

What is an essay

The word "essay" came into Russian from French and historically goes back to the Latin word *exagium* (weighing). French *ezzai* can be literally translated by the words experience, trial, attempt, sketch, essay.

An essay is a prose work of small volume and free composition, expressing individual impressions and considerations on a particular occasion or issue and knowingly not claiming to be a definitive or exhaustive treatment of the subject.

"Large Encyclopedic Dictionary" gives the following definition: "Essay is a genre of philosophical, literary-critical, historical-biographical, journalistic prose, combining an emphasized individual position of the author with a relaxed, often paradoxical presentation, oriented to the colloquial speech".

"Concise Literary Encyclopedia" specifies, "An essay is a prose work of small volume and free composition, treating a private theme and presenting an attempt to convey individual impressions and considerations somehow related to it."

Some attributes of an essay are:

- The presence of a specific topic or issue. A work devoted to analyzing a wide range of problems, by definition, cannot be performed in the genre of essay.
- The essay expresses individual impressions and thoughts on a particular subject or issue and does not pretend to be a definitive or exhaustive treatment of the subject.
- as a rule, an essay implies a new, subjectively colored word about something, such a work can be of philosophical, historical-biographical, journalistic, literary-critical, scientific-popular or purely fiction character.
- The content of the essay assesses first the author's personality - his worldview, thoughts and feelings.

This genre has become popular in recent years. The creator of the essay genre is considered to be M. Montaigne ("Experiments", 1580). Today, the essay is offered as an assignment quite often. It is one of the main components of the package of documents (when entering an educational institution or employment). Essay contest helps to choose the best from the variety of the best!

It is important to write an essay and for a young specialist.

The way the candidate has managed to present himself, how he described his achievements and failures, allows the employer to determine whether this person is good enough for the business, whether his work experience is sufficient to meet expectations in the future and bring benefit to the company (organization, enterprise).

The purpose of the essay is to develop such skills as independent creative thinking and writing your own thoughts.

Writing an essay is extremely useful, as it allows the author to learn to formulate thoughts clearly and competently, structure information, use basic concepts, highlight cause-and-effect relationships, illustrate experience with relevant examples, argue their conclusions.

The most relevant topic for the essay of a young specialist is "Me and my career". The subject of the essay is given to make it easy for the commission (employer) to assess the features of your thinking, creativity, enthusiasm and potential. The best way to achieve such a result is to write directly and frankly, remaining honest to yourself. If you are not honest, there is every chance that your essay will be considered unnatural.

Essay structure and outline

The structure of the essay is determined by the requirements for it:

1. the essay author's thoughts on the problem are stated in the form of brief thesis statements (T).
2. the idea must be supported by evidence - therefore, the thesis is followed by arguments (A).

Arguments are facts, phenomena of social life, events, life situations and life experience, scientific evidence, references to the opinion of scientists, etc. It is better to give two arguments in favor of each thesis: one argument seems unconvincing, three arguments can "overload" the statement made in the genre focused on brevity and imagery.

Thus, the essay acquires a circular structure (the number of theses and arguments depends on the topic, the chosen plan, the logic of thought development):

- **introduction**
- **thesis, arguments**
- **thesis, arguments**
- **thesis, arguments**
- **conclusion.**

When writing an essay, it is also important to consider the following points:

1. The introduction and conclusion should focus on the problem (the introduction poses it, the conclusion summarizes the author's opinion).
2. It is necessary to highlight paragraphs, red lines, establishing a logical connection of paragraphs: this is how the integrity of the work is achieved.
3. Style of presentation: essays are characterized by emotionality, expressiveness, artistry. Specialists believe that the proper effect is provided by short, simple, diverse in intonation sentences, skillful use of the "most modern" punctuation mark - dash. However, the style reflects the peculiarities of the personality, it is also useful to remember.

Before you start writing an essay, pay attention to the following questions. Answering them will allow you to more clearly determine what is worth writing in the essay:

1. In addressing your personal qualities or abilities in the essay, ask yourself:
 - o do I differ in this or that quality from those I know?
 - o in what ways did this quality manifest itself?
2. about the activity you were (are) engaged in:
 - o what led me to engage in this activity?
 - o why did I keep doing it?

3. about each event in your life that you mentioned:

o why do I remember that particular event?

o did it change me as a person?

o how did I react to it?

o was it a revelation to me; something I had not realized before?

4. about each person you mentioned:

o why did I name that particular person?

o do I aspire to be like him/her?

o what qualities of his or hers do I admire?

o did they say something that I will remember for the rest of my life?

o Have I changed my views?

5. About each of your preferences and what you dislike:

o why do I like or dislike it?

o has it influenced my life in a significant way?

6. About each of your failures:

o what did I learn as a result?

o what useful things have I learned from the situation?

