

Writing an essay based on our key question

WALT: unpack what an essay is, analyse an exemplar and plan for our own essay

Resources to support:

[How to write a five-paragraph essay](#)

[Why write essays?](#)

[How to write an essay: basic essay structure in 3 minutes](#) (3 minute video)

Lesson Sequence

- Brainstorm: What does “essay” mean? Collaboratively write a definition.
- What is the purpose of writing essays? Convinces the reader to agree with your argument, organises your thinking, demonstrates your knowledge of the subject, develops a formal approach to writing that communicates clearly and with authority.
- Bridging - transferable skills to work/higher education: reading and note-making, critical thinking and analysis, organising ideas, arguing a case, communicating effectively with a reader.
- Show [How to write an essay](#) video.
- Unpack [planning sheet](#) - essay criteria: five paragraphs (introduction, three supporting paragraphs, conclusion), each supporting paragraph has at least two ‘E’s (elaborate, explain, example).
- Give out copies of [Antarctica and Tourism](#) essay, explain that we are going to analyse this exemplar according to essay-writing criteria.
- Introduction: start with a hook (question, quote, shocking statistic, provocative statement, intriguing anecdote). Lure your reader in the door! Set-up the situation (announce your subject, who/what is this about, background info) Keep your reader in the house!
- How does “Antarctica and Tourism” do this? Intriguing anecdote about Antarctica as tourist destination. Gives background info about how tourism has increased. Emphasises scenic beauty and unique wildlife, implying their importance.
- Supporting paragraphs: start with a topic sentence. Limit yourself to one point. Support your point with ‘E’s. Transition to your next point with last sentence. Use as much evidence as possible.
- What is the topic sentence of the first supporting paragraph? Does it give a good indication of what the paragraph will be about? Topic sentence suggests more background info on tourism. Elaboration, explanation, or example? Does this paragraph have two ‘E’s? Does it transition to the next point with its last sentence?
- Repeat process with remaining supporting paragraphs.
- Conclusion: relate back to introduction. Add new piece of info. Leave reader thinking.
- How does the conclusion of Antarctica and Tourism relate back to the introduction? What new information does it give us? Does it leave the reader thinking?
- Give students copies of [planning sheet](#). Discuss how they might turn their key question into a thesis statement, eg. “Climate change is causing irreparable damage to Antarctica.”

- Give students remainder of workshop time to plan for their essays, supporting where necessary.

Exemplar of Level 4 essay:

<p>Deeper features</p> <p>Ideas States ideas clearly, with build-up to thesis statement. Supports argument with relevant ideas and data.</p> <p>Structure Organises writing logically: thesis/supporting evidence/restated thesis. Understands paragraphing.</p> <p>Sentences Uses a variety of structures.</p> <p>Vocabulary Uses appropriate vocabulary.</p> <p>Language features Attempts to appeal to reader's feelings. Uses repetition. Addresses audience directly. Offers solutions.</p>	<p>You may not notice it but at school there are people who have no friends, people who are constantly getting bullied because they are different, people who don't even want to be at school. The worst time for these children is the lunch hour. With no one to talk to and no one to play with the hour seems to take forever to pass. If only they had somewhere to go where the bullies weren't. Somewhere they could meet people like themselves, have fun and make friends. This is why I believe there should be supervised games and rooms at lunch times for children to go to.</p> <p>If there was organised games during lunchtimes the loners might meet people like themselves and make friends. They will also learn new skills like how to play different sports, cardgames and boardgames. They might even find a sport that they really like then join a club that plays on Saturdays or during the week. This will be an extra chance for them to make new friends and feel better about themselves.</p> <p>Did you know New Zealand has the second worst suicide rate per capita out of the whole world. That is a disgrace to our country. I believe that if we start having organised games during lunchtimes it will be a start to descending down that ladder and getting rid of that awful fact.</p>	<p>Surface features</p> <p>Grammar, spelling, punctuation Uses these with few intrusive errors.</p>
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Give copies to students to use as checklists for criteria.

[Essay Writing Success Criteria](#)