THE EXPOSITORY ESSAY

AICE General Paper AS 8004
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IN THIS LESSON, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

➤ define the purpose of expository writing.

➤ identify an expository prompt using trigger words.

➤ understand the expository prompt using 4 simple rules.

➤ brainstorm ideas for an expository prompt using General Paper strategies, such as the Hand Approach.

➤ Lesson Duration: 45 minutes
WHICH IMAGE BEST REPRESENTS EXPOSITORY WRITING?

#1

#2

#3
WHAT IS EXPOSITORY WRITING?

➤ The goal of expository is to:
  ➤ Provide **information**
  ➤ Objectively **explain**
  ➤ **define, clarify, or interpret**

➤ Organize your essay utilizing one or more of the **Methods of Development:**
  ➤ Main idea/detail: best for expository writing
  ➤ Argument/support
  ➤ Problem/solution
  ➤ Cause/effect
  ➤ Compare/contrast
  ➤ Order of importance
EXPOSITORY WRITING:

The Prompt
THE GOLDEN RULES FOR GP PROMPTS

➤ **Golden Rule #1:**

➤ What goes up DOESN’T come down—once a discursive, always a discursive

➤ **Golden Rule #2:**

➤ IF argue, THEN counter. Argue your points, but concede one point to the counterargument.

➤ **Golden Rule #3:**

➤ The aim of expository is information. Don’t overanalyze, don’t argue, don’t discuss both sides.  

  Give reasons for your opinion—that’s all.
STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING THE EXPOSITORY PROMPT

The Purdue Online Writing Lab suggests the following:

Step 1 - Read the prompt carefully: This is not the time to skim-read. The prompts are generally not very long, but it’s important that you read slowly and carefully to make sure you understand what is being asked of you. Reading the prompt carefully will get you on track early in the writing process.

Step 2 - Underline key words: The prompt will contain key words that will reveal the prompt’s topic. The prompt will also communicate how you are expected to write about the topic. These key words might include action verbs that tell you what to do and nouns that tell you what topics to cover. Underlining these words will help you focus on them as you plan your essay.

Step 3 - Restate the prompt in your words: The best way to understand the prompt and commit it to memory is to repeat it in your own words. Pretend that you are explaining the prompt to yourself or another student. Restating the prompt in your words will help you think clearly about the prompt and absorb it.

For more on essay writing, visit the OWL at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/
STILL UNCLEAR?

- The following video explains 4 steps for understanding any prompt. As you watch, record these 4 steps in your notes.
EXPOSITORY PROMPT TRIGGERS

➤ Explain
➤ What/Why/Which
➤ Who…and give reasons
➤ Illustrate your point
➤ Indicate which
➤ Give reasons for
➤ Fully explain
➤ Give examples of
➤ Account for
➤ Analyze
➤ Write about
1. How far do you agree that a hereditary monarch as Head of State is preferable to an elected president?
2. Should every country have the right to possess weapons of war?
3. ‘No man is an island.’ Discuss.
4. Should women be more prominent in public life in your country?

The difference between Argumentative and Discursive is simple:
- Is it a close-ended question? Can you answer the question with ‘yes’ or ‘no’? Then it’s ARGUMENTATIVE.
- Is it an open-ended question? Can you answer the question with phrases like ‘it depends’ or ‘sometimes’ or ‘a little/lot’? Then it’s DISCURSIVE.
1. **How far** do you agree that a hereditary monarch as Head of State is preferable to an elected president? *(Discursive)*

2. **Should** every country have the right to possess weapons of war? *(Argumentative)*

3. “No man is an island.” **Discuss.** *(Discursive)*

4. **Should** women be more prominent in public life in your country? *(Argumentative)*
1. Assess the ability of technology to ensure human happiness in the present society.

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

3. What do you understand by ‘sustainable development’? How far has it progressed in your region?

4. Consider the case for and against stem cell research.
1. **Assess** the ability of technology to ensure human happiness in the present society. *(Discursive)*

2. **Account for** the ever-increasing popularity of numbers and word puzzles. *(Expository)*

3. **What** do you understand by ‘sustainable development’? **How far** has it progressed in your region? *(Expository + Discursive)*

4. **Consider** the case **for and against** stem cell research. *(Discursive)*
1. “A book has one purpose: to entertain.” Evaluate this statement.

2. What music appeals to you and why?

3. Is it important to preserve old buildings or to encourage new forms of architecture?

4. Explain the popularity of designer labels.
1. “A book has one purpose: to entertain.” Evaluate this statement. (Discursive)

2. What music appeals to you and why? (Expository)

3. Is it important to preserve old buildings or to encourage new forms of architecture? (Argumentative)

4. Explain the popularity of designer labels. (Expository)
EXPOSITORY WRITING:

Brainstorming
HOW DO I FIND IDEAS?

➤ Think GP Relevance
   ➤ Local, National, International
   ➤ Past history, current event
   ➤ Consider all academic categories

➤ Use the Hand Approach to help you!
THE HAND APPROACH: THE WORLD IS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

KEY:

THUMB: THUMBS UP TO SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY!
INDEX: POLITICS & GOVERNMENT- REMEMBER, UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU!
MIDDLE: ENVIRONMENT- BECAUSE IT IS CENTRAL TO OUR EXISTENCE!
RING: SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS & CULTURAL VALUES
PINKIE: MEDIA, SPORTS, POP CULTURE- YOU COMPLETE ME!
WHAT DOES HAND APPROACH BRAINSTORMING LOOK LIKE?

Writers, like Dickens, draw our attention to injustice happening before our eyes. Write a commentary on any writer or writers that have stirred your conscience.

- *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin
- *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson
- *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton
- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
- *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare
- *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Hoskins Forbes
- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- *Antigone* by Sophocles
- *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
- *A Work in Progress* by Connor Franta
- *Concussion* by Jeanne Marie Laskas
- *Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot
- *Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Andersen
UNPACK THE PROMPT

➤ Think GP Relevance
  ➤ Impact:
    ➤ Local
    ➤ National
    ➤ International
  ➤ Time:
    ➤ Past history
    ➤ current events

➤ Consider all academic categories
  ➤ Math
  ➤ Science
  ➤ Literature
  ➤ Social Studies
  ➤ The Arts

➤ Use the Hand Approach
Now it's your turn!

"Without storytellers, we would understand neither ourselves nor the world about us." Explain how this is true.
STILL UNCLEAR?

➤ Check out this website for more on the characteristics of an expository essay:

➤ Characteristics of an Expository Essay
STILL UNCLEAR?

➤ For more help with the Hand Approach, go to the link below:

➤ Using the Hand Approach to Build an Essay
EXPOSITORY WRITING:

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

1. Opening Sentence
2. Context
3. Thesis Statement
INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

1. **Opening Statement:** Start your paper with a general statement about your topic that catches the reader’s attention, a relevant quotation, question, anecdote, fascinating fact, definition, analogy, the position opposing one you will take, or a dilemma that needs a solution.

2. **Context:** Provide the information the reader will need to understand the topic.

3. **Thesis statement:** State your position- or MAIN CLAIM- on the topic using words from the prompt, giving two to three reasons to be used to support your thesis. Your position will ONLY EXPLAIN, CLARIFY, OR INTERPRET how storytellers help us understand ourselves and our world by listing two to three ways in which they do so OR two to three storytellers who fit this claim.
What do you consider to be the serious purpose behind television cartoon shows?

The popularity of the animated cartoon has delighted the American public for decades (*Opening Sentence*). 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 (*Context*). 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 (*Thesis Statement*).

The thesis statement lays out three reasons the writer has chosen to explain how cartoons serve a more serious purpose:
1. they teach us moral lessons
2. they have educational value
3. they offer a light-hearted approach to the serious issues of an increasingly complex society
EXPOSITORY WRITING:

Body Paragraphs
BODY PARAGRAPHS: CEE STRATEGY

➤ **Claim**
  ➤ Topic sentence that provides the main idea of the paragraph.
  ➤ Must be one of the reasons presented in the thesis statement in the order in which they were presented.

➤ **Explain**
  ➤ Explain to the reader the significance of the evidence you have provided. Think about why you chose to include it. How does the piece of evidence support your thesis?

➤ **Evidence**
  ➤ Include specific textual evidence: cited quotes, paraphrases or summary; or evidence that supports your thesis from other sources: anecdotes, first-person interviews or your own experience.
  ➤ **Cite Sources** using:
    ➤ 1) parenthetical citation AND/OR signal phrase: example: As stated in Source 4, “the number of miles driven in the United States peaked in 2005 and dropped steadily thereafter” (Rosenthal 4). *Use this method for the FSA or for research papers.*
    ➤ 2) paraphrasing the original author’s idea into your own words, using a signal phrase to cite the source: As John F. Kennedy once said, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country”. *This can be used without a citation for the General Paper exam.*

➤ **Seamless Transition**
  ➤ Connect each paragraph with a sentence that demonstrates how each idea leads into the next and how they work together to support your position. Use topic words to connect ideas.
  ➤ If you are unsure as to how to incorporate a seamless transition, use a **TRANSITIONAL WORD/PHRASE** at the beginning of the proceeding paragraph.
What do you consider to be the serious purpose behind television cartoon shows?

In addition to moral instruction, cartoons often serve educational purpose *(Claim/Topic Sentence)*. 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 *(Explain Personal Logic)*. 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 *(Specific Evidence)*. Clearly, a closer look at television cartoons reveals a deeper purpose than mere enjoyment *(Seamless Transition)*.

The writer uses logic and specific examples to support the claim. However, the writer DOES NOT argue that cartoons SHOULD provide moral instruction; rather, the writer is explaining how cartoons can provide moral instruction. The writer never argues or uses phrases such as ‘in my opinion’.
EXPOSITORY WRITING:

The Conclusion
CONCLUSION

1. Provide a Transition. Your first sentence should trigger the essay’s closing, but try to avoid the overdone “In conclusion”. Instead, use:
   ➤ Clearly
   ➤ Evidently
   ➤ It appears
   ➤ Therefore
   ➤ Ultimately, etc.

2. Restate Your Main Points. Avoid copying and pasting the exact same sentences. Also, don’t spend a lengthy amount of time rehashing these ideas.

3. Offer a New Perspective. Try to arrive at a “bigger picture” conclusion by:
   ➤ offer a solutions or next steps
   ➤ present new questions
   ➤ show the significance of your thesis

4. End Memorably. Subtly use creative writing strategies to enhance the lasting effect of your message.

5. Use Prompt Language. Wrap up your address of the topic by bringing it back to the prompt.
What do you consider to be the serious purpose behind television cartoon shows?

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.

Notice that the writer does not merely copy and paste the thesis, but restates the thesis:

➤ Thesis: 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.

➤ Restated Thesis: 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.
IT’S YOUR TURN!

➤ Write an expository essay on the following prompt using the Expository Essay packet to guide the writing process:

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

➤ For more information on all things GP, go to The Global Pen at https://theglobalpen.com OR go to Jill’s new EdPioneer page at https://www.facebook.com/blazethetrail/.

➤ If you want to use this in another class, you may want to switch out the hand approach and use the lens essay approach instead:
  ➤ http://www.brandeis.edu/writingprogram/davis-grant/UWShandbook/lens%20essay%20assignments.pdf
  ➤ https://harvardwritingcenter.wordpress.com/2010/03/30/the-four-parts-of-a-lens-essay-argument/
  ➤ https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/01/
  ➤ http://research.pomona.edu/writingcenter/files/2012/06/Writing-a-Lens-Essay.pdf

➤ Questions? Constructive Criticism? You can reach me at laci.cedeno@browardschools.com