Classification of essays

In terms of content, essays can be:

- philosophical,

- literary-critical,

- historical,

- artistic,

- artistic-publicistic,

- spiritual-religious, etc.

In literary form, essays appear in the form of:

- review,

- lyrical miniature,

- notes,

- pages from a diary,

- letter, etc. A distinction is also made between essays:

- descriptive,

- narrative,
- reflective,
- critical,
- analytical, etc.

In this case, the basis is the compositional features of the work done in the essay genre.

Finally, the classification of essays into two large groups is proposed:

- personal, subjective essay, where the main element is the disclosure of one or another side of the author's personality,
- objective essay, where the personal beginning is subordinated to the subject of description or some idea.

The essay of a young specialist on a certain topic belongs to the second group.

Signs of an essay

It is possible to distinguish some general signs (features) of the genre, which are usually listed in encyclopedias and dictionaries:

1. Small volume.

There are, of course, no rigid boundaries. The volume of an essay is from three to seven pages of computer text. For example, Harvard Business School often writes essays of only two pages. Russian universities allow essays of up to ten pages, though in typewritten text.

2. Specific topic and emphasized subjective interpretation of it.

The topic of the essay is always specific. An essay cannot contain many topics or ideas (thoughts). It reflects only one option, one thought. And develops it. It is an answer to one question.

3. Free composition is an important feature of the essay.

Researchers note that the essay by its nature is arranged in such a way that it does not tolerate any formal framework. It is often built contrary to the laws of logic, subject to arbitrary associations, guided by the principle of "Everything is the other way around".

4. The casualness of the narrative.

It is important for the author of the essay to establish a trusting style of communication with the reader; to be understood, he avoids deliberately complicated, unclear, overly strict constructions. Researchers note that a good essay can be written only by someone who is fluent in the topic, sees it from different sides and is ready to present the reader not exhaustive, but a multidimensional view of the phenomenon that became the starting point of his thoughts.

5. Tendency to paradoxes.

The essay is designed to surprise the reader (listener) - this, according to many researchers, is its obligatory quality. The starting point for the reflections embodied in the essay is often an

aphoristic, vivid statement or paradoxical definition that literally collides seemingly indisputable but mutually exclusive statements, characteristics, theses.

6. Internal semantic unity

This is perhaps one of the paradoxes of the genre. Free in composition, focused on subjectivity, the essay at the same time has an internal semantic unity, i.e. consistency of key theses and statements, internal harmony of arguments and associations, consistency of those judgments in which the author's personal position is expressed.

7. Orientation to colloquial speech

At the same time, it is necessary to avoid the use of slang, formulaic phrases, abbreviated words, overly frivolous tone in the essay. The language used when writing an essay should be taken seriously.

So, when writing an essay, it is important to define (grasp) its topic, determine the desired scope and goals of each paragraph.

Start with the main idea or a bright phrase. The task is to immediately capture the attention of the reader (listener). Comparative allegory is often used here, when an unexpected fact or event is linked to the main topic of the essay.

Rules of essay writing

- Of the formal rules of essay writing we can name only one - the presence of a title.
- The internal structure of the essay can be arbitrary. Since this is a small form of written work, it is not necessary to necessarily repeat the conclusions at the end, they can be included in the main text or in the title.
- Argumentation may precede the formulation of the problem. The problem formulation may coincide with the final conclusion.
- Unlike an abstract, which is addressed to any reader, so it begins with "I want to talk about..." and ends with "I have come to the following conclusions...", an essay is a rejoinder addressed to a prepared reader (listener). That is, a person who, in general terms, already understands what is going to be discussed. This allows the author of the essay to focus on the disclosure of the new and not to clutter the statement with service details.

Mistakes when writing an essay

Unlike tests, essays do not assume a multiple-choice format (when you are offered several answer options to choose from). Writing an essay is not limited in time, you can rewrite it many times, ask your friends to read your essay. Take advantage of all the opportunities and try to avoid common mistakes.

1. Poor revision.

Don't think that you can limit yourself to spell check only. Reread your essays and make sure that there are not any ambiguous expressions, unfortunate turns, etc. Examples that you should not "take note of":

"I am proud that I was able to resist the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco".

"Working for your firm (organization), located in a wonderful place with lots of Gothic-style architecture, will be an exciting challenge for me."

2. Tiresome preambles. Insufficient detail.

Too often an interesting essay loses out in what is a listing of assertions without illustrating them with examples. Essays are characterized by the usual clichés: the importance of hard work and perseverance, learning from mistakes, etc.

3. verbosity.

Essays are limited to a certain number of words, so you need to manage this volume wisely. Sometimes this means leaving out some ideas or details, especially if they have already been mentioned somewhere or are not directly relevant. Such things only distract the reader's (listener's) attention and overshadow the main topic of the essay.

