

SECTION

5

TEXT COMPOSITION

LANGUAGE AND USAGE

Rules of writing a Ghanaian language

INTRODUCTION

This section examines the types of essays. Essay writing is an essential skill not only in Ghanaian Languages but also in other subjects such as English and History.

At the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Compose a narrative essay
- Compose a descriptive essay
- Compose an expository essay

Key Ideas

- A composition or an essay is a piece of writing expressing ideas or thoughts with a central theme.
- You will study three types of essay:
 - ◇ Narrative essay is a prose written story which expresses one's experience in a creative form through narration.
 - ◇ The descriptive essay is a genre of essay that asks the student to describe something—object, person, place, experience, emotion, situation, etc.
 - ◇ Expository essays are essays that intend to explain or describe something. It provides a clear, focused explanation of a particular topic, process, or set out ideas
- All essay types have a structure and features unique to them.

Parts of this topic were discussed in previous sections. Can you recollect what a topic sentence is? What are supporting sentences?

Write down your definition after discussing with your classmates.

Then, check your answer with the definition below.

Topic sentence

A topic sentence is the sentence which expresses the main idea of the paragraph in which it occurs. A supporting sentence is the sentence that helps to develop the main idea.

Composition/Essay

Skill is required to write a good essay. The ideas must be expressed and organized well in a paragraph. This can be achieved by; classifying similar information, giving a chronological sequence of events, providing evidence and illustrations, providing comparison, etc.

Composition is a piece of writing or the art and process of writing to express ideas or thoughts. Every essay expresses a central theme.

Three types of essays are discussed in this section starting with narrative essays.

Narrative essay

A narrative essay is a prose-written story that focuses on the commentary of a central theme. Fictional or non-fictional events are recounted in a creative way. The narrative is normally sequential and often written in the first person (although not always). Most narrative essays are written in the past tense and imagery, or other literary devices are used to captivate the audience.

Example of narrative essay topics:

- Write a story about your first day at school.
- The most memorable vacation I had.
- A personal achievement I am proud of.
- Write a story about a valuable lesson I learnt from a mistake.

Activity 5.1

Pair work: Write a topic sentence and two supporting sentences on this topic; *A birthday party*

Activity 5.2

Read the article below and note down what the features of a narrative essay are in your own words.

<https://open.library.okstate.edu/internationalcomposition/chapter/unique-characteristics-of-the-narrative-essay/>

Group work: Discuss what skills you think are necessary to organise ideas in a paragraph based on what you've learnt so far.

Structure of a narrative essay

A narrative essay has a structure which serves as a guide to organise your essay well.

Read the text on <https://mhcc.pressbooks.pub/app/uploads/sites/31/2021/07/Narrative-Essay.pdf>

Activity 5.3

In groups share what you learnt from the reading.

Compare what you learnt from the reading with the following structure of narrative essay. The structure consists of an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion.

Introduction

An opening hook. Often begins with a question, statistics or a statement that draws attention.

Relevant background information that readers need to know is also found in the introduction

A thesis statement that presents the main argument or point could also be included.

Body Paragraphs

Detailed explanations that support the thesis statement are presented here.

The timeline is also filled in and the plot unwinds.

Each paragraph should start with a topic sentence and end with a transitional statement which leads to the next section.

Conclusion

Restate the thesis statement

Review the main points

Write down a closing statement that summarises the whole essay

Activity 5.4

1. In pairs note down the elements that should be included in the body of a narrative essay and discuss with your group.
2. In groups write a three- paragraph narrative essay on a festival that you went to f. Read to the class for analysis.
3. Read the passage below and in your groups and identify the theme or purpose of each paragraph and the features that the author has used to draw the reader in.

Throughout university, I had always excelled in academics. My mother is a university professor and my father is a teacher, so learning was instilled in me at a very young age. During my junior year (a monumental year for future college students), I faced a significant setback when I received a failing grade on a crucial exam in a class that I had always done fairly well in.

