

Effective Writing

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Some suggestions/ considerations for EW students' essays:

I. Narration (usually personal, autobiographical)

A story/ experience makes and shows a point.

Order- usually chronological

Detail-choose according to purpose (too much? too little?)

Point of View-probably first (be consistent)

II. Description

Readers feel as if they were experiencing the writer. (Evoke scene, place, time)

Order-usually spatial.

Detail- figurative language, especially metaphors and similes.

-imagery

Vigorous, specific words—no blanks.

Narrative is not the purpose.

III. Compare/Contrast

Pair of people/things/places/ideas

Tone-usually objective

Order-order of main points must be the same for each half of the pair

Parallel-main points stated in parallel form

Balance-among main points

Order-two basic patterns (See students' class notes)

Coherence-effective use of transitions

Audience-writer needs clear and consistent sense of their audience

IV. Process Analysis

Answer the question "How?" (Not "Why")

Use specific information (i.e. how to do a specific task) or develop a process/ stages (i.e. emotional, psychological, educational steps).

Order-usually chronological

Coherence-transitions, especially time markers

Exemplify/ show general steps/stages

Tone-be consistent (objective? Humorous? satirical?)

Audience-avoid re-telling the obvious.

V. Classification/ Division

Classify-put man things, people, places into categories based on their similarities.

Divide-analyze one thing, person, place into its component parts.

Avoid mixing Classification and Division.

Purpose-make it clear to the audience (i.e. why did you choose your particular means of classifying or dividing)

Logic-avoid overlapping categories. Be careful to include all essential categories.

Framework-for classification, try to examine each category in a similar situation.

VI. Argument/Persuasion

Purpose-to persuade.

Means-by documentation (data: observations, surveys, facts, etc.)

Footnotes and Bibliography are essential.

Thesis is the writer's position

-sufficiently narrow

-supportable

Order-4231?

Time for opposition-but subordinate

No emotionalism/slanting by consistent use of facts, data

No imprecision (i.e. vague references, passives, blank words, euphemisms, clichés)

Logic-watch out for fallacies.

VII. Criticism/Analysis

Based on literature- is a paper written to analyze.

Thesis-narrow (focus on one aspect of material read)

NOT a plot summary!

Avoid biographical fallacy and autobiographical fallacy.