

Tips on Writing an Essay Advanced English

FORMAT

Set up one inch margins on all sides of paper.

Use size twelve font.

Don't put spaces between paragraphs.

Put heading at top left or top right.

Number your pages at the bottom.

Quotes of 4 lines or more should be indented 10 spaces from left and should be double spaced.

Title should be centered at the top of the first page.

Use standard MLA in-text citation for all quotations and paraphrases

STRUCTURE

Use present tense when speaking of literature; past tense when speaking of history.

Avoid switching tense (unless you are writing about both history and literature).

Use 3rd person point of view only (not 1st or 2nd).

Use transitions within paragraphs (between points) and between paragraphs.

Use parallel structure.

Keep subjects and verbs in agreement in tense and number.

Keep pronouns and antecedents in agreement.

Avoid dangling and misplaced modifiers.

Avoid dangling prepositions.

Avoid clichés.

Avoid vague words like *stuff*, *things*, *very*.

Avoid fragments. Intentional fragments should be limited to one or two per essay.

Avoid substandard language like slang.

Avoid contractions.

Use apostrophes correctly.

Use active voice, not passive.

Use semi colons and colons correctly.

Use commas correctly.

Use two hyphens to indicate a dash.

In parenthetical documentation, put the end quotation mark *before* the parentheses and the punctuation *after* the parentheses.

THINKING/CONTENT

Thesis should be sophisticated and should include an opinion. Don't try to prove a fact.

Thesis should be sophisticated enough to state opinion and topic effectively without having to list main points (essay map).

Mention author and title of work (if applicable) in introduction.

Tie in attention hook.

Set up all quotes before you include them.

Pick quotes carefully and limit them in length.

Warrant each quote.

Concluding statement of each body paragraph should tie back to thesis.

Be concise; avoid wordiness.

Don't overuse the thesaurus. Only go to it in emergencies.

Spell words correctly.

Draw *complex* conclusions.

Make *insightful* connections.

Analyze your subject *in depth*.