

## How to Write an Essay ★★★★★ rated 4.9/5 stars.

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Essay writing is common in middle school, high school and college, and you may even need to write essays in the business world (although they are usually called "reports" at that point). An [essay](#) is defined as "a short piece of writing that expresses information as well as the writer's opinion."

## 7 Steps to Writing an Essay

For some, writing an essay is as simple as sitting down at their computer and beginning to type, but a lot more planning goes into writing an essay successfully. If you have never written an essay before, or if you struggle with writing and want to improve your skills, it is a good idea to go through several steps in the essay writing process.

For example, to write an essay, you should generally:

- Decide what kind of essay to write
- Brainstorm your topic
- Do research
- Develop a thesis
- Outline your essay
- Write your essay
- Edit your writing to check spelling and grammar

While this sounds like a lot of steps to write a simple essay, if you follow them you will be able to write more successful, clear and cohesive essays.

## Choose the Type of Essay

The first step to writing an essay is to define what type of essay you are writing. There are four main structures into which essays can be grouped:

- [Narrative Essay](#): Tell a story or impart information about your subject in a straightforward, orderly manner.
- [Persuasive Essay](#): Convince the reader about some point of view.
- [Expository Essay](#): Explain to the reader how to do a given process. You could, for example, write an expository essay with step-by-step instructions on how to make a peanut butter sandwich.
- [Descriptive Essay](#): Focus on the details of what is going on.

## Brainstorm

You cannot write an essay unless you have an idea of what to write about. Brainstorming is the process in which you come up with the [essay topic](#). You need to simply sit and think of ideas during this phase.

- Write down everything that comes to mind as you can always narrow those topics down later.

- You could use clustering or mind mapping to brainstorm and come up with an essay idea. This involves writing your topic or idea in the center of the paper and creating bubbles (clouds or clusters) of related ideas around it.

Brainstorming can be a great way to develop a topic more deeply and to recognize connections between various facets of your topic.

Once you have a list of possible topics, it's time to choose the best one that will answer the question posed for your essay. You want to choose a topic that is neither too broad nor too narrow.

If you are given an assignment to write a one-page essay, it would be far too much to write about "the history of the US" since that could fill entire books. Instead, you could write about a specific event within the history of the United States: perhaps signing the Declaration of Independence or when Columbus discovered the U.S.

Choose the best topic idea from among your list and begin moving forward on writing your essay.

## Research the Topic

Once you have done your brainstorming and chosen your topic, you may need to do some research to write a good essay. Go to the library or search online for information about your topic. Interview people who might be experts in the subject. Keep your research organized so it will be easy for you to refer back to, and easy for you to [cite your sources](#) when writing your final essay.

## Develop a Thesis

Your [thesis statement](#) is the main point of your essay. It is essentially one sentence that says what the essay is about. For example, your thesis statement might be "Dogs are descended from wolves." You can then use this as the basic premise to write your entire essay, remembering that all of the different points throughout need to lead back to this one main thesis. The thesis will usually be used in your introductory paragraph.

The thesis statement should be broad enough that you have enough to say about it, but not so broad that you can't be thorough.

## Outline Your Essay

The next step is to outline what you are going to write about. This means you want to essentially draw the skeleton of your paper. Writing an outline can help to ensure your paper is logical, well organized and flows properly.

Start by writing the thesis statement at the top and then write a [topic sentence](#) for each paragraph below. This means you should know exactly what each of your paragraphs is going to be about before you write them.

- Don't jumble too many ideas in each paragraph or the reader may become confused.
- Ensure you have [transitions](#) between paragraphs so the reader understands how the paper flows from one idea to the next.
- Fill in facts from your research under each paragraph that you want to write about when you write the essay. Make sure each paragraph ties back to your thesis and creates a cohesive, understandable essay.

## Write the Essay

Once you have an outline, its time to start writing. Write from the outline itself, fleshing out your basic skeleton to create a whole, cohesive and clear essay.

You will want to edit and re-read your essay, checking to make sure it sounds exactly the way you want it to. You want to:

- Revise for clarity, consistency, and structure.
- Make sure everything flows together.
- Support your thesis adequately with the information in your paragraphs.
- Make sure you have a strong [introduction](#) and [conclusion](#) so the reader comes away knowing exactly what your paper was about.

## Check Spelling and Grammar

Now the essay is written but you're not quite done. Reread what you've written, looking out for mistakes and typos.