Essays

When writing an essay it is always very important to keep the “Golden thread” approach in mind. Imagine a piece of thread flowing through your piece of writing – it is what keeps it all together, and ensures that it makes sense. If I pull at the one end of the thread, your ideas should follow, and if I pull at the other end – your ideas should still follow! If your arguments or ideas are not properly developed or set out, the thread will snap.

Coherency is always of utmost importance when writing an essay, if you jump around from one idea to the next – the golden thread will fail, and your essay might not make sense.

*Essays should always have an introduction, body and conclusion.*

In the *introduction* of your essay, you have to make either a bold statement or interesting one – you should try to grab the attention of your reader!

The *body* of your essay should always contain some kind of development, whether it is in your story or in the characters. It is very important to write in paragraphs, and each paragraph should develop one idea only. The same goes for sentences – you cannot have three different ideas in one sentence! When you do this, the sentence becomes a run-on sentence, and you run the risk of losing your reader completely. One thought -> one sentence ; one set of ideas -> one paragraph.

The *conclusion* of your essay does exactly that – it concludes your story. All the loose ends have to be tied up at this stage – imagine the conclusion as tying your whole story into a neat little bundle of excellence!

# Argumentative essays

An argumentative essay starts with a strong statement, and has a formal structured approach where ideas and opinions flow logically. The introduction should convey your point of view on the topic, and the conclusion should round off your argument.

The argumentative essay *aims to convince, persuade or manipulate*, and therefore your opinion/viewpoint should be clear – the reader should not have to wonder what you think about the problem after reading your essay. You have to pick a SIDE! You should all be rather good at writing argumentative essays, because you can argue and fight about it!

Remember that in an argumentative essay you should have a well thought out argument – in other words, support why you agree or disagree with the topic.

# Descriptive essays

Fortunately, like most essays, the name of the type of essay explains it rather well. As would be expected, a descriptive essay relies on you *describing different objects, people or instances*. You have to rely on your skill to describe something so that the reader can ‘see’ it. You have to be able to make the reader feel what you feel, or see what you see through your use of words. We thus use adjectives and adverbs when writing a descriptive essay. Along with your use of emotive and figurative language, you need to incorporate your senses as much as possible, so that the reader can become as involved in the essay as you are. Make the details count as this is what draws your reader and therefore determines whether your story is a good one or not.

# Discursive or expository essays

With a discursive essay, you are still arguing, but you are expected to *argue both sides of the story*. You should weigh up the pros and cons, using examples to back up a statement. The conclusion that you have to draw should be a considered one and completely unbiased. Saying that your essay has to be unbiased means that you are allowed to show your own opinion, but you should not let your own thoughts and values influence the essay, you may not pick a side!

# Narrative essays

Once again, the name gives it away! Narrative essays are essays in which you narrate (*relate/describe something that happened*). Thus remember that the function of a narrative essay is to tell a story, in detail! This story can be told from the first person (I could feel my heart pounding in my chest) or the third person perspective (She could feel her heart pounding in her chest). Remember to include detail in your story, the reader has to be able to imagine your story as if it were happening in front of them. Remember because it is a story, there has to be a plot! So in other words, your story has to go somewhere with a beginning, middle and end! Normally a story runs chronologically, but if you want to add a little spice you are allowed to throw in a few flashbacks! The story that you are telling can be either imaginative or real.

# Reflective / personal / creative / imaginative essays

This type of essay is all about your *observation of the world around you*, and how you can relate to that – most of the time this will be a genuine situation that you are describing. This essay uses the first person perspective, because you are using your own experiences to draw from to tell the story, and it is written from your point of view. The point is that you have to make the story seem real to the person reading it by the way you tell it.