**CARA MENULIS ESAI**

Esai adalah karangan prosa yang membahas suatu masalah secara sepintas lalu dari sudut pandang pribadi penulisnya. Pengarang esai disebut esais. Esai sebagai satu bentuk karangan dapat bersifat informal dan formal. Esai informal mempergunakan bahasa percakapan, dengan bentuk sapaan “saya” dan seolah-olah ia berbicara langsung dengan pembacanya. Adapun esai yang formal pendekatannya serius. Pengarang mempergunakan semua persyaratan penulisan.

[**Tipe-tipe Esai**](http://www.pemustaka.com/topik/tipe-tipe-esai)  
Ada enam tipe esai, yaitu :

1. **Esai Deskriptif**. Esai jenis ini dapat melukiskan subjek atau objek apa saja yang dapat menarik perhatian pengarang. Ia bisa mendeskripsikan sebuah rumah, sepatu, tempat rekreasi dan sebagainya.
2. **Esai Tajuk**. Esai jenis ini dapat dilihat dalam [surat kabar](http://www.pemustaka.com/topik/surat-kabar) dan majalah. Esai ini mempunyai satu fungsi khusus, yaitu menggambarkan pandangan dan sikap surat kabar/majalah tersebut terhadap satu topik dan isyu dalam masyarakat. Dengan Esai tajuk, surat kabar tersebut membentuk opini pembaca. Tajuk surat kabar tidak perlu disertai dengan nama penulis.
3. **Esai Cukilan Watak**. Esai ini memperbolehkan seorang penulis membeberkan beberapa segi dari kehidupan individual seseorang kepada para pembaca. Lewat cukilan watak itu pembaca dapat mengetahui sikap penulis terhadap tipe pribadi yang dibeberkan. Disini penulis tidak menuliskan biografi. Ia hanya memilih bagian-bagian yang utama dari kehidupan dan watak pribadi tersebut.
4. **Esai Pribadi**, hampir sama dengan esai cukilan watak. Akan tetapi esai pribadi ditulis sendiri oleh pribadi tersebut tentang dirinya sendiri. Penulis akan menyatakan “Saya adalah saya. Saya akan menceritakan kepada saudara hidup saya dan pandangan saya tentang hidup”. Ia membuka tabir tentang dirinya sendiri.
5. **Esai Reflektif**. Esai reflektif ditulis secara formal dengan nada serius. Penulis mengungkapkan dengan dalam, sungguh-sungguh, dan hati-hati beberapa topik yang penting berhubungan dengan hidup, misalnya kematian, politik, pendidikan, dan hakikat manusiawi. Esai ini ditujukan kepada para cendekiawan.
6. **Esai Kritik**. Dalam esai kritik penulis memusatkan diri pada uraian tentang seni, misalnya, lukisan, tarian, pahat, patung, teater, kesusasteraan. Esai kritik bisa ditulis tentang seni tradisional, pekerjaan seorang seniman pada masa lampau, tentang seni kontemporer. Esai ini membangkitkan kesadaran pembaca tentang pikiran dan perasaan penulis tentang karya seni. Kritik yang menyangkut karya sastra disebut kritik sastra.

**Bagian Esai**

Sebuah esai dasar bisa dibagi menjadi tiga bagian yaitu:

* Pertama, pendahuluan yang berisi latar belakang informasi yang mengidentifikasi subyek bahasan dan pengantar tentang subyek yang akan dinilai oleh si penulis tersebut.
* Kedua, tubuh esai yang menyajikan seluruh informasi tentang subyek.
* Ketiga, adalah bagian akhir yang memberikan kesimpulan dengan menyebutkan kembali ide pokok, ringkasan dari tubuh esai, atau menambahkan beberapa observasi tentang subyek yang dinilai oleh si penulis.

[**Ciri-ciri Esai**](http://www.pemustaka.com/topik/ciri-ciri-esai)

1. Berbentuk prosa, artinya dalam bentuk komunikasi biasa, menghindarkan penggunaan bahasa dan ungkapan figuratif.
2. Singkat, maksudnya dapat dibaca dengan santai dalam waktu dua jam.
3. Memiliki gaya pembeda. Seorang penulis esai yang baik akan membawa ciri dan gaya yang khas, yang membedakan tulisannya dengan gaya penulis lain.
4. Selalu tidak utuh, artinya penulis memilih segi-segi yang penting dan menarik dari objek dan subjek yang hendak ditulis. Penulis memilih aspek tertentu saja untuk disampaikan kepada para pembaca.
5. Memenuhi keutuhan penulisan. Walaupun esai adalah tulisan yang tidak utuh, namun harus memiliki kesatuan, dan memenuhi syarat-syarat penulisan, mulai dari pendahuluan, pengembangan sampai ke pengakhiran. Di dalamnya terdapat koherensi dan kesimpulan yang logis. Penulis harus mengemukakan argumennya dan tidak membiarkan pembaca tergantung di awang-awang.
6. Mempunyai nada pribadi atau bersifat personal, yang membedakan esai dengan jenis karya sastra yang lain adalah ciri personal. Ciri personal dalam penulisan esai adalah pengungkapan penulis sendiri tentang kediriannya, pandangannya, sikapnya, pikirannya, dan dugaannya kepada pembaca.

**Langkah-langkah pembuatan esai**

Jika dipetakan mengenai langkah-langkah membuat esai, bisa dirunut sebagai berikut:

1. Menentukan tema atau topik
2. Membuat *outline* atau garis besar ide-ide yang akan kita bahas
3. Menuliskan pendapat kita sebagai penulisnya dengan kalimat yang singkat dan jelas
4. Menulis tubuh esai; memulai dengan memilah poin-poin penting yang akan dibahas, kemudian buatlah beberapa subtema pembahasan agar lebih memudahkan pembaca untuk memahami maksud dari gagasan kita sebagai penulisnya, selanjutnya kita harus mengembangkan subtema yang telah kita buat sebelumnya.
5. Membuat paragraf pertama yang sifatnya sebagai pendahuluan. Itu sebabnya, yang akan kita tulis itu harus merupakan alasan atau latar belakang alasan kita menulis esai tersebut.
6. Menuliskan kesimpulan. Ini penting karena untuk membentuk opini pembaca kita harus memberikan kesimpulan pendapat dari gagasan kita sebagai penulisnya. Karena memang tugas penulis esai adalah seperti itu. Berbeda dengan penulis berita di media massa yang seharusnya (memang) bersikap netral.
7. Jangan lupa untuk memberikan sentuhan akhir pada tulisan kita agar pembaca merasa bisa mengambil manfaat dari apa yang kita tulis tersebut dengan mudah dan sistematis sehingga membentuk kerangka berpikir mereka secara utuh.

**Cara mengembangkan kerangka karangan esai**

1. Untuk memudahkan karangan, mulailah dengan sebuah definisi;
2. Kembangkan karangan dengan deskripsi situasi;
3. Masukan pandangan seorang ahli;
4. Buatlah kalimat-kalimat tunggal dan kalimat majemuk setara atau bertingkat dengan struktur yang sederhana;
5. Untuk memudahkan menguraikan paragraf gunakan paragaraf-paragraf deduktif;
6. Esai biasa adalah karangan argumentasi.

Contoh [kumpulan buku](http://www.pemustaka.com/topik/kumpulan-buku) esai sastra yang bisa dijadikan referensi adalah, *Menjadi Manusia* karya Yakob Sumarjo, *Si Parasit Lajang* karya Ayu Utami, *Obsesi Perempuan Berkumis* karya Budi Darma. Anda juga bisa melihat **contoh esai sastra** di media massa seperti Kompas, Pikiran Rakyat, dan lain-lain yang biasa muncul hari Minggu di lembar budaya. Di lembar Khazanah koran Pikiran Rakyat sering muncul esai sastra atau kritik sastra.