A failure.

That's exactly how I felt.

I let my parents down and more importantly, myself. Overwhelmed with insecurity and self-doubt, I went through the entire day in shock and questioned how this would affect my future in higher education. Was I even cut out for the academic rigor of university? Before I began to spiral, I sought comfort from my parents and guidance counsellor. With their grace and understanding, they pulled me from the depths of devastation, and I quickly realized that I would be okay.

Yes, a failing grade on an important exam is crushing but I could work hard and get a tutor for the rest of the school year to prevent it from happening again and to improve my grade in the class.

I realised that failures are a part of life and that it is how we react to them that determines our success. I also learned the importance of seeking help and support from others. By working with my lecturer and tutor, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the subject and improve my grades. And of course, I learned to persevere in the face of adversity, no matter how big my problem seemed. This experience was a turning point in my high school career and helped to shape the person I am today. I am grateful for the lessons I learned and the growth that came from this challenge.

Descriptive essays

What is a descriptive essay?

A type of essay that describes something such as an object, a person, a place or an experience, in a creative way as to give the reader a vivid picture of what is being described. It should be well organised and use sensory language to engage the audience.

Structure of descriptive essay

A descriptive essay has a similar structure to essays previously studied.

Introduction: Should outline what the essay will discuss. A hook such as a rhetorical question is useful to draw the reader in.

Body paragraphs: Where the main ideas are explained. The topic sentence should make the theme of each paragraph clear and should draw the reader's attention. A new paragraph should be used every time a new idea is introduced.

Conclusion: Reiterates the intent of the essay as discussed in the introduction and ties together what we've learnt through reading the body paragraphs.

Some examples of descriptive essay topics.

- Description of a favourite movie.
- Description of the ideas of freedom and justice.
- Description of the book that you love the most.

- Description of your first trip overseas.
- Description of your best friend.

Activity 5.5

1. Using what you've learnt so far, write a definition of a descriptive essay. How is it different from a narrative essay?
 - a. Then, watch the video and read the bullet points below and share your ideas on the features of descriptive essays with your group members. Which of the features do you think is most important and why?

A descriptive essay - Search (bing.com)

Below are some features of a descriptive essay

- The language should be clear for the reader. The language used should be compatible with the theme.
- Make use of figurative language in writing. This means that the author uses metaphors, adjectives, symbols and adverbs in painting the picture for the audience
- Select word choices to create a memorable description for the reader.

Activity 5.6

Read these tips for writing a descriptive essay;

1. Firstly, research on the topic that you have been given and expand upon the idea with some creativity. Organise any evidence/information that you plan to use.
2. Secondly write an outline in bullet points and lay out what you are going to say and in what order.
3. Thirdly, write your topic sentence for each paragraph.
4. Lastly proofread and edit your essay. This will help you to correct any errors you might have committed.

Would you add anything to these tips? Which of the four stages do you think is most important when writing a good descriptive essay?

Activity 5.7

1. In groups write a three-paragraph descriptive essay on 'The many landscapes of Ghana' and discuss the tips that guided you in writing the essay. Be ready to present your essay and your writing tips to the class.

2. Compare and contrast the language used in a narrative essay and a descriptive essay. Share your findings with your classmates.

Expository Essays

An expository essay “exposes” the reader to a topic; it informs the reader with details, descriptions, or explanations of a subject.

Processes of writing Expository Essays

Writing a good expository essay requires a firm understanding of the assignment or given topic. Some examples of some essay titles that you could be given are;

1. Why do people need to continue space exploration?
2. Discuss the importance of mental health.
3. Explain the consequences of deforestation
4. How social media is affecting the course of studies.

When faced with writing an expository essay it’s important to follow these steps;

- a. Read your question of topic carefully.
- b. Re-read your notes on the subject. Be sure to ask your teacher for clarification if you still need help. Read about the topic online or in books if you need more information.
- c. [Break up the assignment into simpler, smaller pieces.](#)
- d. [Create](#) an outline to structure your essay (see below).
- e. Write a narrowed [thesis](#) statement, and structure a formal [introduction](#) to set the [tone](#) for your essay.

