

Elegant Essay Checklists

Steps to Writing an Informative or Descriptive Essay A

(Outlining and writing by section)

1. Think and Brainstorm

- Think about the topic. Brainstorm by asking questions, free-writing and/or making a cluster chart.
- Develop a thesis using the Thesis Checklist.

2. Outline and Write

- Outline the body paragraphs on an Outline Form. Think about SEE (Statement, evidence, explanation) as well as Showing vs. Telling.
- Write the body paragraphs. See Body Paragraphs Checklist.
- Check the body paragraphs for transitions and revise as necessary.
- Return to the Outline Form. Think about and outline your Introduction. Think of a dramatic opener. Outline your Conclusion.
- Write your Introduction. Write your Conclusion. See Introduction and Conclusion checklists.

3. Evaluate and Edit. Proofread and Polish.

- Read your entire essay. Improve the style by adding dress-ups, varying your sentence openers, using decorations and triple extensions. See p. 142 of *The Elegant Essay*.
- Evaluate your essay using the Descriptive Essay Grading Sheet on p. 137 of *The Elegant Essay*. Make any necessary revisions.
- Read your entire essay out loud and proof read it. Make any necessary revisions.
- Type. Proofread. Go over essay with teacher.
- Print essay and share with someone!

Elegant Essay Checklists

Steps to Writing an Informative or Descriptive Essay B

(Outlining entire essay first)

1. Think and Brainstorm

- Think about the topic. Brainstorm by asking questions, free-writing and/or making a cluster chart.
- Develop a thesis using the Thesis Checklist.

2. Outline and Write

- Outline the entire essay on an Outline form. For the body paragraphs, Think about SEE (Statement, evidence, explanation) as well as Showing vs. Telling.
- Write the body paragraphs. See Body Paragraphs Checklist.
- Check the body paragraphs for transitions and revise as necessary.
- Write your Introduction. Write your Conclusion. See Introduction and Conclusion checklists.

3. Evaluate and Edit. Proofread and Polish.

- Read your entire essay. Improve the style by adding dress-ups, varying your sentence openers, using decorations and triple extensions. See p. 142 of *The Elegant Essay*.
- Evaluate your essay using the Descriptive Essay Grading Sheet on p. 137 of *The Elegant Essay*. Make any necessary revisions.
- Read your entire essay out loud and proof read it. Make any necessary revisions.
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Elegant Essay Checklists

Steps to Writing a Persuasive or Research Essay A

(Outlining and writing by section)

1. Think and Research

- Think about the topic. Brainstorm by asking questions, free-writing and/or making a cluster chart.
- Research your topic using books or approved internet sites.
- Develop a Works Cited page. Use an MLA Citation Generator.
Then see the checklist on p. 107 of *The Elegant Essay*.
- Develop a thesis using the Thesis Checklist.

2. Outline and Write

- Outline the body paragraphs on an Outline Form. Think about SEE (Statement, evidence, explanation) as well as Showing vs. Telling.
- Write the body paragraphs. See Body Paragraph Check List.
- Check the body paragraphs for transitions and revise as necessary.
- Revise the Works Cited page as necessary.
- Return to the Outline Form. Think about and outline your introduction. Think of a dramatic opener. Outline your conclusion.
- Write your Introduction. Write your Conclusion. See Introduction and Conclusion checklists.

3. Evaluate and Edit. Proofread and Polish.

- Read your entire essay. Improve the style by adding dress-ups, varying your sentence openers, using decorations and triple extensions. See p. 142 of *The Elegant Essay*.
- Evaluate your essay using the Persuasive Essay Grading Sheet on p. 139 of *The Elegant Essay*. Make any necessary revisions.
- Read your entire essay out loud and proof read it. Make any necessary revisions.
- Type. Proofread. Go over essay with teacher. Print essay and share with someone!