[Pengertian Esai](http://www.pemustaka.com/topik/pengertian-esai) dan Ciri-Cirinya, 4.3 out of 5 based on 12 ratings

**Artikel Menarik Lainnya:**

* [Pengertian Esai Sastra dan Contohnya](http://www.pemustaka.com/esai-sastra-dan-contohnya.html)

Anda sedang membaca artikel yang berjudul **Pengertian Esai dan Ciri-Cirinya** dengan Kategori [Wahana Informasi](http://www.pemustaka.com/kategori/wahana-informasi). Anda boleh menyebarluaskan atau mengcopynya jika artikel ini sangat bermanfaat bagi tema-teman Anda, namun jangan lupa untuk meletakkan link [*Pengertian Esai dan Ciri-Cirinya*](http://www.pemustaka.com/pengertian-esai-dan-ciri-cirinya.html) sebagai sumbernya.

Sumber: <http://www.pemustaka.com/pengertian-esai-dan-ciri-cirinya.html>

**Esai** adalah suatu [tulisan](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tulisan) yang menggambarkan opini penulis tentang subyek tertentu yang coba dinilainya.

|  |
| --- |
| **Daftar isi**   [[sembunyikan](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esai)]   * [1 Bagian esai](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esai#Bagian_esai) * [2 Langkah-langkah pembuatan esai](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esai#Langkah-langkah_pembuatan_esai) * [3 Lihat pula](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esai#Lihat_pula) * [4 Pranala luar](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esai#Pranala_luar) |

**[**[**sunting**](http://id.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Esai&action=edit&section=1)**] Bagian esai**

Sebuah esai dasar bisa dibagi menjadi tiga bagian yaitu:

* Pertama, pendahuluan yang berisi latar belakang informasi yang mengidentifikasi subyek bahasan dan pengantar tentang subyek yang akan dinilai oleh si [penulis](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penulis) tersebut.
* Kedua, tubuh esai yang menyajikan seluruh informasi tentang subyek.
* Ketiga, adalah bagian akhir yang memberikan kesimpulan dengan menyebutkan kembali ide pokok, ringkasan dari tubuh esai, atau menambahkan beberapa observasi tentang subyek yang dinilai oleh si penulis.

**[**[**sunting**](http://id.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Esai&action=edit&section=2)**] Langkah-langkah pembuatan esai**

Jika dipetakan mengenai langkah-langkah membuat esai, bisa dirunut sebagai berikut:

1. Menentukan tema atau topik
2. Membuat *outline* atau garis besar ide-ide yang akan kita bahas
3. Menuliskan pendapat kita sebagai penulisnya dengan kalimat yang singkat dan jelas
4. Menulis tubuh esai; memulai dengan memilah poin-poin penting yang akan dibahas, kemudian buatlah beberapa subtema pembahasan agar lebih memudahkan [pembaca](http://id.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pembaca&action=edit&redlink=1) untuk memahami maksud dari gagasan kita sebagai penulisnya, selanjutnya kita harus mengembangkan subtema yang telah kita buat sebelumnya.
5. Membuat paragraf pertama yang sifatnya sebagai pendahuluan. Itu sebabnya, yang akan kita tulis itu harus merupakan alasan atau latar belakang alasan kita menulis esai tersebut.
6. Menuliskan kesimpulan. Ini penting karena untuk membentuk opini pembaca kita harus memberikan kesimpulan pendapat dari gagasan kita sebagai penulisnya. Karena memang tugas penulis esai adalah seperti itu. Berbeda dengan penulis berita di media massa yang seharusnya (memang) bersikap netral.
7. Jangan lupa untuk memberikan sentuhan akhir pada tulisan kita agar pembaca merasa bisa mengambil manfaat dari apa yang kita tulis tersebut dengan mudah dan sistematis sehingga membentuk kerangka berpikir mereka secara utuh.

An **essay** is a piece of writing which is often written from an author's personal [point of view](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perspective_%28cognitive%29). Essays can consist of a number of elements, including: [literary criticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_criticism), political [manifestos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manifestos), learned [arguments](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arguments), observations of daily life, recollections, and reflections of the author. The definition of an essay is vague, overlapping with those of an [article](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_%28publishing%29) and a [short story](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_story). Almost all modern essays are written in [prose](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prose), but works in [verse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry) have been dubbed essays (e.g. [Alexander Pope](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Pope)'s [*An Essay on Criticism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An_Essay_on_Criticism) and [*An Essay on Man*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An_Essay_on_Man)). While brevity usually defines an essay, voluminous works like [John Locke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke)'s [*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An_Essay_Concerning_Human_Understanding) and [Thomas Malthus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Malthus)'s [*An Essay on the Principle of Population*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An_Essay_on_the_Principle_of_Population) are counterexamples.

