

# Critical Thinking Skills

## How to Write an Essay

Skills For Critical Thinking	Chapters											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>LEVEL 1</b> <b>Remembering</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define, Describe, Identify, Label, List, Match, Name, State</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>LEVEL 2</b> <b>Understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, Discuss, Explain, Paraphrase, Restate, Summarize</li> </ul>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>LEVEL 3</b> <b>Applying</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predict, Project, Produce, Relate, Report; Show</li> </ul>		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
<b>LEVEL 4</b> <b>Analysing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illustrate, Infer, Outline, Point Out, Prioritize, Recognize</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
<b>LEVEL 5</b> <b>Evaluating</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appraise, Compare and Contrast, Conclude, Decide, Support</li> </ul>					✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
<b>LEVEL 6</b> <b>Creating</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Categorize, Compare, Compose, Contrast, Create; Design; Revise</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Based on Bloom's Taxonomy



# Writing a Descriptive Essay

Put the letter of the correct term in the blank in front of its meaning.

- |          |                          |  |  |          |
|----------|--------------------------|--|--|----------|
| <b>A</b> | <b>descriptive essay</b> |  | the final paragraph of a descriptive essay. It should restate the thesis of the essay and summarize the points made by the writer.   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>B</b> | <b>topic sentence</b>    |  | the first paragraph of a descriptive essay. It should grab the reader's attention and state what the essay will be about.  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>C</b> | <b>thesis sentence</b>   |  | an essay whose purpose is to describe or portray something, someone, or some place with enough detail to help the reader create a mental picture of what is being written about. | <b>3</b> |
| <b>D</b> | <b>introduction</b>      |  | the second, third, and fourth paragraphs of a descriptive essay. Each paragraph should discuss one or more of the points stated by the writer in the thesis statement.           | <b>4</b> |
| <b>E</b> | <b>body</b>              |  | adjectives that answer "What kind is it? How many are there? Which one is it?"   | <b>5</b> |
| <b>F</b> | <b>conclusion</b>        |  | should grab your reader's attention. It is usually the first sentence in a paragraph.  | <b>6</b> |
| <b>G</b> | <b>describing words</b>  |  | states what you want your readers to know, believe, or understand after reading your essay. It is usually the second or third sentence in the introduction.                      | <b>7</b> |

SAMPLE

2. **Circle** every adjective in each sentence. The number at the end of the sentence tells how many adjectives it contains.

- a) It was a dark and stormy night. (2)
- b) I have two brothers and four sisters. (2)
- c) The shaggy dog ran after the fluffy cat. (2)
- d) He drove a red car with black seats. (2)
- e) Dad gave me ten dollars and fifteen cents. (2)



# What is a Narrative Essay?

You have already learned that a **narrative essay** tells about the writer's experiences and is written in the form of a story. A narrative essay can also be based on someone else's experiences and can be fact or fiction. Many of the greatest books of all time are written as narrative essays.

You should follow the five steps of the writing process as you plan and write a narrative essay. Your first actions in writing a narrative essay should be to: 1. Identify the experience that you want to write about; 2. Think about why the experience will be important to your audience; 3. Spend time thinking about the details of the experience; and 4. Create an outline of the basic parts of the narrative essay's contents.

When you write a narrative essay you will **tell about events in the order that they happened**. An excellent way to write a narrative essay is to pretend that you are describing a movie to a friend. Your goal is to have your friend see a "mind movie" in his head. Think of all the details that you need to add to make the movie clear and sensible. You can't just say, "They got into a large rocket ship." You might say, "Dad and Mom ran up the stairway of a huge, silver spaceship with high-looking symbols drawn on its sides." Two very good graphic organizers to use during the prewriting for a narrative essay are the **Storyboard** and the **Skeleton Plan**.

Another very important tip to remember when you compose a narrative essay is to use **strong verbs**. You recall that **a verb is a part of speech that shows action or state-of-being**. "State-of-being" verbs are any forms of the word, "be" – is, am, were, was, are, be, being, been. "State-of-being" verbs are verbs that state that something **IS**. "State-of-being" verbs are **NOT** powerful verbs. In fact, one author says that, "BE verbs are boring!" Always try to limit the number of "be" verbs you use in your essays.

Action verbs describe the action or behavior of somebody or something. Words such as "jiggled", "screamed", "raced", "tipped", and "whispered" are all action verbs. Action verbs keep your audience interested in your writing and help them see the story in their minds. "Show, don't tell" is a phrase that every good writer should follow. **The objective of writing a narrative essay is to make the reader feel as if he is seeing the story unfold before him.** Good writers use action and dialog to show what a character is thinking, saying, and doing. Showing can be done by: 1. writing scenes; 2. describing the actions of the characters; 3. revealing character through dialog; and 4. using the five senses when possible.

Finally, a narrative essay will almost always communicate a central main idea or a lesson learned by one or more main characters. A narrative essay is not just a retelling of the events in someone's life. A narrative story teaches a lesson or makes a very important point.



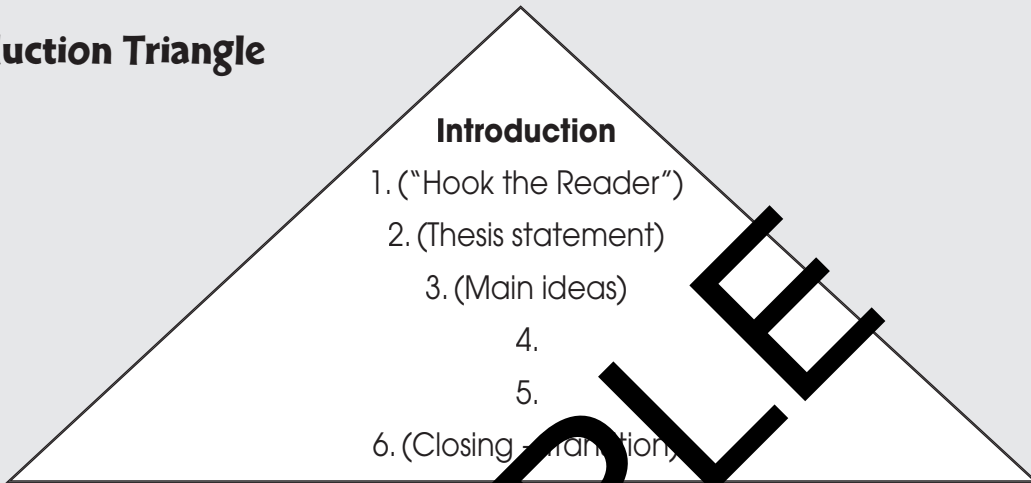
**The Writing Watch Dog says,  
"Rather than just telling your  
readers what happens, use  
vivid details and descriptions to  
recreate the experience for them."**



# Writing an Informative Essay

1. Write an introduction to an informative essay about *Charlotte's Web*.

## Introduction Triangle



**Body Block** Now write the body paragraph using the hints that have been provided:

**Paragraph # 2:** This book is a story about a girl named Fern and a pig named Wilbur.

**Paragraph # 3:** However, the most important friend Wilbur would ever have was a simple gray spider named Charlotte.

**Paragraph # 4:** Charlotte alone had the power to save Wilbur's life.

## Conclusion Triangle

