

ESSAY WRITING CHEAT SHEET: (From Krista Dornbush, La Guana Bush High School, La Guana Beach, CA)

Seven Steps of Essay Writing

- 1. Read and Analyze the question.**
 - * What is the question asking?
 - * What is the question asking you to do?
 - * What type of question is it?

- 2. Collect and sort the data needed to answer the question.**
 - * Brainstorm a list of factual information.
 - * Create categories for this information.

- 3. Create your thesis statement.**
 - * The thesis is your answer to the question. It is the guiding argument of the essay.
 - * The thesis must fully address the question, take a position with regard to the question, and provide organizational categories for analysis.

- 4. Write the introduction to your essay.**
 - * Begin with a broad statement on the topic.
 - * Narrow the paragraph with 2-3 sentences that bring the question into focus.
 - * Conclude with the thesis statement.

- 5. Write the body of the essay.**
 - * Each paragraph must have a topic sentence.
 - * Each paragraph must have evidence, or historical fact.
 - * Each paragraph must have analysis, which may be presented as interpretation or commentary.
 - * Each paragraph must contain a “clincher” sentence.
 - * Each paragraph must contain a transition sentence that directs the reader to the next paragraph.

- 6. Write the conclusion.**
 - * The conclusion must reinforce the thesis, not restate it.
 - * The conclusion must summarize the main points of the body paragraphs.
 - * The conclusion must synthesize the clincher sentences.
 - * The conclusion must address “So what?” (historical significance).

- 7. Proofread your essay.**
 - * Eliminate grammatical errors.
 - * Eliminate contradictions between the thesis and the body.

Types of Essay Questions

- 1. Change over time – Questions that ask you to look at a period of history and explain the evolution of a particular aspect within the time frame given. For example, “Between 1790 and 1870 the economic growth of the US was significantly stimulated by government aid.” Discuss this growth.**
- 2. Cause and effect – Questions that ask you to weigh factors and explain the resulting relationship between those factors and the end result. For example, “Why did the US enter the First World War?”.**
- 3. Compare and contrast – Questions that ask you to show similarities and differences on the topic given. For example, “Compare and contrast the Northern Renaissance with the Italian Renaissance.”**
- 4. Define and Identify – Questions that ask you to identify key factors by both definition and historical significance. “Identify the social, political and economic factors that led to the Age of Exploration.”**
- 5. Statement/Reaction – Questions that ask you to form an opinion, on a given statement, based on historical evidence. For example, “‘Slavery was the sole cause of the Civil War.’ Evaluate this statement.”**
- 6. Evaluation – Questions that ask you to form an opinion based on good or bad, right or wrong, based on historical evidence. For example, “Select any three of the following and evaluate their effectiveness as political leaders.”**
- 7. Analyzing Viewpoints – Questions that ask you defend or refute a given historical viewpoint based on historical evidence. For example, “Defend the economic policies of Hitler in the years 1921 – 1933 in Germany.”**

Key Terms

- 1. Analyze – to break into parts and explain the parts**
- 2. Cause/Effect – the beginning/ the result**
- 3. Chronological – events put in the order they happened**
- 4. Clarify – to make clear**
- 5. Compare – show how two things are alike**
- 6. Contrast – show how two things are different**
- 7. Describe – to tell how something looks or how it happened**
- 8. Discuss – to tell about the main points and important details**
- 9. Define – to give the meaning**
- 10. Diagram – to make a drawing of something and label its parts**

11. Enumerate – to make a list
12. Evaluate – to give your opinion of what is important; discuss its good and bad points; discuss its strengths and weaknesses
13. Explain - to give facts that elucidate
14. Fact – something that can be proven to be true
15. Illustrate – to give examples
16. Infer – to make a conclusion based on fact
17. Interpret – to offer an explanation
18. Justify – to give good reasons
19. Opinion – belief based on what a person thinks or feels
20. Predict – to make a guess about the future
21. Prove – to show something is true by giving facts
22. Question – to ask
23. Reflect – to think about
24. Relate – to show how things are alike or connected
25. Sequence – to put in the correct order
26. State – to give the main points or reasons\
27. Summarize – to briefly cover the main points
28. Trace – to tell about the progress or growth

Transition and Signal Words for Essays

Sequence and Chronological Order Stems

After	Afterwards
Ago	Already
At last	At the same time
As	Before
During	Eventually
Even now	Finally
(the) final	First, first of all
Following	For a time
Further, furthermore	Immediately
Initially	In the first place
In the meantime	Last, lastly
Later	Long after
Meanwhile	Next
Now	Not long after
Once	On (date)
Preceding	Presently
Second, secondly	Several
Sometimes	Soon, soon after
Some	Subsequently

Suddenly
Thereafter
To begin with
Until

Then
Third
Today
While

Compare and Contrast Stems

Although
As opposed to
But
Compared with
Despite
Either...or
Equally important
In comparison
In like manner
In spite of
Just as
Likewise
Nevertheless
On the contrary
On the other hand
Regardless
Similarly
Unlike
Whereas
Yet

Also
As well as
By comparison
Conversely
Different from
Even though
However
In contrast
In the same way
Instead of
Like
Neither...nor
Notwithstanding
Not only...but also
Rather than
Same as
Still
Unless
While

Cause and Effect Stems

Accordingly
As if
Because
Hence
If...then
May be due to
Provided that
So
Then
Thus

As a result
As though
Consequently
In order to
It follows that
Nevertheless
Since
So that
Therefore

Emphasis Words

Besides

Certainly

Furthermore
Moreover
Of course

Indeed
Obviously

Stems for Examples

Another
For instance
First, second, etc...
Most important
Specifically
To begin with
To illustrate

For example
Furthermore
In addition
Namely
Such as
That is

Conclusion Words

As a result
For this reason
In other words
It follows that
On the whole
Thus
To sum up

Consequently
In brief
In short
In fact
Therefore
To summarize