Elegant Essay Checklists

Steps to Writing a Persuasive or Research Essay B

(Outlining entire essay first)

1. Think and Research

- Think about the topic. Brainstorm by asking questions, free-writing and/or making a cluster chart.
- Research your topic using books or approved internet sites.
- Develop a Works Cited page. Use an MLA Citation Generator.
Then see the checklist on p. 107 of *The Elegant Essay*.
- Develop a thesis using the Thesis Checklist.

2. Outline and Write

- Outline the entire essay on an Outline form. For the body paragraphs, Think about SEE (Statement, evidence, explanation) as well as Showing vs. Telling.
- Write the body paragraphs. See Body Paragraph Check List.
- Check the body paragraphs for transitions and revise as necessary.
- Write your Introduction. Write your Conclusion. See Introduction and Conclusion checklists.
- Revise the Works Cited page as necessary.

3. Evaluate and Edit. Proofread and Polish.

- Read your entire essay. Improve the style by adding dress-ups, varying your sentence openers, using decorations and triple extensions. See p. 142 of *The Elegant Essay*.
- Evaluate your essay using the Persuasive Essay Grading Sheet on p. 139 of *The Elegant Essay*. Make any necessary revisions.
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- Type. Proofread. Go over essay with teacher.
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Elegant Essay Checklists

Essay Parts Checklists

Thesis Statement

See p. 9: Types of Thesis Statements

Steps to create a thesis statement:

1. Determine your essay's intent. Will it inform, describe or persuade?
2. Narrow your focus or your topic.
3. Develop a two part statement. In part one, state your narrow focus. In part two, add details concerning what you want to say about it.

Checklist

- Make sure your thesis statement does not cover too much ground. Your thesis should summarize your preview your essay, not duplicate it.
- Make sure academic thesis statements are parallel.
- Check that your persuasive thesis statement presents an argument rather than states a fact.
- Check that your narrative thesis statement creates an emotion or alludes to a lesson learned.

Body Paragraphs and Transitions

Types of Paragraphs: Example, Personal Experience, Statistics, Observation, Research or Testimony, Description, Anecdote/story, Analogy

- Are your paragraphs understandable? Good topics, clinchers, and flow?
- Do your paragraphs follow the SEE plan? (Statement, evidence, explanation)
- In each paragraph, does your evidence support the assertion or statement?
- Do you *show* rather than *tell*?
- Do your paragraphs exhibit style? Do you use a variety of dress-ups, sentence openers, and decorations?
- Do your transitions make sense? Do they keep the reader on track?
- Do you use a variety of transitional techniques rather than over-rely on one? Do you use Reference Transitions, Connectives Transitions and Bridges (Paragraph hooks)?
- Do you use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation?

Elegant Essay Checklists

Introductions

Types of Introductions:

Give background and introduce the thesis (Funnel),

Ask a question,

Show a benefit to be gained,

Begin with an unexpected, humorous, or startling statement,

Begin with a quotation or a familiar saying,

Begin with a dialogue (real or imagined),

Relate a story or paint a descriptive picture.

See p. 38-39 of *The Elegant Essay* for details.

- When adding creative elements, be careful not to stray too far away from the original topic
- Be sure dialogue or startling statements connects with the rest of the introduction
- Do not use anything similar to “By reading this essay...” or “I intend to show...” or “By way of introduction...”
- No “I” statements in the introduction: “I think,” “I believe,” others. Exception: If you are relating personal experience, “I” statements are fine.
- Make sure the introduction makes sense and uses appropriate transitions.
- Do you use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation?

Elegant Essay Checklists

Conclusions

Types of Conclusions:

Broaden out (Revisit thesis and summarize the main points)

Answer or ask a question

Show the benefit gained

End with an unexpected or humorous statement

End with a suggested course of action

End with a quotation or familiar saying

Finish the story

- Refrain from introducing any new information. If you want to add a new topic, add another body paragraph.
- Emphasize the most important point or what you want the reader to remember.
- Tie up any loose ends
- Never, ever begin with "In conclusion"
- No "I" statements. (Exception: personal experience)
- Do you use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation?