Expository Essay Writing

AICE General Paper AS 8004

Mrs. Cedeño, MS. Ed.
South Broward High School
STEP 1: PREWRITING

So, of course, the first step of any essay is to first think of everything you know about that subject. Believe it or not, you’ve already been doing that! We’ve read several short stories, you’ve read an autobiography— plus everything you’ve read in the past has prepared you for this prompt: ‘Without storytellers, we would understand neither ourselves nor the world about us.’ Explain how this is true.

As you (hopefully) recall from prior learning, there are 5 stages of the writing process: prewriting; drafting/writing; revising; editing; publishing. Use the graphic organizer below to brainstorm your ideas on our working prompt (prewriting).

PROMPT: ‘Without storytellers, we would understand neither ourselves nor the world about us.’ Explain how this is true.

Essay Style: ____________________________________________
Thesis: ______________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
Brainstorm—Hand Approach Ideas:

- SOCIAL/RELATIONSHIPS
- ENVIRONMENT
- MEDIA, SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT
- POLITICS & GOVERNMENT
- SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Remember to think GP Relevance:
- Local, National, and International impact
- Past history/current event
- Consider all academia: math, science, social studies, literature, arts

Credits: Jill Pavich, NBCT
AICE: General Paper 8004
jill.pavich@palmbeachschools.org
Boca Raton Community High School, PBCSD
STEP TWO: DRAFTING/Writing - 

**INTRODUCTIONS**

We will be working in phases on the drafting process. First, let’s draft our expository introduction. Some things to keep in mind with a expository introduction:

- **Connect** to the language of the prompt
- **Concisely** introduce the topic
- **Clarify** ambiguous terms
- **Convey** the essay’s style through the thesis statement

Using the *Guide to Expository Essays* presentation, let’s draft an introduction for the following prompt:

> *Without storytellers, we would understand neither ourselves nor the world about us.* Explain how this is true.

**Practice**

Take a look at the following paragraph and label, as well as highlight: general statement, context, thesis statement.

> The popularity of the animated cartoon has delighted the American public for decades. As these shows evolve over the years, children and adults alike enjoy the colorful simplicity of imaginary worlds, from Mickey Mouse to Dora the Explorer. But aside from animation’s ability to take us away, TV cartoons also serve a more serious purpose: they teach us moral lessons; they have educational value; and they offer a light-hearted approach to the serious issues of an increasingly complex society.

**Practice: Writing an Effective Thesis**

Take a look at each prompt and, as a group, brainstorm aloud. Then use the following tips to write a thesis statement.

- The thesis should outline two to three reasons that explain your position on the prompt.
- Use key words from the prompt to help ensure that your essay will be on task (“storyteller” or “ourselves” or “the outside world”). You also want to specifically address how the statement is true—not false.

1. Account for the ever-increasing popularity of numbers and word puzzles.

2. What music appeals to you and why?
3. Explain the popularity of designer labels.

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

4. Account for the strong preference for male babies in some societies.

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

5. Which foreign country would you most like to visit? Give reasons for your choice.

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Now that you’ve practiced writing an effective thesis statement, let’s draft an introduction.

1. **General statement about the topic:**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

* Tip: Use the topic word in your first sentence.

2. **Provide context the reader needs to understand the topic:**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

* Tip: Use transition words.

3. **Thesis with 2 to 3 reasons:**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

* Tip: 1) use key words from the prompt
Body paragraphs are the most important part of your essay because they are the essence of the essay. Think of it this way— if your essay was a sandwich, your body paragraphs would be the meat and “fixins”, whereas the introduction and conclusion would be the bun. Although the bun is important for holding the sandwich together, it’s not why you eat the sandwich!

Each body paragraph of an expository essay should include the following: topic sentence, student logic, and specific examples.

**Topic Sentence**

The first sentence of your body paragraph is your topic sentence. There are several ways that you can write this sentence, but you will ALWAYS incorporate a word that maintains focus on the prompt. Our prompt is: *Without storytellers, we would understand neither ourselves nor the world about us. ’Explain how this is true.* So, some words you would try to include would be “storytellers”, “understand”, “ourselves”, and “world”. You can also choose a synonym for that word as to prevent redundancy.

First, use a transitional word or phrase. The list below gives you an idea of appropriate transitions for each body paragraph:

- **First body paragraph**: first of all, one reason, with, a vital force, a major event, a primary concern, because, a significant factor, a key feature
- **Middle paragraphs**: moreover, likewise, similarly, in contrast, furthermore, conversely, on the other hand, nevertheless, another distinctive quality, in spite of
- **Final paragraph**: final reason, finally, most noteworthy, the chief outcome, especially valuable, the most substantial issue, the crux of the matter

**Student Logic and Concrete Examples**

This is where you explain, clarify, define, or interpret the reasons that you have chose in your thesis. It makes the most sense to go in the order in which you mentioned them— this makes it easier for the reader to follow. Use the CEE strategy here: claim; explain; evidence (your topic sentence is your claim). Then, explain your claim with personal logic. Finally, support your explanation with a specific example. **You do not necessarily need to cite your sources here, which is ONLY true of the General Paper exam.** Finally, include seamless transitions into the next paragraph. This sentence should be a preview for the reader as to what is to come.

