

INTRODUCTION TO HIGH SCHOOL WRITING

Lesson 4: Expository Essay

This lesson covers what is often referred to as an argumentative essay, but which is actually properly termed an expository essay.

Please take a look at a quick description of the expository essay here: [Purdue Writing Lab – Expository Essay](#)

Logical reasoning consists of syllogisms or arguments. A syllogism contains two premises and a conclusion. For example:

Premise 1: Socrates is a man.

Premise 2: All men are mortal.

Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

All arguments can be broken down into some form of syllogism.

A logical fallacy occurs when one of the premises of an argument is flawed, causing “bad logic” that yields an invalid conclusion. For example:

Premise 1: Socrates is a man.

Premise 2: All men are pigs.

Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is a pig.

Even though this argument follows the syllogistic format, there are a couple problems here. First, it is not true to say that *all* men are pigs. This is the fallacy of *hasty generalization*. Second, there is more than one definition of the word *pig*: an animal and unpleasant person. This is the fallacy of *equivocation*, when you use a word one way in the premise and a different way in the conclusion.

Other types of fallacies:

1. Non sequitur (it does not follow)

Victor is honest; therefore, he will get a job.

My hair looks nice today; therefore, I will make lots of friends.

2. Hasty generalization

Teenagers are reckless drivers.

All politicians are crooks!

3. Ad hominem (to the man)

His arguments might impress us if we were not aware of his extreme selfishness.

You think that abortion is immoral because you are uneducated.

You think that abortion is moral because you are a bloodthirsty killer.

4. Bandwagon

Everyone else cheats on their taxes; why shouldn't I?

Brand X soda pop is the leading brand in Canada. You should buy it!

5. Circular reasoning (begging the question)

He is lazy because he does not like to work.

I like blue because it is my favourite colour.

6. Red herring

Why worry about terrorists when we ought to be doing something about acid rain?

Skydiving cannot be dangerous; it is so much fun!

7. *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc* (after this, therefore because of this)

Since the new mayor took office crime has increased by 25%. Therefore, his policies are not working!

You cannot get a tattoo—criminals have tattoos. You do not want to become a criminal, do you?

8. Either...or fallacy (false disjunction)

We have only two choices: ban nuclear weapons or destroy the earth.

America: love it or leave it.

9. False analogy

These two books are about the same length—one is probably just as good as the other.

My last car was dark blue and a real speedster! I'm going to buy another dark blue car because I like driving fast.

10. Equivocation

You have a right to vote, so do what is right and vote.

Man is the only rational being. Women are not men. Therefore, women are irrational.

Assignment

Write an expository essay based off of your five-paragraph outline from week 3, incorporating any corrections or suggestions from your tutor. Make sure you have

- a clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay
- clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion
- body paragraphs that include evidential support
- evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal)
- a bit of creativity—remember to have fun!

- a conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided

Add at least one logical fallacy to one of your body paragraphs, identify it, and respond to it.