4. Long sentences.

The longer the sentence, the better - this is what some candidates think. However, this is far from the truth. Long sentences do not yet prove the writer right, and short sentences often produce a greater effect. It is best when long sentences alternate with short ones in an essay. Try reading the essay aloud. If you feel you are out of breath, break the paragraph into smaller paragraphs.

When you finish writing your essay, do this exercise. Assign a letter to each paragraph: either S (short), M (medium), or L (long). S

- is less than 10 words, M is less than 20 words, and L is 20 or more words.

A correct essay has the following or similar letter order - M S M M L L M S.

An incorrect essay is characterized by such a sequence of letters - S S S S M M L L L L.

5. Do not overload the essay.

When writing an essay, discard words from encyclopedias. Incorrect use of such words distracts the reader's attention and diminishes the importance of the essay.

By avoiding such common mistakes, you will be able to interest the expert committee (employer) in your experience.

Checking the essay

Of great importance when writing an essay is checking the first version of the essay. When writing a draft, your main task is to develop your argument, polish your main thoughts and arrange them in a strict sequence, accompanying them with illustrative materials or supporting data, etc. Having written the first draft, let it rest for a day or two, and then return to the work of checking and improving it, on a "fresh head".

When checking the essay, first of all, pay attention to the following important points:

1. First of all, it is important to remember that the essay is a subjective genre, so its evaluation can be subjective. You should not focus on the entire mass of employers.

2. Submissions:

No matter what question you are answering, you need to accomplish certain goals. You are expected to keep the following in mind when writing your essay:

Have I answered the question posed?

How clearly and accurately have I presented my thoughts? Does what I have written sound natural, are there any errors where? Also make sure that you:

- o Demonstrated your desire to build your career in a particular direction.
- o Have been "focused" on building a career in a particular field.
- o Included one to three qualities, strengths, or characteristics that set you apart from other candidates.
- o Presented at least one strong argument for the employer to invite you to join their business.

3. communication / writing skills.

The essays are also designed to test your ability to put your thoughts on paper and your writing skills. A specialist selection consultant says: "Your essay should not characterize you as a future writer or philologist, you are a future leader, manager. The ability to present your ideas well is important for success in business, and those who communicate easily with others have the ability to express them on paper."

A poorly written (presented) essay will not be conducive to being accepted into the business.

4- The image of a real person.

The expert committee (employer) wants to discern in the essay the image of the person who wrote it. Not only test scores and work experience are important, but also the character of the candidate. "We look for something elusive in documents that numbers can't show, so we hope to find it in the essay. By no means miss the opportunity to tell us about yourself in your essays. This will help us make sure that we are considering a very real person and not just the sum of various indicators."

What is important here is the following - be honest, sincere, unique, i.e. be yourself!

Experts believe that often graduates and applicants want to seem like someone: a leader, a mature person, that they forget to be just a person!

5. Individuality.

The only way to make the commission (employer) discern the image of a particular person behind all the documents is to bring an element of personal, inimitable, unique in the essay. Your essays will immediately become more interesting and eye-catching. They will help you stand out among hundreds of other applicants.

"The essay should be as personalized as possible. It's boring to read essays that are full of general phrases - it's a waste of time. You won't understand anything about the personality of the candidate in question anyway."

6. Details.

Everything you write in the essay should be supported by examples, make references to your experience. Details will make your essays interesting, unique, specific.

7. Distinctive features / Uniqueness / Something interesting, funny.

According to experts "Graduates (applicants) should not be afraid of going beyond what is acceptable, it is better to be yourself. Very often graduates are worried about whether they can make the right impression, so they remove from the essay everything that makes them outstanding. Such safe essays, from the graduates' point of view, are quite tedious to read."

You don't necessarily have to make jokes in your essays to make them interesting. However, try to use every means at your disposal to make your essays memorable.

8. Honesty.

The expert committee does not tolerate participants who like to fluff their essays. It will be better if you reflect the true state of affairs in your essay. At the same time, do not emphasize your shortcomings, although they are present in your character. It is necessary to be honest, but positive.

Speak about yourself and your qualities only positively! So-called "weaknesses" should be presented in the following way: "this used to be my weakness, but now it has turned into a positive quality".

9. Literary work.

Representatives of expert commissions like such essays, reading which is one pleasure. "Make sure your essay is easy to read. Give it some more time: check whether your thoughts are coherent, whether they lead to a logical conclusion of the topic."

"Humor is a great tool, but use it wisely. A sarcastic or sassy tone is often annoying. Real humor is an art and is a sign of good taste."

In your essays, you tell your success story, give reasons why you want to build your career in the direction you have chosen. You can go even further by writing an essay in the form of a literary work: a story, a novella. However, this is a risky approach, since most people are not very good writers, besides, this way you can downplay the seriousness of your narrative. Finally, employers will not invite you into their business just because you are a great storyteller.