In some countries (e.g., the United States and Canada), essays have become a major part of formal [education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education). Secondary students are taught structured essay formats to improve their writing skills, and [admission essays](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Admissions_essay) are often used by [universities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University) in selecting applicants and, in the humanities and social sciences, as a way of assessing the performance of students during final exams. The concept of an "essay" has been extended to other mediums beyond writing. A film essay is a movie that often incorporates documentary film making styles and which focuses more on the evolution of a theme or an idea. A [photographic essay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photo_essay) is an attempt to cover a topic with a linked series of photographs; it may or may not have an accompanying text or captions.

|  |
| --- |
| **Contents**   [[hide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay)]   * [1 Definitions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Definitions) * [2 History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#History)   + [2.1 Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Europe)   + [2.2 Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Japan) * [3 As an educational tool](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#As_an_educational_tool) * [4 Forms and styles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Forms_and_styles)   + [4.1 Cause and effect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Cause_and_effect)   + [4.2 Classification and division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Classification_and_division)   + [4.3 Compare and contrast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Compare_and_contrast)   + [4.4 Descriptive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Descriptive)   + [4.5 Dialectic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Dialectic)   + [4.6 Exemplification](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Exemplification)   + [4.7 Familiar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Familiar)   + [4.8 History (thesis)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#History_.28thesis.29)   + [4.9 Narrative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Narrative)   + [4.10 Critical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Critical)   + [4.11 Other logical structures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Other_logical_structures) * [5 Magazine or newspaper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Magazine_or_newspaper) * [6 Employment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Employment) * [7 Non-literary types](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Non-literary_types)   + [7.1 Visual Arts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Visual_Arts)   + [7.2 Music](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Music)   + [7.3 Film](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Film)   + [7.4 Photography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Photography) * [8 See also](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#See_also) * [9 References](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#References) * [10 Further reading](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#Further_reading) * [11 External links](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#External_links) |

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=1)**] Definitions**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Essais_Titelblatt_(1588).png)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.20wmf11/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Essais_Titelblatt_(1588).png)

Essays of [Michel de Montaigne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_de_Montaigne)

An essay has been defined in a variety of ways. One definition is a "prose composition with a focused subject of discussion" or a "long, systematic discourse".[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-0) It is difficult to define the genre into which essays fall. [Aldous Huxley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aldous_Huxley), a leading essayist, gives guidance on the subject.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-1) He notes that "[l]ike the novel, the essay is a literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything, usually on a certain topic. By tradition, almost by definition, the essay is a short piece, and it is therefore impossible to give all things full play within the limits of a single essay". He points out that "a collection of essays can cover almost as much ground, and cover it almost as thoroughly, as can a long novel"--he gives Montaigne's Third Book as an example. Huxley argues on several occasions that "essays belong to a literary species whose extreme variability can be studied most effectively within a three-poled frame of reference". Huxley's three poles are:

* Personal and the autobiographical essays: these use "fragments of reflective autobiography" to "look at the world through the keyhole of anecdote and description".
* Objective and factual: in these essays, the authors "do not speak directly of themselves, but turn their attention outward to some literary or scientific or political theme".
* Abstract-universal: these essays "make the best ... of all the three worlds in which it is possible for the essay to exist".

The word *essay* derives from the French infinitive *essayer*, "to try" or "to attempt". In English *essay* first meant "a trial" or "an attempt", and this is still an alternative meaning. The Frenchman [Michel de Montaigne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_de_Montaigne) (1533–1592) was the first author to describe his work as essays; he used the term to characterize these as "attempts" to put his thoughts into writing, and his essays grew out of his [commonplacing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonplacing).[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-2) Inspired in particular by the works of [Plutarch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plutarch), a translation of whose *Oeuvres Morales* (*Moral works*) into French had just been published by [Jacques Amyot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Amyot), Montaigne began to compose his essays in 1572; the first edition, entitled [*Essais*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essays_%28Montaigne%29), was published in two volumes in 1580. For the rest of his life he continued revising previously published essays and composing new ones. [Francis Bacon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Bacon)'s [essays](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essays_%28Francis_Bacon%29), published in book form in 1597, 1612, and 1625, were the first works in English that described themselves as *essays*. [Ben Jonson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ben_Jonson) first used the word *essayist* in English in 1609, according to the [*Oxford English Dictionary*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxford_English_Dictionary).

