

Eng 206 Writing Academic English

Book used: Writing Academic English; the Longman Academic Writing Series

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It is a course which focuses on the structure of an academic essay and different types of essays. This helps students in both writing and speaking. Essay is a piece of writing with several paragraphs. It is about one topic, just as a paragraph.

Essay Writing

1. Introduction:
 - a) General statements
 - b) Thesis statement
2. Body
 - a) Topic Sentence
 - i) Support
 - ii) Support
 - iii) Support

(concluding sentence)
 - b) Topic Sentence
 - i) Support
 - ii) Support
 - iii) Support

(concluding sentence)
 - c) Topic Sentence
 - i) Support
 - ii) Support
 - iii) Support

(concluding sentence)
3. Conclusion:

Restatement or summary of the main points; final comment

Types of Essays

1. Process Essay

It is also known as the chronological order. Chronological order is a way of organising ideas in the order of their occurrence in time. Chronological order has all sorts of uses.

We use it to tell stories, to relate historical events, and to write biographies and autobiographies. We also use it to explain process and procedures. For example, we will use chronological order to explain how to take a photograph, how to make a piece of pottery, how to perform a chemistry experiment, or how to set up an accounting system. Such essays are called 'how to' essays or essays.

Model Essay: Chronological Order Essay

<p>Introduction Paragraph</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Understanding Chernobyl</p> <p>Clouds of radioactive steam shoot into the sky. Fires burn unstopably, sending radioactive smoke and particles into the atmosphere. Men dressed in protective clothing work feverish to extinguish the fires and contain the contamination. Hundreds of residents hastily grab their possessions and flee their homes. Roadblocks are erected to keep strangers away. This was the scene at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the former USSR in April 1986. The plant's nuclear reactor had exploded, spreading radioactive contamination over an area that stretched as far away as Norway and Sweden. This catastrophic accident renewed fears about the safety of nuclear reactors around the world. Are such fears justified? To understand how the accident in Chernobyl happened, it is necessary to understand how a nuclear power plant is constructed and how one operates.</p>
<p>Body Paragraph 1</p>	<p>A nuclear power plant contains a nuclear reactor that uses controlled nuclear fission to produce electricity. The reactor consists of fuel rods alternating with control rods inside a very larger container called the reactor core. The fuel rods contain radioactive fuel such as uranium-235, and the control rods contain neutron- absorbing substances such as boron and cadmium. By varying the depth of the control rods with in the core, one can increase or decrease the absorption of neutrons, thereby speeding up or slowing down the fission process. If necessary, the rods can be dropped all the way into the core to stop the reaction completely. A high-pressure water bath surrounds the rods. The water acts as coolant by slowing down the neutrons. In some reactors, graphite is added to the water because graphite also slows down neutrons. A confinement shell usually surrounds the parts containing radioactive material so radioactivity cannot escape.</p>
<p>Body Paragraph 2</p>	<p>How do nuclear reactors produce electricity? First, a series of nuclear fissions are produced by bombarding the nuclei of uranium-235 with neutrons. When a neutron strikes a nucleus, the nucleus splits, releasing energy. The energy then heats the water surrounding the rods, whose outsells are made of zirconium. The hot water is pumped to a heat exchanger, where steam is produced. Finally, the steam passes to a turbine that drives a generator to produce electricity.</p>

Body Paragraph 3	How did the accident at Chernobyl happen? It happened because on the day of the accident, the safety system on the reactor had been disabled while operators performed an experimental test. During the test, the reactor cooled excessively and threatened to shut down. If this had happened, the operators would not have been able to restart the reactor for a long period of time. To avoid this situation, they removed most of the control rods, which was against all safety rules. Soon, the reactor began to overheat. When the reactor overheated, the fuel rods melted and spilled their radioactive contents into the superheated water, which then flashed into steam reacted with the zirconium shells of the fuel rods and with the graphite in the coolant water to produce hydrogen gas, which then ignited. The graphite burned for a long time, spreading even more radioactivity into the atmosphere.
Concluding Paragraph	In the end, the cost of the Chernobyl accident was enormous. Thirty one people died, and several hundreds were hospitalised. Thousands had to be evacuated and resettled. The soil around Chernobyl will remain contaminated for years. The lesson from Chernobyl is this: A well-designed nuclear power plant using normal fuel is not dangerous as long as proper safety procedures are followed. However, poor design and/or disregard for safety regulations can lead to catastrophe

2. Cause/Effect Essays

Another common pattern of essay organisation is called cause and effect. In a cause/ effect essay, you discuss the causes (reasons) for something, the effects (results), or both causes and effects.

Block Organisation	
A	B
Introduction	Introduction
1 st Cause	1 st cause
2 nd Cause	Transition paragraph
3 rd Cause	2 nd cause
Transition paragraph	3 rd cause
1 st effect	4 th cause
2 nd effect	Effects
Conclusion	Conclusion
C	D
Introduction	Introduction
Effects	1 st effect
Transition paragraph	2 nd effect
1 st Cause	3 rd effect
2 nd cause	4 th effect
3 rd cause	Conclusion
Conclusion	

Chain Organisation
Introduction
Cause
Effect
Cause
Effect
Cause
Effect
Cause
Effect
Conclusion

Model essay

SAD

Years ago, medical researchers identified a psychological disorder that they appropriately named Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD. People who suffer from SAD become very depressed during the winter months. Doctors now understand the causes of this condition, which affects millions of people, particularly in areas of the far north where winter nights are long and the hours of daylight are few.