**Practice**

Take a look at the following paragraph and both label and highlight the following: topic sentence, personal logic, specific example(s). **Prompt: Without storytellers, we would understand neither ourselves nor the world about us. ’Explain how this is true.**

In addition to moral instruction, cartoons often serve educational purpose. Parents today— more so than ever before— are increasingly selective of what they expose their children to when it comes to TV, so it would make sense to infuse academic value with entertainment. In this way, everyone wins: television networks increase in sales while children learn from what they’re watching. For example, Dora the Explorer, a cartoon show for school-aged children, takes viewers on an entertaining adventure while teaching them valuable, academic lessons about culture as well as language. They have fun celebrating Latin-American holidays like Cinco de Mayo, singing along to Latin-American songs, and learning basic Spanish such as numbers and greetings. Clearly, a closer look at television cartoons reveals a deeper purpose than mere enjoyment.
Apply It: First Body Paragraph

Use the previous tips to write your first paragraph. Remember, you are transitioning from your thesis statement. Use one of the following phrases: first of all, one reason, with, a vital force, a major event, a primary concern, because, a significant factor, a key feature.

Thesis: ________________________________________________________________

1. Topic Sentence:

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

Tip: Use a transitional word/phrase AND incorporate words from prompt

2. Student Logic & Concrete examples: ______________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

Remember that, for the GP exam, you are not required to include citations or references.

3. Seamless Transition (the first sentence of your second body paragraph): moreover, likewise, similarly, in contrast, furthermore, conversely, on the other hand, nevertheless, another distinctive quality, in spite of

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________
Apply It: Body Paragraphs

Use the CEE strategy to write the rest of your body paragraphs, being sure to use seamless transitions. Use the transitions on page from page 5 to help you.
STEP TWO: DRAFTING/Writing -  CONCLUSIONS

Provide the reader an overview of the main ideas you discussed, but also be sure to highlight the progression of your thought process. Don’t only restate your thesis but show the significance of your synthesis of the information.

1. Provide some sort of TRANSITION to trigger the essay’s closing, but do not necessarily use the traditional ‘in conclusion’ format.
   - Clearly, Evidently, It appears, Therefore, Ultimately, etc.

2. Briefly summarize the main points you’ve covered in the essay without going overboard on detail reiteration; develop parallels or highlight direct contrasts if possible.
   - limit this to 1-3 sentences

3. Offer a new perspective:
   - offer a SOLUTION or NEXT STEPS
   - present new QUESTIONS

4. show the SIGNIFICANCE of your THESIS
   - Include PROMPT LANGUAGE as you wrap up your address of the topic.

Practice

Label and highlight each part of the following conclusion: transition, restate your main points, offer a new perspective, end memorably. Also, circle all uses of prompt language.

Prompt: Without storytellers, we would understand neither ourselves nor the world about us.’ Explain how this is true.

Clearly, television cartoon shows can serve more than one purpose. We use them to teach moral and social behaviors, we use them to educate our people, and we use them to make sense of the complexities that underpin our day-to-day dealings. Through the art of storytelling, cartoons secretly reveal who we are as a social culture; they animate our identity. They may be hailed for their whimsy, but cartoons should also be admired for their wisdom.
Apply It

Use the previous guidelines to draft your own conclusion on our prompt. Don’t forget to use **prompt language** throughout your conclusion!

1. Transition to the essay’s closing: 

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

2. Summarize your essay’s main points: 

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

3. Offer a new perspective: 

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

4. End memorably: 

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
STEP 3: REVISING THE CONTENT

Rewrite your essay below. Then ask another student to peer edit for revisions of content.
STEP 4: EDITING FOR CONVENTIONS

You guessed it! Use the revisions above to rewrite your essay. Next, ask another student to peer edit for conventions (grammar, spelling, and punctuation). This draft will be graded.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
STEP 5: PUBLISH

Turn in your essay to be graded. Below is the rubric based on the GP exam.

Grading key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>90-100: Level 1</th>
<th>70-75: Level 3 LOWER</th>
<th>60-69: Level 4</th>
<th>50 and below: Level 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAND 1</td>
<td>Very good and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the topic</td>
<td>Thoughtful, engaging, articulate, and well-organized arguments and evidence.</td>
<td>Thoughtful and engaging discussion, displaying sensitivity, sophistication, and high-level critical thinking.</td>
<td>Lack of engagement, limited discussion, and weak arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAND 2</td>
<td>Good knowledge and understanding of the topic</td>
<td>Engaging, well-organized, and well-supported arguments.</td>
<td>Relevant and engaging, but lacking depth and critical analysis.</td>
<td>Minimal understanding and limited discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAND 3</td>
<td>Moderate knowledge and understanding of the topic</td>
<td>Statements are relevant, but lack depth and critical analysis.</td>
<td>Lack of engagement and limited discussion.</td>
<td>Lack of engagement, minimal discussion, and weak arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAND 4</td>
<td>Limited knowledge and understanding of the topic</td>
<td>Statements are relevant, but lack depth and critical analysis.</td>
<td>Lack of engagement and limited discussion.</td>
<td>Lack of engagement, minimal discussion, and weak arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAND 5</td>
<td>Weak knowledge and understanding of the topic</td>
<td>Statements are relevant, but lack depth and critical analysis.</td>
<td>Lack of engagement and limited discussion.</td>
<td>Lack of engagement, minimal discussion, and weak arguments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL SCORE: ___________/100

Comments: