



Expository Writing

What is it?, Thesis, topic sentences, supporting info., conclusion, how to organize the essay

Expository Essay Writing

- **Expository**—You are **NOT** trying to convince the reader to think a certain way or to accept a single viewpoint as valid.
- You are simply **explaining** a viewpoint that you believe is true.

Elements of Expository Essays

- Introduction paragraph—contains **thesis** and **hook**.
- Body paragraphs—**1** for each **primary reason** that you believe your thesis statement to be true.
 - Each paragraph begins with a **topic sentence**.
 - **Supporting details/information** for that reason complete the paragraph.
- Conclusion paragraph—contains **restatement of thesis**.

Introduction Paragraph

- Begin with an attention-getting statement, quote, or question—the **HOOK**.
- Most of the time, the **last sentence** of your introduction is your **THESIS**.
 - **For STAAR**, you must make your intro paragraph **brief** to leave room for thorough body paragraphs. Don't write an extensive intro!

Thesis

- Tells what the **writer believes** about a topic

AND

- Lists the **reasons** for the belief in the order they appear in the essay

Body Paragraphs

- Use **1** body paragraph for each **primary reason** that supports your thesis.
- In most essays, you will need 3 body paragraphs.
- **However, with limited room on STAAR 26-line paper, use only 1 or 2 supporting paragraphs.**
 - **Caution:** If you use only 1 body paragraph, it must be a STRONG, thorough body paragraph clearly focusing on your thesis.

Topic Sentences

- These should be the **1st sentence** of each body paragraph.
- You must specifically base topic sentences **on your thesis.**
 - **Hint:** Try to use a word (or its synonym) from your thesis statement to “glue” the topic sentence to your thesis.

Topic Sentence Examples:

- **THESIS:** *Grandparents can offer their grandchildren two crucial lessons involving **respect** and **unity**.*
 - **Topic sentence for body paragraph 1:** *Grandparents can teach the youngest family members to **respect** and value older people.*
 - **Topic sentence for body paragraph 2:** *More importantly, grandparents can teach their grandchildren to play a role in the **unity** and happiness of the whole family.*

Supporting Information

- This information supports (proves) your topic sentences by giving **examples, scenarios, proof, and/or commentary.**
- You must specifically base these examples, scenarios, proof, and/or commentary **on your topic sentence** for that body paragraph.

Supporting Info Example:

- **Topic Sentence:** *Grandparents can teach the youngest family members to respect and value older people.*
- **Supporting Info:** *For instance, when I was younger, my grandfather would tell me stories about his time in the Vietnam War.*

Conclusion

- **Restate your thesis** in slightly different words.
- **Add an insightful closing statement** if you have room left.
 - **For STAAR**, you must make your conclusion brief to leave room for thorough body paragraphs. Don't write an extensive conclusion!

Hook:
Thesis Statement
(I believe that...)



Body Paragraph 1 Topic Sentence
--

Body Paragraph 2 Topic Sentence
--



Supporting Points/Examples/Commentary
1.
2.
3.

Supporting Points/Examples/Commentary
1.
2.
3.

Conclusion:

Supporting Idea

Supporting Idea

Body ¶ Topic Sentence

THESIS STATEMENT

(I believe that...)

Supporting Idea

Supporting Idea

Body ¶ Topic Sentence

Body ¶ Topic Sentence

Supporting Idea

Supporting Idea

See example
and break it down:

“Summer: 15 Days or 2 ½ Months?”

Read the “Summer” expository essay and...

- Highlight or underline the **thesis statement** in pink (intro paragraph).
- Bracket [] the **hook** (intro paragraph).
- **Underline and number** the **reasons** in the thesis statement (or intro paragraph) that will become body paragraphs.
- **Highlight** each topic sentence in blue (body paragraphs).
- **Circle** transition words/phrases between supporting info/details in body paragraphs.
- **Underline** the thesis **restatement** in the conclusion paragraph.

“Summer” expository essay

Summer: 15 Days or 2 1/2 Months?

The final bell rings. It's the last day of school, and summer has finally come! Students don't have to think about school for at least another 2 1/2 months. That is the way it should always be. Schools should continue using the traditional calendar and not a year-round schedule. There are numerous downsides to year-round schooling. It has no positive effects on education, it adds to costs, and it disrupts the long-awaited summer vacation.

Contrary to the well-accepted belief, year-round schooling has no constructive impact on education. Most year-round schedules use the 45-15 method: 45 days of school followed by 15 days off. Because of this, there are many first and last days of school. All those transitions disrupt the learning process. Also, there is no evidence of higher test scores. Due to that, many schools that change to year-round schedules end up switching back. For example, since 1980, 95 percent of schools that tried the year-round schedule changed back to a traditional calendar. It is obvious that changing to year-round schooling does not help students; therefore, why is the change necessary?

Like any other facility, keeping a school open requires a great deal of money. When a school changes to a year-round schedule, the costs skyrocket. Keeping school open in the middle of summer requires air conditioning, and that adds significantly to the school's expenses. The usual utility bills grow because of the additional open-school time. Finally, teachers must be paid for all the weeks they are working. With all these factors, the cost of keeping schools open becomes immensely high. For example, a high school in Arizona had a cost increase of \$157,000 when they switched to year-round schooling. Some schools may not be able to handle such increases, and other schools that can handle these expenses could be doing better things with the money. Is year-round school really where the money should go?

An important part of a child's life is summertime. With year-round schedules, students would hardly have any time to relax. During the 15-day breaks, they would be thinking about their quick return to school. It would also be difficult to coordinate family vacations with parents' work schedules. Similarly, children would not be able to go to most summer camps. One expert, Dr. Peter Scales, says, "The biggest plus of camp is that camps help young people discover and explore their talents, interests, and values. Most schools don't satisfy all these needs. Kids who have these kinds of [camp] experiences end up being healthier and have fewer problems." Obviously, the summer is crucial to a child's learning and development. Why should this invaluable part of a young person's life be taken away?

It is evident that year-round schooling is not the best option for the school calendar. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the traditional school year. Why change something that works so well? The final bell rings. Let's make sure this bell means that the "real" summer vacation has come.

Group Work:

Deconstruct the “Summer” essay

- Get into groups that I assign.
- Use the **expository tree** or **bubble outline** to re-create what could have been the original outline from which the “Summer” essay was written.
 - Be sure that each of you writes the outline on your own paper! You’ll want this example as a reference throughout the year as we prepare for STAAR.

Your turn!

- Read the **prompt** about teen stress (be sure you deconstruct it to know what it's asking).
- Fill out the **expository tree** or **bubble outline**. (your choice—which do you like better?)
- **Write your expository essay** in the 26-line STAAR-format box.