Thinking task: After reading these steps to writing a good expository essay, what skills do you think will be essential in helping you to prepare?

Structure of an expository essay.

Below is the structure of an expository essay.

Introduction of the Essay

Briefly introduce your topic and provide a thesis statement summarising what you are going to say about it.

Body It often consists of three paragraphs but maybe more for a longer essay. This is where you present the details of the processes, ideas or topic you are explaining. Each paragraph should be limited to the explanation of one general idea. This will allow for clarity and direction throughout the essay. It’s important to link each paragraph back to the thesis statement in the opening paragraph.

Conclusion

The conclusion of an expository essay serves to summarise the topic under discussion. The conclusion is there to round off the essay in an engaging way. It gives a final judgement on explanations given in the thesis statement and the body paragraphs.

Read the link below and discuss in pairs the features of an expository essay.

<https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-characteristics-of-an-expository-essay>

Activity 5.8

1. Explain the term essay. Share your definition with the class.
2. In pairs read the example essay and discuss the features of an expository essay. Present your ideas to the class
<https://assets.myperfectwords.com/blog/expository-essay/expository-essay-examples/expository-essay-example-grade-7-pdf.pdf>
3. In groups discuss the processes in writing an expository essay. Present to the whole class.
4. Write a three-paragraph expository essay on ‘Why do people continue to pursue space exploration?’ and give it to another classmate to identify the features and critique the structure where necessary.
5. In groups compare and contrast the features and structure of a descriptive essay and an expository essay. Share your findings with the whole class.

Review Questions

1. Write a one paragraph narrative essay and identify the topic sentences and supporting sentences in it.
2. Explain in your own words the term narrative essay.
3. Give a vivid account on how you will develop the topic *The best experience in my life* into a good narrative essay.
4. Discuss the structure of a narrative essay. Present your observations to the class.
5. Write out a three-paragraph essay on the topic *A memorable trip I embarked on* and discuss the features of the narrative essay that you have written. Identify the topic sentence in each paragraph.
6. Provide an outline on the essay topic '*A description of my School*'. Do not forget to take into consideration the features and structure of the essay.
7. Write a descriptive essay of at least three paragraphs on the topic of '*My best friend in the whole world*'. Take into careful consideration the structure of a descriptive essay.
8. What is an expository essay?
9. Write an expository essay of three paragraphs on the topic *The effects of deforestation*. Examine its organisation and structure.
10. Compare a narrative essay and an expository essay. Outline the similarities and differences.

Suggested Answers to Review Questions

1. A sample of one paragraph essay

*Each ethnic group has their own traditional dances, with specific dances for different occasions. Some of these specific dances are meant for funerals, celebrations, storytelling, praise and worship. **There are various dances in Ghana performed by the ten regions across the country, most frequently during festivals and occasions such as funerals, marriage ceremonies, etc.** These dances are performed to entertain and educate people.(e.g. The ‘Gome’ dance, as performed by the Gas of the Greater Accra region of Ghana during the Homowo festival in August). Other dances in Ghana includes kpalongo performed by the Gas, Agbadza by the Ewes, Adowa by the Akans, Bambaya by the Northerners, Patsa and Dbahsh by the Ga-Adangbes, and many others. There are many dances that have originated from Ghana and their ethnic groups.*

The topic sentence is: Each ethnic group has their own traditional dances, with specific dances for different occasions.

The remaining sentences are supporting sentences

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Ghana

2. A narrative essay is a prose written story on a central theme or topic narrating an experience of the writer in a creative way.
3. Based on the topic the essay will first be planned and the features of using personal pronouns will be considered, ideas should follow sequentially, it should have a hook that will arouse interest etc.
4. The structure of narrative essay is Introduction, Body paragraph and conclusion. The learner must discuss the details of the structure.

