

PEARL CITY SCHOOLS
WRITING & COMPOSITION
ESSAY PROPOSAL SHEET

Name _____

1- *Purpose of essay (describe, narrate, analyze, inform, argue, persuade):*

2- *The intended audience (specify):*

3- *Your position as a writer (use a noun to name yourself):*

4- *The preliminary claim, thesis, or opening hypothesis:*

5- *Suggested title of your essay (two-part title recommended):*

THESIS

What a thesis is not:

1. Not a title
 - "Someone Special,"
 - "Honey on the Breeze"
 - "How to Change a Tire"
2. Not an announcement of the subject
 - "I want to share some thoughts with you about a person very special to me."
 - "My subject is the problem of open casket visitations."
 - "The thesis of this paper is the need for stop signs at the 4-way stop at Killer Road."
 - "In this paper I am going to tell you how to change a tire."
3. Not a statement of fact
 - "There have been four accidents at Killer Road this year."
 - "The School Board has voted to suspend for ten days any students who fall asleep in English class."
 - "I am afraid of heights."
 - "When your tire goes flat, you have to change it."
4. Not a definition
 - "Suicide is the deliberate taking of one's own life."
 - "A democracy is a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or their elected agents."

What a thesis is:

The thesis is the controlling idea of a paper; it does more than name the topic; it asserts a position.

The thesis contains the author's view of the topic, the reason for writing, the goal.

The thesis is one sentence highlighting one main idea that states the conclusion the author has reached.

"The inconvenience associated with living on a gravel road could be improved through better maintenance of the roads."

"A memorial service can be less stressful for a grieving family than an open casket visitation."

"Sixteen-year-olds should not have the legal option of dropping out of high school."

"Knowing how to change a tire can save you time and money."

A good thesis has these qualities:

It is restricted: To be restricted, a thesis must limit the subject to what can be discussed in sufficient detail to support the thesis (or dramatic focus).

Not restricted: The United States has a serious pollution problem.

Restricted: "The widespread use of agricultural pesticides must be curbed through legislation."

It is precise: A thesis is precise when it can have only one interpretation.

Not precise: My hometown is very unusual.
"The Sunday night races at the Freeport race track are interesting."

Precise: "I love the streets of my hometown because they are lined with flowers the city has planted there."
"The Sunday night races at the Freeport race track should not be banned."

It is unified: A thesis is unified when it has one sentence containing just one main idea (there may be subordinate parts, but there must be just one main clause).

Not unified: "The nuclear bomb has immense destructive power, and it should never be used again."

Unified: "The nuclear bomb should never be used again because of its immense destructive power."

A thesis states the author's position, attitude, point of view toward a subject.

Examine the following theses and determine which are restricted, precise and unified.

1. Fort Lauderdale is an interesting place to spend spring vacation.
2. The most recent Olympics and who won.
3. Funerals cost too much; morticians take advantage of grieving relatives; therefore, the price of funerals should be regulated.
4. Pro football is a better game than college football.
5. Foreign films are obscene and ~~inappropriate~~ *inappropriate*, and they ought to be censored.
6. When you grow tomatoes, you'd better not count your chickens before they're hatched.
7. The United Nations has many weaknesses and cannot prevent a war between the major powers.
8. It is easy to see the beginnings of things and harder to see the ends.
9. The Star Wars trilogy films enjoyed enormous box-office success, and they proved that science-fiction film must be taken seriously by the critics.
10. Social historians agree that the American Dream is no more than the snows of yesteryear.
11. Enrollment at Highland is up by 5% this semester.
12. The twenty-first century will be an exciting time in which to live.

13. In this essay I will tell you about a miserable experience I had.
14. Misery is taking an Army physical.
15. Laying linoleum is not as difficult as you might think.

Introductory Paragraph

Introduction
Thesis sentence
Plan of development:
Points 1, 2, 3

The *introduction* attracts the reader's interest. The *thesis sentence* states the main idea advanced in the paper. The *plan of development* is a list of the points that support the thesis. The points are presented in the order in which they will be developed in the paper.

First Supporting Paragraph

Topic sentence (point 1)
Specific evidence

The *topic sentence* advances the first supporting point for the thesis, and the *specific evidence* in the rest of the paragraph develops that first point.

Second Supporting Paragraph

Topic sentence (point 2)
Specific evidence

The *topic sentence* advances the second supporting point for the thesis, and the *specific evidence* in the rest of the paragraph develops that second point.

