The Essay

**Essay** - an essay is a short composition dealing with a single topic, and usually expressing one person’s point of view or understanding of the topic

Essays are categorized as descriptive, expository, narrative or persuasive.

**Note**: few essays are **completely** one style

**Expository essay** – communicates information about an event, process, issue or topic. The purpose is to explain and to expose.

Ex: a magazine article that tells about laser eye surgery

**Narrative essay** – tells the story of an event or experience

Ex: an autobiographical essay such as Dylan Thomas’ “Memories of Christmas

**Descriptive essay** – describes the person, place, object or process.

Ex: Describing the characteristics of an outport town

**Persuasive essay** – the author tries to convince the reader that his/her opinion on a subject is the correct one

**Format of the Essay:**

**Introduction:**

A good introduction does the following:

1. arouse the interest of the audience. One may use techniques such as a controversial statement, interesting fact, provocative quotation, questions, etc.

2. states the thesis (main idea of the essay)

**Body:**

These are the 3-5 paragraphs that develop the idea introduced in your first paragraph.

**Conclusion:**

A good conclusion is a summary of the points of an essay. The ending should **NOT** include any **NEW** information, but present the final thoughts on the thesis

**Writing the Essay:**

**Thesis statement** - a sentence or two that gives the main idea of the essay

**Topic sentence** - a sentence that tells what is to follow in a paragraph. The main idea of a paragraph.

**Style and important concepts:**

**Unity** - A quality of writing in which all sentences and paragraphs support one main idea. This means that the essay contains only what is relevant to the topic.

**Coherence** - refers to the logical arrangement and progression of ideas in an essay. A clear, logical flow in writing with smooth transitions from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph. See p.90-91

**Transitional terms** - words or phrases which help to achieve a smooth flow between sentences and between paragraphs.

**Methods of Organizing Ideas (in the body of an essay)**

1. **Definition**

- the essay defines a key term and then clarifies and expands on it

2. **Comparison / Contrast**

- explores similarities and difference between things

3. **Cause and Effect**

- considers reasons for events or behaviors and the probable results

4. **Problem / Solution**

- states a problem and then solutions are given and supported with **FACTS**, **EVIDENCE** and **OPINION**

5. **Statistics**

- numerical facts to support an argument

6. **Authorities**

- someone who is an expert in the field

7. **Brief Narratives**

- short stories to prove a point

8. **Examples**

**Tone of the Essay:**

**Objective:**

the author tries to remain partial and **NOT** put his/her opinion or bias into the essay.

**Subjective:**

the author puts himself or his opinions (or feelings) into the essay