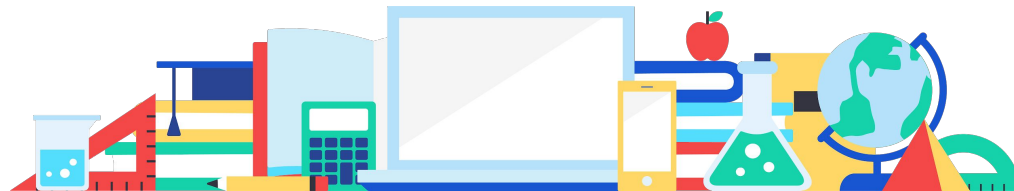




Essay Feedback

**Updated September 23, 2022**



## In this training

### You will

- Acknowledge your role as a writing coach
- Review what to expect in a session
- Learn strategies to help students in the last two phases of writing essays:  
Revising & Editing

*For strategies on helping students in the planning and drafting stages of writing be sure to review our Essay Planning training too!*

***If you've already completed Essay Planning training, skip to slide 20.***

# Your Role



# Your Role

## Develop a Writer

Throughout their life students will be asked to “explain, inform, justify, enumerate, summarize and describe” often through writing (Hochman & Wexler 3). Your role is to help them develop this skill set.

You’re a helper! That’s why you’re here, but “fixing” grammar issues or “rewriting” a student’s thesis will only help the paper improve, not the writer. They won’t be able to take this skill with them throughout their life. Instead, think of the essay/paper as the vehicle you use to help the student develop key skills and confidence!

**If you only remember one thing from this training: Our goal is to develop the student as a writer, not write a better paper for them.**



# Be Patient

## Writing is cognitively demanding

Writing requires executive functioning skills that most of us don't fully develop until our 20s!

### We're asking students to:

- *Strategize* when selecting a topic & details
- *Plan* a road map for a concision
- *Organize* information into logical order
- *Focus* on the task at hand (and not their phone notifications)
- *Sustain* this effort and self-monitor

As a coach, keep this in mind as you work with students and maintain a caring, patient approach.

# Be Culturally Competent

## Culture's impact on writing

**Culture determines acceptable ways of presenting information.**

Exaggeration, emotionalism, restraint, understatement, conciseness, clarity, etc. are all a matter of stylistic choice and influenced by our own lived experiences.

Be mindful of the preferences you're bringing to the writing process.

# What to expect in your writing sessions



# Types of Writing

Students come to UPchieve with assignments that cover a wide range of subjects, but you can expect to see mostly these types of essays:

- **Expository:** Explains and informs (including compare and contrast)
- **Narrative:** Process or event in chronological or sequential order
- **Descriptive:** Uses the five senses evoke images of people, places, and things
- **Argumentative or persuasive:** Presents both sides of an issue, including evidence, and appeals to logic to support one side
- **Literary analysis:** Closely studying a text, interpreting its meanings, and making an argument based in evidence from the text



# Stages of Writing

## What are the four stages of writing?

Your support will change depending on the student's stage of writing. In each stage students engage in different activities:

- **Planning:** Research topics, generate content ideas, outline, develop strong thesis
- **Drafting:** Write full sentences and paragraphs based on an outline (students should do this step mostly independently)
- **Revising:** Clarify or alter content or structure
- **Editing:** Ensure proper grammar, punctuation, mechanics, citation

# Sample Session Structure

- Welcome & Build Rapport
- Understand the assignment
- Assess the needs of the writer
- Set expectations: What can realistically be done in the session
- Provide structured help based on their phase of writing
  - ◆ Planning
  - ◆ Drafting
  - ◆ Revising
  - ◆ Editing
- Celebrate progress!

**Start The Session**



# The Basics

- Check the About This Session feature
- Start with a friendly greeting
- Ask how you can help them!
- Understand the assignment: Read through the prompt, rubric, etc.
- Assess what the student needs and start there
  - ◆ Example Questions:
    - What have you already started working on?
    - Where are you getting stuck?

# Set Expectations

## **Given the assignment, time frame, the writer's needs, and your availability**

- Decide on the course of action and be explicit
- Share your role
  - ◆ Example:
    - Student: *"I need help writing my opening paragraph"*
    - Coach Response: *"Great, I can help you brainstorm what to write here, but you'll need to write the paragraph yourself. Let's get started!"*

# Think & Write

## Applying Your New Knowledge

We've added a few reflection questions on blue slides to help you process new information!