Answer is based on the essay that will be written by the learner. A sample is below:

Introduction to a Memorable Trip

A trip can be like a small adventure that takes you away from your daily life. It gives you a chance to see new places and meet new people. One such trip that I will never forget was when I went to the mountains with my family.

The Journey to the Mountains

The journey started early in the morning. We packed our car with food, clothes, and a camera to capture the moments. The drive was long but exciting. We played games and sang songs. As we got closer to the mountains, the view outside our window became more beautiful. Tall trees and green hills were everywhere. It felt like we were driving into a picture.

Fun Activities

When we reached our cabin, we were all thrilled. The next few days were filled with fun. We went hiking and saw waterfalls. We even spotted some wild animals from

a safe distance. The best part was sitting by the fire at night, roasting marshmallows and telling stories.

Learning from the Trip

This trip taught me a lot. I learned how to appreciate nature and the importance of spending time with family. It also showed me that adventures don't have to be big to be memorable. Sometimes, the simple joy of being together and experiencing something new is enough.

Conclusion

That trip to the mountains is a time I will always remember. It wasn't just about the beautiful sights, but the laughter and the bond we shared. It showed me that the best memories are made when we explore and enjoy the world together.

The above is a sample essay with the narration done sequentially as shown in the italic headings which serve as a guide.

5. The following is a sample outline for Description of my school.

In the Introduction: name and location of the school, what you derived/benefit from the school in terms of education, social etc.

Body paragraph: Description of the school, layout of the school, buildings and classrooms, Courses or subject offered, extracurricular activities, the teachers and administration, students, clubs and organisation in the school what you derived/benefit from the school in terms of education, social etc,

(This could be about three paragraphs)

Conclusion: why you love the school, why the school is the best. overall benefit from the school to your life

6. Answers will differ. Below is a check list for a descriptive essay

7. Answers will differ. Below is a check list for a descriptive essay

<https://www.knockholt.kent.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=641&type=pdf>

8. It is an essay that intends to explain or describe something. It provides a clear, focused explanation of a particular topic, process, or set out ideas. It “exposes” the reader to a topic, informs the reader with details, descriptions, or explanations of a subject.

9. Answers will differ. Use this checklist to check your work:

Introduction

- 1 Did you use 2 to 3 sentences to introduce the topic?
- 2 Did you introduce your topic with supporting details?
- 3 Do your supporting details completely relate to the topic?
- 4 Is your topic stated clearly?
- 5 Is your introductory paragraph catchy and does it engage the reader?

Body

- 1 Do you have a paragraph for each of your 3-5 details?
- 2 Is each detail clearly stated at the beginning of each paragraph?
- 3 Did you back up each detail with facts?
- 4 Did you include closing remarks at the end of each paragraph and lead into the next paragraph?

Conclusion

- 1 Did you re-state your topic idea?
- 2 Did you finish with an ending that leaves the reader satisfied?
- 3 Did you summarize the previous paragraphs?

Overall:

- 1 Does your expository writing inform the reader well about your topic?
- 2 Did you use informing details, facts and logic?
- 3 Do all your paragraphs relate well to your topic?
- 4 Have you really captured your reader's interest? 5 Have you left your readers with good information in some way?

Source: <https://palmspringsmiddleschool.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ExpositoryWritingChecklist.pdf>

10. Some differences and similarities between narrative essay and expository essay.
 - a. Narrative is a style of writing that can be called story telling while expository is descriptive in nature.
 - b. Expository is factual and contains a lot of details in the form of facts whereas narrative contains figures of speech and a lot more flowing than expository
 - c. The content is organised in expository while it can be without chronology narrative style of writing
 - d. Narrative can be both facts and fiction whereas expository is mostly factual.
 - e. Expository is used by authors mostly in textbooks whereas narrative style is used by authors writing novels and short stories.

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Extended Reading

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Acknowledgements



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