



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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What to Consider When Writing a Process Essay

A process paper either tells the reader how to do something or describes how something is done. As you write your process essay, consider the following:

- What process are you trying to explain? Why is it important?
- Who or what does the process affect?
- Are there different ways of doing the process? If so, what are they?
- Who are the readers? What knowledge do they need to understand this process?
- What skills/equipment are needed for this?
- How long does the process take? Is the outcome always the same?
- How many steps are there in the process?
- Why is each step important?
- What difficulties are involved in each step? How can they be overcome?
- Do any cautions need to be given?
- Does the process have definitions that need to be clarified?
- Are there other processes that are similar and could help illustrate the process that you are writing about?
- If needed, tell what should not be done or why something should be done.
- Process papers are often written in the second person (you), but some teacher prefer that you avoid this. Check with your teacher.

Your responses to these questions and statements should enable you to write an effective process essay.

How to Write an Effective Essay Exam

1. Read through all the questions carefully.
2. Budget your time and decide which question(s) you will answer first.
3. Underline the key word(s) which tell you what to do for each question.
4. Choose an organizational pattern appropriate for each key word and plan your answers on scratch paper or in the margins.
5. Write your answers as quickly and as legibly as you can; do not take the time to recopy.
 - A. Begin each answer with one or two sentence thesis which summarizes your answer. If possible, phrase the statement so that it rephrases the question's essential terms into a statement (which therefore directly answers the essay question).
 - B. Support your thesis with specific references to the material you have studied.
6. Proofread your answer and correct errors in spelling and mechanics.

Specific Organizational patterns and "Key Words"

Most essay questions will have one or more "key words" that indicate which organizational pattern you should use in your answer. The six most common organizational patterns for essay exams are definition, analysis, cause and effect, comparison/contrast, process analysis, and thesis-support.