

# Types of Essays

Expository Essay	<p><b>Sample topic: "How to Tame a Dragon."</b></p> <p>The function of the expository essay is to explain, or to acquaint your reader with a body of knowledge. By explaining a topic to the reader, you are demonstrating your own knowledge.</p>
Persuasive Essay	<p><b>Sample topic: "Dragons Should Not Be Tamed"</b></p> <p>In the <b>persuasive essay</b>, you must defend your side of an argument. You are no longer merely showing, you are convincing. The persuasive essay must choose a side, make a case for it, consider and refute alternative arguments, and prove to the undecided reader that the opinion it presents is the best one. You must be aware of other sides and be fair to them; dismissing them completely will weaken your own argument.</p>
Informal Essay	<p><b>Sample topic: "Me and My Dragon."</b></p> <p>The <b>informal</b> essay is written mainly for enjoyment. This is not to say that it cannot be informative or persuasive; however, it is less a formal statement than a relaxed expression of opinion, observation, humour or pleasure. A good informal essay has a relaxed style but retains a strong structure, though that structure may be less rigid than in a formal paper.</p> <p>The informal essay tends to be more personal than the formal, even though both may express subjective opinions. In a formal essay the writer is a silent presence behind the words, while in an informal essay the writer is speaking directly to the reader in a conversational style. If you are writing informally, try to maintain a sense of your own personality. Do not worry about sounding academic, but avoid sloppiness.</p>
A Review	<p><b>Sample title: "The Fire Inside: A Review of John Scale's <i>Dragons</i>."</b></p> <p>A <b>review</b> may be either formal or informal, depending on the context. Its goal is to evaluate a work, which implies that the reviewer's personal opinion plays a significant role in the process. However, a certain objective standard needs to be maintained and, as in a persuasive essay, your assertions need to be proved.</p> <p>The formality of the review will be determined by how much of the essay is analysis, how much is summary, and how much is your reaction to the work you are reviewing. A more formal review will not only discuss the work on its own merits but also place it in context. Newspapers and popular magazines tend to review in terms of finance: is this record or film worth spending money on? Critical journals will attempt to determine whether a new novel or play has achieved something new and significant. A good review will discuss both the qualities and the importance of a given work.</p>
Research Essay	<p><b>Sample topic: "Dragons and Demons in Norse Mythology."</b></p> <p>The <b>research</b> essay leads you into the works of others and asks you to compare their thoughts with your own. Writing a research paper involves going to source material and synthesizing what you learn from it with your own ideas. You must find texts on the subject and use them to support the topic you have been given to explore. Because it is easy to become lost in a wilderness of outside material, you must take particular care to narrow your topic.</p>
Literary Essay	<p><b>Sample topic: "The Characterization of Dragons in the Works of Tolkien"</b></p> <p>In the <b>literary</b> essay, you are exploring the meaning and construction of a piece of literature. This task is more complicated than</p>

	<p>reviewing, though the two are similarly evaluative. In a review you are discussing the overall effect and validity of written work, while in a literary essay you are paying more attention to specifics.</p> <p>A literary essay focuses on such elements as structure, <a href="#">character</a>, <a href="#">theme</a>, style, <a href="#">tone</a>, and subtext. You are taking a piece of writing and trying to discover how and why it is put together the way it is. You must adopt a viewpoint on the work in question and show how the details of the work support your viewpoint.</p>
Business Report	<p><b>Format often varies depending on the focus of the report (i.e. proposal, business case, analysis document, evaluation report, etc.</b></p> <p><b>Typical Components</b> in a report may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title page</li> <li>• Abstract or summary</li> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Background</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> <li>• Recommendations</li> <li>• Attachments</li> </ul>

The Department of English, University of Victoria (1995), *The UVic Writer's Guide*. Accessed from <http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/MasterToc.html#Essays>. May 25, 2010.