoughts
- include a relevant quotation to make your conclusion sound confident.





Essays in exams are much shorter than regular essays for class and they are written on-the-spot.

This means that you do not go through the drafting process.

However, it is very important that you take time to plan your timed essays!



Move through this animation which will help you understand how best to approach an essay in an exam when you come to do one.

Press **start** to begin.

start



When writing any essay, you must use **standard English**.

That means:

- do not use slang or colloquial expressions
- do not use contractions (don't, couldn't, etc.).

You should also write in a formal, **objective** tone.

That means:

- use the passive voice when appropriate (e.g. *it might be said that...*)
- do not use the personal pronoun 'I' (as in, "I think..." or "I am going to write about...").





Here are some informal expressions.

A yellow pencil with a pink eraser and a green band, positioned vertically on the left side of the slide.

He's really psyched about it.

The school dress code sucked.

There were loads of reasons he did it.

She was totally upset.

They knew the game would go awesome.

A black fountain pen with gold accents, positioned vertically on the right side of the slide.

Can you replace them with something more formal?

How much have you learned about essay writing? Read each of the following statements and press 'Do' if you think you should do it, or 'Don't' if you think you shouldn't.

Make a plan before you start to write your essay.

Do

Don't