SAD results from a decrease in the amount of sunlight sufferers receive. Doctors know that decreased sunlight increases the production of melatonin, a sleep-related hormone that is produced at increased levels in the dark. Therefore, when the days are shorter and darker, the production of this hormone increases. Shorter, darker days also decrease production of serotonin; a chemical that helps transmits nerve impulses. Lack of serotonin is known to be a cause of depression. Depression may result from the resulting imbalance of these two substances in the body. Also, doctors believe that a decrease in the amount of sunlight the body receives may cause a disturbance results in symptoms such as lethargy, oversleeping, weight gain, anxiety, and irritability- all signs of depression.

Since absence if light seems to be the cause of the disorder, a daily dose of light appears to be the cure. Doctors advise patients to sit in front of a special light box that stimulates natural light for a few hours every day. An hour's work outside in winter sunlight may also help.

In conclusion, the depressive effect of low sunlight levels may help explain the high suicide rate in the Scandinavian countries; more important, it may suggest a remedy: when the days grow short, turn on the lights.

3. Comparison and Contrast Essay

In comparison/ contrast essay, you explain the similarities and differences between two items. Comparison and contrast is a very common pattern in most academic fields.

Model Essay

Japan and the United States: Different but Alike

The culture of a place is an integral part of its society whether that place is a remote Indian village in Brazil or a highly industrialised city in Western Europe. The culture of Japan fascinates people in the United States because, at first glance, it seems so different. Everything that characterizes the United States, - newness, racial heterogeneity, vast territory, informality, and an ethic of individualism- is absent in Japan. There, one finds an ancient and homogeneous society, an ethic that emphasizes the importance of groups, and a tradition of formal behaviour governing every aspect of daily living, from drinking tea to saying hello. On the surface at least, U.S and Japan societies seem totally opposite.

One obvious difference is the people. Japan is homogenous society of one nationality and a few underrepresented minority groups, such as the ethnic Chinese and Koreans. All areas of government and society are controlled by the Japanese majority. In contrast, although the United States is a country with originally European roots, its liberal immigration policies have resulted in its becoming a heterogeneous society of many ethnicities- Europeans, Africans, Asians, and Latinos. All are represented in all areas of U.S society, including business, education and politics.

Other areas of difference between Japan and the United States involve issues of group interaction and sense of space. Whereas people in the United States pride themselves on individualism and informality, Japanese value groups and formality. People in the United States admire and reward a person who rises above a crowd; in contrast, a Japanese proverb says, 'the nail that sticks up gets hammered down.' In addition while North Americans' sense of size and scale developed out of the vastness of the continent, Japanese genius lies in the diminutive and miniature. For example, the United States builds airplanes, while Japan produces transistors.

In spite of these differences, these two apparently opposite cultures share several important experiences.

Both, for example, have transplanted cultures. Each nation has a 'mother' society- China for Japan and Great Britain for the United States- that has influenced the daughter in countless ways: in language, religion, art, literature, social customs, and ways of thinking. Japan of course, has had more time than the United States to work out its unique interpretation of the older Chinese culture, but both countries reflect their cultural ancestry.

Both societies, moreover, have developed the art of business and commerce, of buying and selling, of advertising and mass producing, to the highest, levels. Few sights are more reassuring to people from the United States than the tens and thousands of busy stores in Japan, especially the beautiful, well stocked department stores. To U.S eyes, they seem just like Macy's or Neiman Marcus at home. In addition, both Japan and the United States are consumer societies. The people of both countries love to shop and are enthusiastic consumers of convenience products and fast foods. Vending machines selling everything from fresh

flowers to hot coffee are as popular in Japan as they are in the United States, and fast-food noodle shops are as common in Japan as McDonald's restaurants are in the United States.

A final similarity is that both Japanese and people in the United States have always emphasized the importance of work, and both are paying penalties for their commitment to it: increasing stress and weakening family bonds. People in the United States, especially those in business and in the professions, regularly put in twelve or more hours a day at their jobs, just as many Japanese executives do. Also, while the normal Japanese workweek is six days, many people in the United States who want to get ahead voluntary work on Saturday and/or Sunday in addition to their normal five-day workweek.

Japan and the United States: different, yet alike. Although the two societies differ in many areas such as racial heterogeneity versus racial homogeneity, individualism versus group cooperation and informal versus formal forms of behaviour, they share more than one common experience. Furthermore, their differences probably contribute as much as their similarities toward the mutual interest the two countries have in each other. It will be interesting to see where this reciprocal fascination leads in the future.

4. Argumentative Essays

It is an essay in which you agree or disagree with an issue, using reasons to support your opinion. Your goal is to convince your reader that your opinion is right.

Five keys

- a) An explanation of the issue
- b) A clear thesis statement
- c) A summary of the opposing arguments
- d) Rebuttals to the opposing arguments
- e) Your own arguments