

Essay #1 Directions: Informative/Explanatory Essay English 101

be completely free of spelling errors. (3) *I will not accept papers that are not clipped or stapled together. Dog-earing copies together is unacceptable.*

Due Date: Three polished rough-draft copies are due on the day listed in the syllabus for peer evaluations. A final draft will be due about a week later.

Length: This essay is to be 5-7 pages in length (if you use a large proportional font, about 1250-1750 words).

Format: The essay should be typed or word-processed on high quality paper (no onion-skin paper or semi-transparent bond paper, please). Aim for a professional appearance. The essay should be written in the Modern Language Association format (MLA). You may find it useful to peruse pages 102-14 of Diana Hacker's *The Bedford Handbook*, 6th edition for discussion of this format. Hacker includes a full example of this format on pages 113-14.

In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, please include the following material flush against the left margin: your name, your teacher's name, the course including the meeting time in parentheses, and the due date (not necessarily the date you finished the work):

Jane Doe
Professor Wheeler
Writing 121 (11:00 class)
18 January 2003

After typing this material in the upper left-hand side of the first page, you should double-space and center the title of your composition. Be original. Be memorable. Make your title count. Note that the title of your own unpublished essay need not be underlined, italicized, or placed within quotation marks. Follow normal conventions for capitalization. (See Hacker pages 473-74.)

The body of your essay should be double-spaced and left justified rather than fully justified. Maintain one-inch margins all around the essay. On every page *including the first*, insert a header with your last name and the page number according to MLA format. By viewing "header" on most word-processors, you can set up your document to automatically include such a header on each page.

Reminders: (1) Grammar, mechanics, and neatness count. Because faulty grammar can lead to miscommunication, and sloppiness detracts from the essay's impact, grammar, mechanics, and neatness are in many ways inseparable from content. (2) Since you will probably use a word-processor, remember to use the spell-check but also proofread visually. Your paper should

Special Directions: (1) Students have a week for revision, proofreading, and editing the rough draft. Therefore, I expect these essays to be free of grammatical errors and typos. (2) This essay is formal in tone. Writers should avoid informalities such as contractions, slang, second person pronouns ("you"), and colloquial speech in favor of a professional tone. (3) Do note, however, that "formal" is not synonymous with "boring." Create a strong opening and strong conclusion.

Essay #1: Informative/Explanatory Essay

In this essay, the students' purpose is to inform the reader about a topic and offer clear, understandable explanations concerning that topic. *All students will still need a unifying thesis to focus the essay.* If students engage in research, they will need to cite their findings according to MLA standards and include a Works Cited page; examples can be downloaded from the class website under the "Research" link or perused in *The Bedford Handbook*. (Such research may not be necessary, however, if the student is familiar with the subject-matter already.) The student should attempt to incorporate at least **two** of the four invention techniques we will have discussed by the final due date: narration, description, process, or comparison/contrast. Of course, other techniques are welcome in addition to these, and they may be necessary to flesh out the paper.

Choose one of the following prompts as the basis of your essay:

Option A: Identify a potential problem that many students or young people face today. Inform the reader about this problem, explain its origins and its symptoms, and provided a detailed explanation of how to identify and correct the problem. Examples might be a health or dietary problem, poor financial planning, credit-card debt, risks of a certain type of injury, time-management difficulties, bad study habits, and so on.

Option B: Select a difficult, abstract, or technical concept that is important in a field of study, but one which may be unfamiliar to students outside that major. Explain to your reader this concept by using clear description, narration, process, comparison/contrast, and/or other techniques. Examples of such concepts might be punctuated equilibrium in biology, plate tectonics in geology, *laissez-faire* financial strategies in economics, poetic analysis in literature, quadratic equations in algebra, the concept of manifest destiny in American history, intellectual property in law, the cardio-pulmonary system in medicine, and so on. The point is to make this subject understandable rather than highlight the author's intelligence *per se*.