Take out a piece of paper or open a new word doc and **write down how you would respond to this help request.**



Heres the question Although they cannot control everything in their life, can they control their responses to these outside elements? If so, does that mean each person is ultimately in control of their own destiny? Why or why not?

4:40 pm

## Example Responses

There are many great ways to respond! For example...

- **Ask questions to understand more about the assignment:**
  - ◆ *Thanks for sharing the question, do you have any other details about the assignment like word count or points that you should cover?*
- **Ask a question to assess the learner's needs:**
  - ◆ *Looks like an interesting question! Have you started writing your response yet?*

# Provide Structured Help





# The Basics

No matter the phase of the writing process, always...

- **Ask questions**
- **Validate frustrations** and help students move past them
- Provide **praise and encouragement**
- Provide **time** for students **to think and process**
- Request **more information** if something is unclear
  - ◆ *Can you tell me more about...?*

# Our Favorite Questions

## Questions help student develop critical thinking skills

### **Use questions to help students articulate and examine the *reasons for their choices***

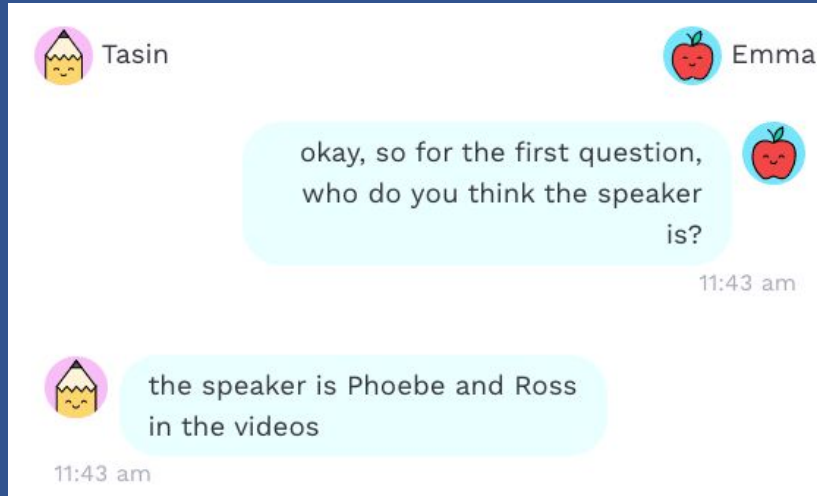
- What do you want to say?
- What is your main idea here?
- What do you want your reader to know in this paragraph?
- How does this connect with the previous statements?

### **Use questions to help students developing critical awareness of the *reader's point of view***

- Why does the reader want or need to know about that?
- What information do you have that the reader does not?

## Think & Write

Why are questions a powerful coaching tool?



## Our Response

### Questions engage students to actively participate in learning

You already know you can't just do the assignment for the student—so how can you empower them to do most of the work? Questions are your number one tool!

Questions can uncover the students **thought process**, **advance** their **thinking** and **guide** students to take the next logical step.



# Revision

## **Focus of the session**

- Clarify or improve the content or structure of a draft

## **In the revision stage students could**

- Refine their thesis
- Strengthen introductions and conclusions
- Add more supporting details
- Make sentences and paragraphs more informative, clear, and interesting
- Refine transitions & connect ideas
- Increase unity/conclusiveness of their composition

## **UPchieve's two feedback rule**

- Often you want to provide all the feedback students might need to improve their writing, however, this is overwhelming
- **Provide a maximum of two large ways a student can improve their draft** and focus on helping them implement your feedback

# Before you read

## Establish a shared understanding of the topic, audience, and purpose before you read

### Using the prompt, assignment directions, etc. help students identify:

- Audience
- Topic
- Purpose (their goal or purpose in relation to that audience or what they hope to accomplish in the paper)

### Questions to ask

- Can you put the prompt in your own words?
- Who are you writing this paper for? What do they need to know?
- Why are you writing this paper? Explain, persuade
- What are you writing about?

# As you read

## Ask your student to assess their own work

Copy & paste our student [revision checklist](#) into the document editor and ask the student to answer the questions!