Third Supporting Paragraph

Topic sentence (point 3)
Specific evidence

The *topic sentence* advances the third supporting point for the thesis, and the *specific evidence* in the rest of the paragraph develops that third point.

Concluding Paragraph

Summary, conclusion,
or both

A *summary* is a brief restatement of the thesis and its main points. A *conclusion* is a final thought or two stemming from the subject of the paper.

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Transitions

Addition signals: first of all, for one thing, second, the third reason, also, next, another, and, in addition, moreover, furthermore, finally, last of all

Time signals: first, then, next, after, as, before, while, meanwhile, now, during, finally

Space signals: next to, across, on the opposite side, to the left, to the right, in front, in back, above, below, behind, nearby

Change-of-direction signals: but, however, yet, in contrast, otherwise, still, on the contrary, on the other hand

Illustration signals: for example, for instance, specifically, as an illustration, once, such as

Conclusion signals: therefore, consequently, thus, then, as a result, in summary, to conclude, last of all, finally

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Activity

1. Underline the three *addition* signals in the following paragraph:

I am opposed to state-supported lotteries for a number of reasons. First of all, by supporting lotteries, states are supporting gambling. I don't see anything morally wrong with gambling, but it is a known cause of suffering for many people who do it to excess. The state should be concerned with relieving suffering, not causing it. Another objection I have to the state lotteries is the kind of advertising they do on television. The commercials promote the lotteries as an easy way to get rich. In fact, the odds against getting rich are astronomical. Last, the lotteries take advantage of the people who can least afford them. Studies have shown that people with lower incomes are more likely to play the lottery than people with higher incomes. This is the harshest reality of the lotteries: the state is encouraging people of limited means not to save their money but to throw it away on a state-supported pipe dream.

A MODEL ESSAY

Gene, the writer of the paragraph on working in an apple plant (page 44), later decided to develop his subject more fully. Here is the essay that resulted.

My Job in an Apple Plant

Introductory paragraph

¹In the course of working my way through school, I have taken many jobs I would rather forget. ²I have spent nine hours a day lifting heavy automobile and truck batteries off the end of an assembly belt. ³I have risked the loss of eyes and fingers working a punch press in a textile factory. ⁴I have served as a ward aide in a mental hospital, helping care for brain-damaged men who would break into violent fits at unexpected moments. ⁵But none of these jobs was as dreadful as my job in an apple plant. ⁶The work was physically hard; the pay was poor; and, most of all, the working conditions were dismal.

First supporting paragraph

⁷First of all, the job made enormous demands on my strength and energy. ⁸For ten hours a night, I took cartons that rolled down a metal track and stacked them onto wooden skids in a tractor trailer. ⁹Each carton contained twelve heavy cans or bottles of apple juice. ¹⁰A carton shot down the track about every fifteen seconds. ¹¹I once figured out that I was lifting an average of twelve tons of apple juice every night. ¹²When a truck was almost filled, I or my partner had to drag fourteen bulky wooden skids into the empty trailer nearby and then set up added sections of the heavy metal track so that we could start routing cartons to the back of the empty van. ¹³While one of us did that, the other performed the stacking work of two men.

Second supporting paragraph

¹⁴I would not have minded the difficulty of the work so much if the pay had not been so poor. ¹⁵I was paid the minimum wage of that time, \$2.65 an hour, plus a quarter extra for working the night shift. ¹⁶Because of the low salary, I felt compelled to get as much overtime pay as possible. ¹⁷Everything over eight hours a night was time-and-a-half, so I typically worked twelve hours a night. ¹⁸On Friday I would sometimes work straight through until Saturday at noon--eighteen hours. ¹⁹I averaged over sixty hours a week but did not take home much more than \$150.

Third supporting paragraph

²⁰But even more than the low pay, what upset me about my apple plant job was the working conditions. ²¹Our humorless supervisor cared only about his production record for each night and tried to keep the assembly line moving at a breakneck pace. ²²During work I was limited to two ten-minute breaks and an unpaid half hour for lunch. ²³Most of my time was spent outside on the truck loading dock in near-zero-degree temperatures. ²⁴The steel floors of the trucks were like ice; the quickly penetrating cold made my feet feel like stone. ²⁵I had no shared interests with the man I loaded cartons with, and so I had to work without companionship on the job. ²⁶And after the production line shut down and most people left, I had to spend two hours alone scrubbing clean the apple vats, which were coated with a sticky residue.

