



Process Essay

What is a Process Essay?

The process essay is writing that explains how to do something or how something works by giving a step-by-step explanation. The explanation may be about a concrete process (how to skin a muskrat or how to plant begonias) or an abstract process (how to build self-esteem or how to overcome a loved one's death).

Three Keys To Effective Process:

1. Present the essential steps in the process.
2. Explain the steps in detail.
3. Present the steps in logical order (usually chronological).

Explaining Steps:

This is a key step in writing a process essay. You must present the essential steps in enough detail and logical order that your readers could perform the steps themselves or at least understand how something works.

Thesis Statement of a Process Essay:

The thesis statement usually includes the process being analyzed and the point the writer wants to make about it.

(process)

(point about the process)

Ex: Applying for a driver's license is both exciting and nerve wracking.

How to Write an Effective Process Essay:

1. **Present your stages and steps in chronological order.** The correct order of your steps is vital. They must follow the actual order in which they would be performed, from beginning to end.
2. **Divide your process into at least three major stages.** Each major stage of a process paper must correspond to a paragraph that elaborates and details the steps included in that particular stage.
3. **Create a paragraph on materials, if needed.** Often the materials necessary to perform a certain process must be listed. A paragraph, usually located directly after the introduction, can be designated to address essential materials.

4. **Use time-specific transitional words.** Words like *after*, *as*, *at last*, *before*, *during*, *eventually*, *finally*, *first*, *last*, *later*, *meanwhile*, *next*, *now*, *second*, *since*, *soon*, *then*, *when*, and *while* can be used to indicate when you are moving from one step to the next, i.e., establishing sequence.
5. **Do not use imperative sentences.** Sometimes an instructor will allow you to use imperative second person point of view, such as "Mix the flour and eggs, then beat for two minutes." However, the writing can end up sounding like an instruction manual rather than a well-developed process essay. Therefore, use either first or third person point of view.

Note:

A process paper should be more than a mere set of instructions. It should be smooth, not choppy. Therefore, keep in mind the following points.

- Anticipate possible misunderstandings on the reader's part and, if necessary, tell the reader what *not* to do.
- Provide reasons why certain steps are performed if these steps seem extreme or pointless.
- Define unfamiliar terms or materials that may not be clear to the reader.

Remember:

The process essay is writing that explains how to do something or how something works by giving a step-by-step explanation. There are three keys to a process essay: present the essential steps in the process, explain the steps in detail, and present the steps in logical order (usually chronological).