## Ask yourself guiding questions

- **Thesis:** Is the thesis clear and does it fulfill the writer's purpose?
- **Introduction:** Is the introduction brief, to the point and interesting to the audience?
- **Support:** Are supporting or evidence details sufficient, relevant, and clear?
- **Structure:** Are the sentences and paragraphs arranged/organized appropriately?
- **Coherence:** Are the sentences and paragraphs logically related to one another?
- **Unity:** Does every sentence support the main idea of the paragraph? Does every paragraph support the main idea of the essay?
- **Conclusion:** Does the end of the paper summarize important points and refer to the main idea/thesis?

These are general guiding questions, however, each type of writing could have a specific revision checklist! Here are some more comprehensive [checklists](#) for common essay genres.

## Coach Tip: Use Colors

### Use the Document Editor Highlighter or Font Colors

Some tutors find that highlighting sentences in the document editor helps students and coaches be on the same page, as well as, organize the conversation. Other coaches like to use a different color and type their comments directly into the document.

This next purple highlighted part I think should be elaborated on.



This essay is about the article "2016 Newberry Medal Acceptance" written by Matt de la Peña [maybe start with a more gripping hook]. ~~In my perspective~~ there's no real need to say this phrase because the assumption is that this entire essay is in your perspective already since you're the author! this article is about de la Peña finding his love for literature. In the article de la Peña talks about how he became interested in reading. De la Peña wasn't a reader when he was a kid. He often spent his days playing basketball. Then he found that he was a reader after all since he reads the people around him ~~can you explain this~~ previous line a bit more? what does it mean to read the people around him? how does that more concretely connect to reading literature?. In his later years, he helped kids that were like him to find love for reading as well. After reading de la Peña's speech about finding love for literature, his life story supported ~~my belief~~ similar comment as above: try to omit phrases like "my perspective" or "my beliefs" to make your argument even stronger hat one book can change a person's life.



# Think & Write

What areas for improvement might you suggest for this student? Feel free to review the general checklist

**Requirements:**

The topic of your post can be anything that you'd like to consider from the reading

- Topics to consider:
- Who is Tiresias and what does he tell Kreon?
- Why do you think Kreon begins to change his mind?
- Is there any way to feel sympathy for Kreon, or does he deserve his fate?
- Were you surprised by Antigone and Haemon's dramatic decisions at the end of the play? Do they seem justified or excessive?

Quote directly from the text (for this play, a single line or a handful of lines should suffice)

Include between three-five sentences of analysis

If your discussion post addresses all of the points above (and is posted on time) you will receive full credit

**The topic I chose:**

- Is there any way to feel sympathy for Kreon, or does he deserve his fate?

**Short writing I wrote:**

Unfortunate events happened to Kreon in Scene 8, which were a bit unreasonable compared to what Kreon had done. "I see this second evil, oh misery. What fate, what still awaits me? Just now I hold in my hands my child, yet now I see my wife facing me dead, ah, poor mother, ah poor child," (line 1293). All Kreon had done was worry about his homeland and try to rule the land faithfully. He prevents Primiseous from getting a proper burial and tries to execute Antigone for disobeying him. In return, he sees his dead wife in front of him, who had killed herself, because Kreon prevented his son to marry his fiance. Kreon ends up feeling guilty because of these deaths and prays for a quick death, which is way worse than what he had done to Antigone. Hence, even though Kreon had done these very horrible things to Antigone and Primiseous, Kreon deserves sympathy for all the prophecies that had come true.

## Our Response

This is a great first draft!

**We'd focus on improving supporting details:** There are some gaps in knowledge that a reader needs to follow this student's argument, we'd recommend using questions to elicit that information. For example, is there a way to help the reader understand your response to the prompt in the first sentence?



# Common Revision Topics



# Thesis does not answer prompt

## Why this happens

A student may not understand the prompt or may not be able to put themselves in the viewpoint of the reader.

## Questions to ask

- In your own words what is the prompt asking?
- Why does the reader want or need to know about your topic?

# Thesis or topic sentences are not clear

## Why this happens

A student may need help to put themselves in the viewpoint of the reader.

## Questions

- What information do you have that the reader does not?
- Could you expand your thesis statement/topic sentence by adding (choose one)
  - ◆ Who, what, where, when, why, how?
- Use a phrase to give more detail?

# Too little evidence to support claim

## **Why this happens**

Students may lack evidence to support their claim, review our “gathering information” in the planning process for more strategies & questions!

## **Questions to ask**

- Where in the text supports your claim?
- What sources of information support your idea?
- Can you provide more details about what you mean here?

