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An Introduction to Academic Writing

Second stage

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Chapter Ten

The 10 th Lecture

What Is an Opinion Essay?

A common question among students is: “What is an Opinion Essay?” It is an assignment which contains questions that allow students to share their point-of-view on a subject matter. Students should express their thoughts in a precise manner while providing opinions on the issue related to the field within reasonable logic. Some assignments of this type require references to back the writer’s claims.

Opinion writing involves the use of a student’s point-of-view which is segregated into a point. It is backed by examples and explanations. The paper addresses the audience directly by stating “Dear Readers” or the equivalent. The introduction involves a reference to a speech, book, or play. This is normally followed by a rhetorical question like “is the pope Catholic?” or something along those lines.

Opinion Essay Structure

When it comes to opinion paragraphs, students may struggle with the format of the entire paper. The standard five-paragraph-essay structure usually works well for opinion essays. Figuring out what one is supposed to include in each section may be difficult for beginners. This is why following the opinion essay structure is something all beginners should do, for their own revision before writing.

Introduction

- Address the audience directly, and state the subject matter.
- Reference a speech, poem, book or play.
- Include the author’s name, date of publication in brackets.

Thesis

- 1 or 2 sentences to make up a small description.

- 1 or 2 summarizing sentences of the entire paper.
- 1 sentence that links to the first body paragraph.

Body Paragraph 1

- Supporting argument
- Example Supporting Details : Facts, Quotations and Statistics
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- Supporting Details : Facts, Quotations and Statistics
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- A. Opinions Versus Facts
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 - Opinions are subjective statements based on person's beliefs or attitudes. Example smoking is a bad habit. Facts are objective statements of truths. Example At sea level, water boils at 100 degrees Celsius. Sometimes even facts need proof. Example Cigarettes are addictive. This statement need proof because reader may not agree that cigarettes are addictive. True facts have to specific supporting details to prove that statement. Kinds of specific supporting details include example, quotations and statistics.
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- B. Quotations
 - Quotations from reliable and knowledgeable sources are good supporting details. There are two kinds of quotations : direct and indirect.
 - a) Direct quotations

- Another person's exact words (spoken or written) and enclose them in quotation marks. Notice a quotation can be a complete sentence (or several sentences) or a short phrase. Also notice the punctuation of each quotation.

- To introduce borrowed information (direct quotations, indirect quotations or statistics) use the phrase according to or a reporting verb. Here are some rules for their use.

- 1. Reporting verbs can appear before, in the middle of, or after borrowed information. The reporting phrase according to usually appears before or after but not in the middle.

- One young bicyclist says, "To win in world-class competition, you have to take drugs." (Jones)

- According to one young bicyclist, athletes have to take drugs to win. (Jones)

- 2. Reporting verbs can be used either with or without the subordinator as.

- 3. Reporting verbs can be in any tense. However, be aware that a past tense a reporting verb may cause changes in verbs, pronouns and time expressions in indirect quotation.

- 4. Including the source of the borrowed information with the reporting expression gives authority to your writing because it lets your reader know immediately that your information is from a credible source.

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- Punctuating Direct Quotation

- 1. Put quotation mark around information that you copy word for word from a source. Do not use quotation marks with paraphrases, summaries, or indirect quotation.

- 2. Normally, place commas (and periods) before the first

mark and also before the second mark in pair of quotation marks.

• There are two important exceptions:

• If you insert only a few quoted words into your own sentence, don't use commas.

• When you add an in-text citation after a quotation, put the period after the closing parenthesis mark.

•3. Capitalize the first word of the quotation as well as the first word of the sentence.

•4. If you break a quoted sentence into two parts, enclose both parts in quotation marks and separate the parts with commas capitalize only the first word of the sentence.

•5. If you omit words, use an ellipsis(three spaced period)

•6. If you add words, put square brackets around the words you have added.

•7. Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation.

•8. If your quotation is four lines or longer, do not use quotation marks. Introduce this type of quotation with a colon and indent it one inch from the left- hand margin.

• Indirect Quotations

• in indirect quotation, the speaker's or writer's word are reported indirectly, without quotation marks. Indirect quotations are sometimes called reported speech. Indirect quotation are introduced by the same reporting verbs used for direct quotation, and the word that is often added for clarity. The tense of verbs in indirect quotations is affected by the tense of the reporting verb.

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- Changing Direct quotations to Indirect Quotations
- To change a direct quotation to an indirect quotations :
- 1. Omit the quotations mark
- 2. Add the subordinator that (you may omit that if the meaning is clear without it).
- 3. Change the verb tense if necessary. Follow the sequence of tense rules
- 4. Change pronouns (and time expressions if necessary) to keep the sense of the original.
- Sequence of Tenses Rules
- If the reporting verb is in a past tense, the verbs in an indirect quotation may change tense according to the following rules. Also, pronouns (and sometime time expressions) may change.
- Tense change
- Direct quotations
- Indirect quotations
- Simple present change the simple past
- Susan said “the exam is at eight o’clock”
- Susan said (that) the exam was at eight o’clock
- Simple past and present perfect change to past perfect
- She said, “we didn’t have time to eat breakfast”
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- He said, “the exam has just started”.

- She said (that) they hadn't had time to eat breakfast.
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- He said (that) the exam had just started.
- Will change to would can to could , may to might, and must to had to
- Sam mentioned, "today I will eat Chinese food, and tomorrow I'll eat French food if I can find a good restaurant"
- Sam mentioned that today he would eat Chinese food and that tomorrow he'd eat French food if he could find a good restaurant.
- Time expressions may change if the meaning requires it.
- The teacher said, "you must finish the test right now"
- The teacher said that we had to finish the test right now.
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- There are three exceptions:
 - 1. When the reporting verb is simple present, present perfect, or future, the verb tense in the quotations does not change.
 - 2. When the reporting phrase is according to, the verb tense does not change.
 - 3. When the quoted information is a fact or a general truth, the verb tense in then quotations does not change.
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- STATISTIC
- Like quotations, statistics are good supporting details. Study the graph and then read the paragraph that uses data from it.

Notice the reporting verb that gives the source of information. As you do with quotations, you must also cite the source of statistic data.

- Explanation
- A linking sentence to the second body paragraph.

Body Paragraph 2

- Supporting argument
- Example
- Explanation
- A linking sentence to the third body paragraph.

Body Paragraph 3

- Supporting argument
- Example
- Explanation
- A linking sentence to the conclusion.

Conclusion

- Summary of the entire paper
- A conclusive sentence (the bigger picture)