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=2)**] History**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Globe icon. | The examples and perspective in this article **may not represent a** [**worldwide view**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Countering_systemic_bias) **of the subject**. Please [improve this article](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit) and discuss the issue on the [talk page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Essay). *(January 2011)* |

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=3)**] Europe**

English essayists included [Robert Burton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Burton_%28scholar%29) (1577–1640) and [Sir Thomas Browne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Thomas_Browne) (1605–1682). In Italy, [Baldassare Castiglione](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baldassare_Castiglione) wrote about courtly manners in his essay *Il libro del cortegiano*. In the 17th century, the [Jesuit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesuit) [Baltasar Gracián](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltasar_Graci%C3%A1n) wrote about the theme of wisdom.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-britannica1-3) During the [Age of Enlightenment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment), essays were a favored tool of polemicists who aimed at convincing readers of their position; they also featured heavily in the rise of [periodical literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Periodical_literature), as seen in the works of [Joseph Addison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Addison), [Richard Steele](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Steele) and [Samuel Johnson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Johnson). In the 18th and 19th centuries, [Edmund Burke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Burke) and [Samuel Taylor Coleridge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Taylor_Coleridge) wrote essays for the general public. The early 19th century in particular saw a proliferation of great essayists in English – [William Hazlitt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Hazlitt), [Charles Lamb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Lamb), [Leigh Hunt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Henry_Leigh_Hunt) and [Thomas de Quincey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_de_Quincey) all penned numerous essays on diverse subjects. In the 20th century, a number of essayists tried to explain the new movements in art and culture by using essays (e.g., [T.S. Eliot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T.S._Eliot)). Whereas some essayists used essays for strident political themes, [Robert Louis Stevenson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Louis_Stevenson) and [Willa Cather](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willa_Cather) wrote lighter essays. [Virginia Woolf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Woolf), [Edmund Wilson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Wilson), and [Charles du Bos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_du_Bos) wrote literary criticism essays.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-britannica1-3)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=4)**] Japan**

Main article: [Zuihitsu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zuihitsu)

As with the [novel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novel), essays existed in Japan several centuries before they developed in Europe, with a genre of essays known as [*zuihitsu*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zuihitsu) – loosely connected essays and fragmented ideas – having existed since almost the beginnings of Japanese literature. Many of the most noted early works of Japanese literature are in this genre. Notable examples include [*The Pillow Book*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pillow_Book) (c. 1000) by court lady [Sei Shōnagon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sei_Sh%C5%8Dnagon), and [*Tsurezuregusa*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsurezuregusa) (1330) by Japanese Buddhist monk [Yoshida Kenkō](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoshida_Kenk%C5%8D) being particularly renowned. Kenkō described his short writings similarly to Montaigne, referring to them as "nonsensical thoughts" written in "idle hours". Another noteworthy difference from Europe is that women have traditionally written in Japan, though the more formal, Chinese-influenced writings of male writers were more prized at the time.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=5)**] As an educational tool**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Czythumbur.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.20wmf11/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Czythumbur.jpg)

University students, like these students doing research at a university library, are often assigned essays as a way to get them to analyze what they have read.

In countries like the United States, essays have become a major part of a formal [education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education). Secondary students in these countries are taught structured essay formats to improve their writing skills, and essays are often used by universities in these countries in selecting applicants (*see* [admissions essay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Admissions_essay)). In both secondary and tertiary education, essays are used to judge the mastery and comprehension of material. Students are asked to explain, comment on, or assess a topic of study in the form of an essay. During some courses, university students will often be required to complete one or more essays that are prepared over several weeks or months. In addition, in fields such as the humanities and social sciences,[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] mid-term and end of term examinations often require students to write a short essay in two or three hours.