# Paragraphs lack details

## Why this happens

A student may not have gathered enough information during the planning phase of writing. Be sure to review strategies in our “planning” stage training.

## Questions

- Could you provide an example of...?
- What other details could you include in paragraph 2?
- What other information supports your point in paragraph 3?
- What evidence do you have to support your main point in paragraph 4?
- Where could you answer “why” more clearly?

# Lack of Coherence or Unity

## Why this happens

They may have struggled sorting relevant information.

## Questions

- How can you show the relationship between these two ideas?
- What is the connection between <idea> and <idea>?
- Which statement is irrelevant to your point?



## Think & Write

How can you help this student generate more evidence to support their claim and strengthen their coherency?

This essay is about the article “2016 Newbery Medal Acceptance” written by Matt de la Pena. In my perspective this article is about de la Pena finding his love for literature. In the article de la Pena talks about how he became interested in reading. De la Pena wasn’t a reader when he was a kid. He often spent his days playing basketball. Then he found that he was a reader after all since he reads the people around him. In his later years, he helped kids that were like him to find love for reading as well. After reading de la Pena’s speech about finding love for literature, his life story supported my belief that one book can change a person’s life.

## Our Response

Use questions to...

**Add supporting details/evidence for her claim:** How does his speech share about his love for literature? What specific lines might you reference?

**Strengthen coherence:** Your last sentence mentions that one book can change a person's life, how does this support your main idea?

# Unclear Organization

## Why this happens

A student may not be able to put themselves in the viewpoint of the reader. They may have struggled connecting ideas.

## Questions

- How did you order your thoughts?
- What words will help the reader understand your organization? Where can you add them?
- Where can you add words to signal to the reader how to react?

## Use transition and signal words

These words will help readers understand the writer's organization and/or highlight how the reader is to react or process information.

Suggest a few at a time or share our [word list](#) with students during the session!

- **Time:** First, last, before, initially, previously, currently, meanwhile
- **Conclusion:** In closing, in summary, thus, therefore
- **Illustration:** For example, namely, in particular
- **Change of Direction:** However, although, instead
- **Emphasis:** Moreover, notably, furthermore, especially

# Evidence or quotation unclear or ineffective

## Why this happens

One of the main focus of US Common Core writing is to ask students to state a claim, provide evidence to support their claim, and explain their reasoning. Students may struggle because they don't understand their claim, have difficulty distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant evidence, and/or understanding the reader's perspective. In addition to supporting students through asking questions on the next slide, ensure students follow the formula below.

## Steps to follow

- Introduce the quotation/evidence
- Quote or cite evidence properly
- Explain the quote/evidence in their own words
- Explain how the evidence furthers their claim

## Sentence starters to share

- In other words, the author is saying...
- Therefore, according to the autor,...
- [Author's name]'s point is that...

## Questions

- Whose words are these? (gentle reminder to cite)
- What does the quotation mean?
- How does the quote relate to your own idea/point?

## Think & Write

How would you help this student clarify their use of this quotation?

This essay is about the article “2016 Newbery Medal Acceptance” written by Matt de la Pena. In my perspective this article is about de la Pena finding his love for literature. He said, “I didn’t read past page twenty-seven of *The Catcher in the Rye*, but I read *Basketball Digest* cover to cover. Every single month.”

## Our Response

Use questions to...

**Clarify understanding:** Can you put this quote in your own words?

**Make connections clear:** How does his quote relate to his love for literature?



# Editing Help



# Editing

## **Focus of the session**

- Guide proper grammar, punctuation, mechanics, citation

## **In the revision stage students should**

- Edit grammar, punctuation, mechanics
- Look for typographical errors, omitted words and other mistakes
- Ensure proper citation and style rules are used

## **Coach role**

- Guide, don't edit! Instead of making direct edits:
  - ◆ Highlight sentences
  - ◆ Use questions to help students identify & correct their own errors
- Provide explanations of grammar rules
  - ◆ [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/grammar/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/grammar/index.html)
- Share citation resources
  - ◆ [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/)



## As you read

### Ask your student to assess their own work

- Copy & paste our student editing [checklist](#) into the document editor and ask the student to answer the questions!

### Ask yourself guiding questions

- Are there any run-on sentences?
- Are there any sentence fragments?
- Are there any spelling errors?
- Is punctuation correct?
- Is capitalization correct?
- Is tense correct and consistent?
- Is citation correct?