Concluding paragraph

²⁷I stayed on the job for five months, all the while hating the difficulty of the work, the poor money, and the conditions under which I worked. ²⁸By the time I quit, I was determined never to do such degrading work again.

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Planning the Essay

OUTLINING THE ESSAY

When you write an essay, planning is crucial for success. You should plan your essay by outlining in two ways:

- 1 Prepare a scratch outline. This should consist of a short statement of the thesis followed by the main supporting points for the thesis. Here is Gene's scratch outline for his essay on the apple plant:

Working at an apple plant was my worst job.

1. Hard work
2. Poor pay
3. Bad working conditions

Do not underestimate the value of this initial outline—or the work involved in achieving it. Be prepared to do a good deal of plain hard thinking at this first and most important stage of your paper.

- 2 Prepare a more detailed outline. The outline form that follows will serve as a guide. Your instructor may ask you to submit a copy of this form either before you actually write an essay or along with your finished essay.

FORM FOR PLANNING AN ESSAY

To write an effective essay, use a form like the one that follows.

<i>Introduction</i>	Opening remarks
	<i>Thesis statement</i> _____ _____
	Plan of development

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Body

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Body

Conclusion

Topic sentence 1 _____

Specific supporting evidence

Topic sentence 2 _____

Specific supporting evidence

Topic sentence 3 _____

Specific supporting evidence

Summary, closing remarks, or both

PEARL CITY SCHOOLS
WRITING & COMPOSITION
ESSAY PROPOSAL SHEET

Name Type your name in plain font

1- *Purpose of essay (describe, narrate, analyze, inform, argue, persuade):*

To analyze the differences between British English and American English

2- *The intended audience (specify):*

Linguistics majors

3- *Your position as a writer (use a noun to name yourself):*

A speaker of American English but an admirer of British English

4- *The preliminary claim, thesis, or opening hypothesis:*

The fascinating differences between British English and American English have resulted from a multitude of historical, sociological, and geopolitical factors.

5- *Suggested title of your essay (two-part title recommended):*

Uncle Sam Talks to John Bull: The Fascinating Aspects of British English and American English

Jane Doe
English 2
20 August 2010
Essay 1: Description

Center and Bold Your Title

Start typing your essay in plain Courier New, 12 point-size characters. Indent the first line of every paragraph, fully justify your text, and double-space the text of your essay. The appearance of your document is part of your essay grade.

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PEARL CITY SCHOOLS
 ENGLISH 1 and 2
 ESSAY GRADING SHEET
 FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY

STUDENT NAME _____

I. THE FIRST PARAGRAPH

A. Presence of Effective Attention Getters	1	2	3	4	5
B. Presence of Well-Crafted Thesis	1	2	3	4	5
C. Presence of Three Major Points in a Plan of Development	1	2	3	4	5
D. Presence of Transitions	1	2	3	4	5

II. THE SECOND PARAGRAPH

A. Presence of Transitions	1	2	3	4	5
B. Presence of a Topic Sentence to Match the First Point in the Plan of Development	1	2	3	4	5
C. Presence of Supporting Examples	1	2	3	4	5

III. THE THIRD PARAGRAPH

A. Presence of Transitions	1	2	3	4	5
B. Presence of a Topic Sentence to Match the Second Point in the Plan of Development	1	2	3	4	5
C. Presence of Supporting Examples	1	2	3	4	5

IV. THE FOURTH PARAGRAPH

A. Presence of Transitions	1	2	3	4	5
B. Presence of a Topic Sentence to Match the Third Point in the Plan of Development	1	2	3	4	5
C. Presence of Supporting Examples	1	2	3	4	5

V. THE FIFTH PARAGRAPH

A. Presence of Transitions	1	2	3	4	5
B. Presence of Thesis Idea	1	2	3	4	5
C. Presence of the Three Major Points	1	2	3	4	5

VI. USE OF CORRECT GRAMMAR, MECHANICS, VOCABULARY

A. Absence of Misspelled Words	1	2	3	4	5
B. Absence of Grammar/Usage Errors	1	2	3	4	5
C. Presence of Proper Vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
D. Presence of Elaborate Sentence Structure	1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL POINTS (out of 100 points possible) _____