In these countries, so-called academic essays, which may also be called "papers", are usually more formal than literary ones.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] They may still allow the presentation of the writer's own views, but this is done in a logical and factual manner, with the use of the [first person](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First-person_narrative) often discouraged. Longer academic essays (often with a word limit of between 2,000 and 5,000 words)[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] are often more discursive. They sometimes begin with a short summary analysis of what has previously been written on a topic, which is often called a [literature review](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literature_review).[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

Longer essays may also contain an introductory page in which words and phrases from the title are tightly defined. Most academic institutions[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] will require that all substantial facts, quotations, and other porting material used in an essay be referenced in a [bibliography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliography) or works cited page at the end of the text. This scholarly convention allows others (whether teachers or fellow scholars) to understand the basis of the facts and quotations used to support the essay's argument, and thereby help to evaluate to what extent the argument is supported by evidence, and to evaluate the quality of that evidence. The academic essay tests the student's ability to present their thoughts in an organized way and is designed to test their intellectual capabilities.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

One essay guide of a US university makes the distinction between research papers and discussion papers. The guide states that a "research paper is intended to uncover a wide variety of sources on a given topic". As such, research papers "tend to be longer and more inclusive in their scope and with the amount of information they deal with." While discussion papers "also include research, ...they tend to be shorter and more selective in their approach...and more analytical and critical". Whereas a research paper would typically quote "a wide variety of sources", a discussion paper aims to integrate the material in a broader fashion.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-4)

One of the challenges facing US universities is that in some cases, students may submit essays which have been purchased from an [essay mill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay_mill) (or "paper mill") as their own work. An "essay mill" is a [ghostwriting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghostwriting) service that sells pre-written essays to university and college students. Since [plagiarism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism) is a form of [academic dishonesty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_dishonesty) or [academic fraud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_fraud), universities and colleges may investigate papers suspected to be from an essay mill by using Internet [plagiarism detection](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism_detection) software, which compares essays against a database of known mill essays and by orally testing students on the contents of their papers.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=6)**] Forms and styles**

This section describes the different forms and styles of essay writing. These forms and styles are used by a range of authors, including university students and professional essayists.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=7)**] Cause and effect**

The defining features of a "cause and effect" essay are causal chains that connect from a cause to an effect, careful language, and chronological or emphatic order. A writer using this rhetorical method must consider the subject, determine the purpose, consider the audience, think critically about different causes or consequences, consider a thesis statement, arrange the parts, consider the language, and decide on a conclusion.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-5)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=8)**] Classification and division**

Classification is the categorization of objects into a larger whole while division is the breaking of a larger whole into smaller parts.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-6)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=9)**] Compare and contrast**

Compare and contrast essays are characterized by a basis for comparison, points of comparison, and analogies. It is grouped by object (chunking) or by point (sequential). Comparison highlights the similarities between two or more similar objects while contrasting highlights the differences between two or more objects. When writing a compare/contrast essay, writers need to determine their purpose, consider their audience, consider the basis and points of comparison, consider their thesis statement, arrange and develop the comparison, and reach a conclusion. Compare and contrast is arranged emphatically.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-7)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=10)**] Descriptive**

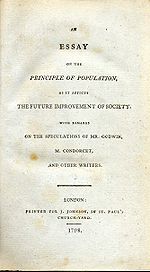
[Descriptive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Descriptive_linguistics) writing is characterized by [sensory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sensory_perception) details, which appeal to the physical senses, and details that appeal to a reader's emotional, physical, or intellectual sensibilities. Determining the purpose, considering the audience, creating a dominant impression, using descriptive language, and organizing the description are the rhetorical choices to be considered when using a description. A description is usually arranged spatially but can also be [chronological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronological) or emphatic. The focus of a description is the scene. Description uses tools such as [denotative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denotative) language, [connotative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connotative) language, [figurative language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Figurative_language), [metaphor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphor), and [simile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simile) to arrive at a dominant impression.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-8) One university essay guide states that "descriptive writing says what happened or what another author has discussed; it provides an account of the topic".[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-9)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=11)**] Dialectic**

