

Lecture 07: " Writing an opinion essay "

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How to Start an Opinion Essay

During the twentieth century, people around the world began using vehicles powered by fossil fuels, and in this new millennium that trend has continued, with a vast uptick in the number of privately owned cars. However, it has become apparent that this phenomenon is causing major environmental damage and needs to be stopped. This essay will argue that humans ought to switch to electric cars.

Introduce and explain the main idea
(Sometimes you will need to start with a general idea and then focus in on a more specific one.)

Give your opinion.

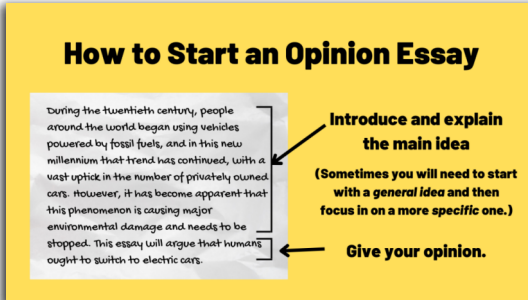
A yellow rectangular box contains the title 'How to Start an Opinion Essay'. Inside the box, on the left, is a sample paragraph of text. On the right, there are two bolded annotations with arrows pointing to the text. The first annotation, 'Introduce and explain the main idea', has an arrow pointing to the first two sentences of the paragraph. The second annotation, 'Give your opinion.', has an arrow pointing to the last sentence of the paragraph. A third annotation, '(Sometimes you will need to start with a general idea and then focus in on a more specific one.)', is positioned between the two main annotations and has an arrow pointing to the first sentence of the paragraph.

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Objectives



Through this lecture, we aim to

- For the student to learn how to write an opinion essay
- For the student to become familiar with the steps of writing an opinion essay

Introduction



Opinion essays are one of the main means used to shape public opinion, as these articles contribute to highlighting viewpoints and opinions on various topics, and include analysis and interpretation of political, social, cultural, economic and other events and phenomena. By highlighting different viewpoints and opinions on certain issues, opinion articles can shape public opinion on a specific topic, direct the attention of society and the government to address a specific issue, or even convince the public of a certain point of view. Therefore, the role of opinion articles in shaping public opinion is considered one of the basic tools that can be used to influence political, governmental, social and economic decisions.

Writing an opinion essay



When you write an opinion essay, you must say what you think about a topic and try to convince the reader of your point of view on that topic. To do that, you should first introduce the topic and state your opinion. Then, you should give three reasons that support your view, and finally, you should write a conclusion where you summarise your arguments and repeat your opinion using different words.

1. Plan your ideas

The first thing you need to do is decide whether you agree with the question or statement and then make a list of two or three reasons that support your opinion, including some facts and/or examples. Here is an example:

Top sports players are paid too much

Opinion: I disagree.

- Reason 1: Their careers are very short.
 - Fact 1: their careers usually end in their 30's.
 - Fact 2: sometimes, they are even shorter because of injuries.
- Reason 2: They lose their privacy.
 - Fact 1: Constantly followed by journalists and fans.
 - Fact 2: Now, everyone uses their phones to take photos and publish them.

2. Organise your text

An opinion essay has three parts:

- Introduction
- Arguments or reasons that support your view.
- Conclusion

2.1. Introduction. Paragraph 1

Introduce the topic and give your opinion. Say whether you agree or disagree with the statement or question. It can be a good idea to use a question to grab the reader's attention. Check the two examples below:

1. *Nowadays, top sportspeople, such as football players or basketball players, have huge salaries, and this promotes a lot of debate. **However, I don't think** they earn too much. **In my opinion**, their salaries are fair.*
2. How often have you heard a friend or a colleague complain about the excessive salaries of professional sports players? But do they really earn too much? **I don't think** they earn too much. **I truly believe** their salaries are fair.

a) Arguments. Paragraph 2

Give the first argument to support your opinion. Include at least two facts or examples to show that your reason makes sense. Check this example:

Firstly, Despite all the money professional sports players earn every year, they work for only a few years – they usually retire when they are in their thirties. **In addition**, many of them have to retire earlier **because** they get injured and have to stop playing.

i) Arguments. Paragraph 3

Give more reasons and again provide examples, facts or supporting ideas. For example:

Secondly, sports stars are celebrities, and all celebrities lose their privacy. Journalists, paparazzi and fans follow them everywhere, and they want to get pictures or talk to them all the time. **Moreover**, now anyone can take photos with their mobile phone and publish them at any moment on their social media accounts.

1 Conclusion. Paragraph 4

Summarise your ideas and repeat your opinion.

To sum up, I believe top professional sports players have the salaries they deserve **because** their careers are short and **because** during those years, their personal lives are affected by their popularity.

Useful language



Sequencing your text

Use connectors to sequence and structure your ideas:

- *Firstly/First of all, ...*
 - *Secondly/Thirdly, ...*
 - *Finally, ...*

Adding more points or ideas

Use connectors to introduce additional ideas:

- *In addition, ...*
 - *Moreover, ...*

Giving your opinion

Expressions you can use to say what you think:

- *In my opinion, ...*
 - *In my view, ...*
 - *I think/feel that ...*
 - *I (truly) believe that ...*
 - *I am convinced that ...*
 - *I agree that ...*
 - *I disagree with/about ...*

Introducing examples

Use connectors to introduce examples:

- *For example, ...*
 - *For instance, ...*

Expressing contrast, purpose and reason

You may also need or want to use some connectors of **contrast, purpose and reason**:

- Contrast: *although, however, despite, etc.*
 - Purpose: *to, in order to, so that, etc.*
 - Reason: *because (of), since, due to, etc.*

Introducing your conclusion

Use connectors to introduce the conclusion:

- *In conclusion, ...*
 - *To sum up, ...*