These are general guiding questions, however, each type of writing could have a specific editing checklist! Here are some more comprehensive [checklists](#) for common essay genres.

# Common Editing Topics



# Run on sentences

## **Why this happens**

Run-on sentences occur when two full sentences have been combined without a conjunction or punctuation. These can often be remedied by converting the sentence into two sentences with a period or semicolon, or adding a conjunction.

## **Highlight the sentence then ask**

→ How can you re-write the highlighted sentence into two complete sentences?

# Sentence Fragments

## **Why this happens**

Sentence fragments occur when sentences are incomplete due to a lack of an independent clause, subject, or verb. These can often be remedied by combining the fragment with another sentence.

## **Highlight the sentence then ask**

- What information can you add the highlighted sentence to make it complete?
- What word could you remove from the sentence to make it complete?
- Why is this sentence incomplete?

# Sentence structure isn't varied

## Why this happens

Students may feel confident in only writing short, concise sentences.

## Questions to ask

- Could you add a [conjunction](#) to this sentence and add more details about who/what/why/where/when/how?
- Could you combine sentence x with sentence y?

# Improper point of view

## Why this happens

Different types of writing require use of various points of view. A student may be unfamiliar with the conventions of the specific writing format.

## Points of View

- **First person (“I” or “Me”)**
  - ◆ Written from the perspective of the writer/narrator who is directly involved in the story
  - ◆ It is far more common for narrative or descriptive essays than argumentative or expository essays
- **Second person (“You”)**
  - ◆ Directly addresses the audience
  - ◆ Used to draw the readers in and have them connect with the writing
- **Third person (“he,” “she,” and “they”)**
  - Third-person point of view is the most formal point of view and is used commonly in every type of essay.

## Steps to follow

- Ask the student what point of view should be used for the essay
- Ask the student to highlight any different points of view and modify them

# Think & Write

How can you help this student complete their sentence fragment?

I have three social roles in my daily life: I am a sister because I have a four-year-old sister, but I also play the role of sisterhood (in the beginning of the sentence you say "three" roles but then only list two in this sentence, what is the third?) Assume my sister is having difficulty expressing herself (this sounds like a sentence fragment?). So I approached her as a sister and counseled her, because that is what sisters are for. The next role I play in my life is that of i am student. Because I have an associate's degree in human services and I am the type of student who will do their best to complete their work and, most of the time, submit work on time. In addition, I am a daughter. Because I had a particular person who raised me and nurtured me from birth,

## Our Response

### A coach might ask:

The sentence I've turned red is a sentence fragment, could you tell me more about what you want to say to the reader?





# Comma Placement

## Why this happens

Students often misplace or omit commas from sentences, so make sure to stay vigilant for missing commas. It is especially common for missing commas before or after a transition word or dependent clause.

## Questions to ask

- Can you read aloud this sentence, where do you take a breath? (I know I won't hear it ;))
- Where might you place a comma in this sentence? Why?

# Tense Agreement

## **Why this happens**

Students sometimes will move from one tense (present) to another (past) in the same paper because they write different sections at different times. This can be intentional and stylistically appropriate in some writing (Literary Analysis, Lab Report) but not in others.

## **Questions to ask**

- Did this happen in the past?
- Is this sentence from a literary work? What tense should it be in?

# Wrong Word Choice

## Why this happens

There are many commonly confused words in the English language. These are easy to mix up, especially if English isn't your first language.

## Examples

- Their and There and They're
  - ◆ Their is the possessive form of "they."
  - ◆ There is used to refer to a place.
  - ◆ They're is a contraction of "they are."
- Then and Than
  - ◆ Then (adverb): at a certain point in time or after
  - ◆ Than (conjunction): used to introduce a second element in a comparison
- There are [many examples](#), and these are just a few!

## Questions to ask after highlighting the word

- What do you want to say with this word?
- Does this look right to you?
- This word means <definition> is that what you wanted to convey?

# Plagiarism

## Why this happens

Students are often unsure of the rules regarding citations. The best thing to advise in this case is when in doubt, cite!

## Always cite when...

- When writer use direct quotations (two or more words verbatim) from a source
- When writer paraphrases an idea found in a source
- When writer states a statistic, fact, or idea that is not common knowledge
- When writer uses the same structure of the argument of a source

Recommend that students **use a free online plagiarism checker** (Grammarly, PaperRater, Quetext, etc.) prior to turning in their essay.