In the [dialectic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectic) form of essay, which is commonly used in [Philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy), the writer makes a thesis and argument, then objects to their own argument (with a counterargument), but then counters the counterargument with a final and novel argument. This form benefits from being more open-minded while countering a possible flaw that some may present.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-10)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=12)**] Exemplification**

An exemplification essay is characterized by a generalization and relevant, representative, and believable examples including [anecdotes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anecdote). Writers need to consider their subject, determine their purpose, consider their audience, decide on specific examples, and arrange all the parts together when writing an exemplification essay.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-11)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:An_Essay_on_the_Principle_of_Population.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.20wmf11/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:An_Essay_on_the_Principle_of_Population.jpg)

[Malthus'](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Robert_Malthus) [*Essay on the Principle of Population*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay_on_the_Principle_of_Population)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=13)**] Familiar**

A familiar essay is one in which the essayist speaks as if to a single reader. He speaks about both himself and a particular subject. [Anne Fadiman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Fadiman) notes that "the genre's heyday was the early nineteenth century," and that its greatest exponent was [Charles Lamb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Lamb).[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-12) She also suggests that while critical essays have more brain than heart, and personal essays have more heart than brain, familiar essays have equal measures of both.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-13)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=14)**] History (thesis)**

A history essay, sometimes referred to as a thesis essay, will describe an argument or claim about one or more historical events and will support that claim with evidence, arguments and references. The text makes it clear to the reader why the argument or claim is as such.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-14)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=15)**] Narrative**

A [narrative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative) uses tools such as [flashbacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flashback_%28narrative%29), [flash-forwards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flashforward), and [transitions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transition_%28fiction%29) that often build to a climax. The focus of a narrative is the [plot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plot_%28narrative%29). When creating a narrative, authors must determine their purpose, consider their audience, establish their point of view, use dialogue, and organize the narrative. A narrative is usually arranged chronologically.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-15)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=16)**] Critical**

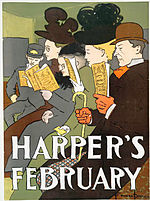
A [critical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism) essay is an [argumentative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argumentative) piece of writing, aimed at presenting objective [analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analysis) of the subject matter, narrowed down to a single topic. The main idea of all the criticism is to provide an opinion either of positive or negative implication. As such, a critical essay requires research and analysis, strong internal logic and sharp structure. Each [argument](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argument) should be supported with sufficient evidence, relevant to the point.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=17)**] Other logical structures**

The logical progression and organizational structure of an essay can take many forms. Understanding how the movement of thought is managed through an essay has a profound impact on its overall cogency and ability to impress. A number of alternative logical structures for essays have been visualized as diagrams, making them easy to implement or adapt in the construction of an argument.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-16)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=18)**] Magazine or newspaper**

Essays often appear in magazines, especially magazines with an intellectual bent, such as [*The Atlantic*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Atlantic) and [*Harpers*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harper%27s_Magazine). Magazine and newspaper essays use many of the essay types described in the section on forms and styles (e.g., descriptive essays, narrative essays, etc.). Some newspapers also print essays in the [op-ed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Op-ed) section.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Harper's_February_(1895)_.jpeg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.20wmf11/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Harper's_February_(1895)_.jpeg)

An 1895 cover of [*Harpers*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harper%27s_Magazine), a US magazine that prints a number of essays per issue.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=19)**] Employment**

Employment essays detailing experience in a certain occupational field are required when applying for some jobs, especially government jobs in the United States. Essays known as Knowledge Skills and Executive Core Qualifications are required when applying to certain US federal government positions.

A KSA, or Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities, is a series of narrative statements that are required when applying to Federal government job openings in the United States. KSAs are used along with resumes to determine who the best applicants are when several candidates qualify for a job. The knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the successful performance of a position are contained on each job vacancy announcement. KSAs are brief and focused essays about one's career and educational background that presumably qualify one to perform the duties of the position being applied for.

An Executive Core Qualification, or ECQ, is a narrative statement that is required when applying to Senior Executive Service positions within the US Federal government. Like the KSAs, ECQs are used along with resumes to determine who the best applicants are when several candidates qualify for a job. The Office of Personnel Management has established five executive core qualifications that all applicants seeking to enter the Senior Executive Service must demonstrate.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=20)**] Non-literary types**

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=21)**] Visual Arts**

In the visual [arts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art), an essay is a preliminary drawing or sketch upon which a final painting or sculpture is based, made as a test of the work's composition (this meaning of the term, like several of those following, comes from the word *essay'*s meaning of "attempt" or "trial").

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=22)**] Music**

In the realm of [music](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music), composer [Samuel Barber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Barber) wrote a set of "Essays for Orchestra," relying on the form and content of the music to guide the listener's ear, rather than any [extra-musical plot or story](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Program_music).

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=23)**] Film**

A film essay (or "cinematic essay") consists of the evolution of a theme or an idea rather than a plot per se; or the film literally being a cinematic accompaniment to a narrator reading an essay. From another perspective, an essay film could be defined as a [documentary film](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_film) visual basis combined with a form of commentary that contains elements of self-portrait (rather than autobiography), where the signature (rather than the life story) of the filmmaker is apparent. The cinematic essay often blends documentary, fiction, and experimental film making using a tones and editing styles.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-chicagomediaworks1-17)

The genre is not well-defined but might include works of early [Soviet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) parliamentarians like [Dziga Vertov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dziga_Vertov), present-day filmmakers including [Chris Marker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Marker),[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-18) [Michael Moore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Moore) ([*Roger & Me*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_%26_Me) (1989), [*Bowling for Columbine*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowling_for_Columbine) (2002) and [*Fahrenheit 9/11*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fahrenheit_9/11) (2004)), [Errol Morris](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Errol_Morris) ([*The Thin Blue Line*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Thin_Blue_Line_%28film%29) (1988)), [Morgan Spurlock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morgan_Spurlock) ([*Supersize Me: A Film of Epic Proportions*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supersize_Me)) and [Agnès Varda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agn%C3%A8s_Varda). [Jean-Luc Godard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Luc_Godard) describes his recent work as "film-essays".[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-19) Two filmmakers whose work was the antecedent to the cinematic essay include [Georges Méliès](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_M%C3%A9li%C3%A8s) and [Bertolt Brecht](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertolt_Brecht). Méliès made a short film ([*The Coronation of Edward VII*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Coronation_of_Edward_VII) (1902)) about the 1902 coronation of King [Edward VII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_VII), which mixes actual footage with shots of a recreation of the event. Brecht was a playwright who experimented with film and incorporated film projections into some of his plays.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-chicagomediaworks1-17)

David Winks Gray's article "The essay film in action" states that the "essay film became an identifiable form of film making in the 1950s and '60s". He states that since that time, essay films have tended to be "on the margins" of the film making world. Essay films have a "peculiar searching, questioning tone" which is "between documentary and fiction" but without "fitting comfortably" into either genre. Gray notes that just like written essays, essay films "tend to marry the personal voice of a guiding narrator (often the director) with a wide swath of other voices".[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-20) The [University of Wisconsin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Wisconsin) Cinematheque website echoes some of Gray's comments; it calls a film essay an "intimate and allusive" genre that "catches filmmakers in a pensive mood, ruminating on the margins between fiction and documentary" in a manner that is "refreshingly inventive, playful, and idiosyncratic".[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay#cite_note-21)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Essay&action=edit&section=24)**] Photography**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Huahine,_French_Polynesia,_Image_-_Scott_Williams.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.20wmf11/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Huahine,_French_Polynesia,_Image_-_Scott_Williams.jpg)

"After School Play Interrupted by the Catch and Release of a Stingray" is a simple time-sequence [photo essay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photo_essay).

A [photographic essay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photo_essay) is an attempt to cover a topic with a linked series of photographs. Photo essays range from purely photographic works to photographs with captions or small notes to full text essays with a few or many accompanying photographs. Photo essays can be sequential in nature, intended to be viewed in a particular order, or they may consist of non-ordered photographs which may be viewed all at once or in an order chosen by the viewer. All photo essays are collections of photographs, but not all collections of photographs are photo essays. Photo essays often address a certain issue or attempt to capture the character of places and events.