## Questions to ask

- Where is this quote from?
- Should you cite this idea?

# Improper Citation

## Why this happens

Students are often unsure of the rules regarding citations. The most common citation style for humanities essays in K-12 schools is MLA ([Modern Language Association](#)) format. Other formats include [Chicago Style](#), APA ([American Psychological Association](#)), and more.

## Remind students that

- All essays that use citations must have a references or works cited list
- There are online citation generators ([EasyBib](#), [CitationMachine](#), etc.) that can cite sources automatically for students, but tell them to check first with their teachers if it is okay to use these resources

## Questions to ask

- How should you cite a direct quote?
- What citation style are you using?

# Think & Write

How can you help this student properly cite this quote?

This essay is about the article “2016 Newbery Medal Acceptance” written by Matt de la Pena. In my perspective this article is about de la Pena finding his love for literature. He said, “I didn’t read past page twenty-seven of *The Catcher in the Rye*, but I read *Basketball Digest* cover to cover. Every single month.”

## Our Response

A coach might ask:

What citation style are you using for this paper?



**Celebrate Progress**





# Celebrating

## **Encouraging students**

Remember students took the brave step to come to UPchieve for help. Even if they didn't come away with a "perfect" essay it's important to celebrate progress so they keep working hard to develop as a writer, and come back to UPchieve for more help!

## **At the end of your session**

- Acknowledge two things the student did well in the paper
- Acknowledge two areas that your work together improved in the paper, and how the student made that happen!

**You've got this!**



# Jump in!

## Whew, that was a lot of information

Don't worry about being perfect, you'll learn and grow as you help students. Each request will be different and simply being a supportive coach will help students develop their confidence and improve as writers.

### When in doubt reach out!

- Join our coach community and share out tricky situations or get feedback on how you answered a request



# Appendix A: Potential Tricky Coaching Situations



## Tricky Coaching Situations

### A student is writing a paper that requires background knowledge

We don't expect you to be a content expert! However, you may still be able to **help ensure ideas are presented in a logical and impactful way.**

We generally ask that you spend **up to 5 minutes** familiarizing yourself with content; ask the student to point you to the most relevant resource.

# Tricky Coaching Situations

## A student would like you to write or rewrite sentences or paragraphs

- Ask questions to help students revise their work on their own
- Remind them it's a process, not perfection. Help them write anything down and worry about "right" word or structure after
- Feel free to end the session if the student continues to pressure you to write for them

# Tricky Coaching Situations

## A student is under a tight deadline

- Acknowledge this stressful situation
- Set realistic expectations for your time together
- Encourage them to make another request if you have to go

# Appendix B: Types of Essays





# Argumentative/ Persuasive Essays

**Argumentative essays** are used to convey an opinion about a certain topic or statement. They require evidence (from outside sources) to establish an argument, which are often covered in the body paragraphs of the essay.

- A strong argumentative essay will indicate that the author has considered all positions by including a rebuttal. The **rebuttal** the part of the argument where the author first explains the opposing argument, and then explains why this argument is irrelevant, incomplete, or incorrect.
- It is important to **understand the audience** for this type of essay, as persuasive essays must be able to communicate effectively to the target audience.
  - ◆ For example, a persuasive essay that argues for greater regulation of the economy would have a very different audience from a persuasive essay that argues that more people should eat breakfast every day.

# Expository Essays

**Expository essays** are unbiased evidence-based essays that are used to provide readers with information.

- In contrast, persuasive essays are biased evidence-based essays because they are used to persuade the reader to agree with their argument.
- They tend to focus on the **5 Ws** (who, what, when, where, why).
- In an expository essay, each body paragraph should ideally only cover one topic.
- The order of each paragraph in an expository essay is important, as expository essays should follow a logical chronological order.

# Literary Analysis

**Literary analysis** means closely studying a text, interpreting its meanings, and making an argument based in evidence from the text.

- A literary analysis is not a summary of a literary work. Instead, it is an argument about the work that expresses a writer's personal perspective, interpretation, judgment, or critical evaluation of the work.
- Literary analysis cover many topics, typically in English classes:
  - ◆ Character, setting, plot, theme, dialogue, imagery, figures of speech, tone, rhyme, point of view are all up for interpretation

# Narrative Essays

**Narrative essays** are used to tell stories and can be fictional or non-fictional.

- They do not require sources like argumentative and expository essays do.
- Narrative essays test your creative writing ability and accordingly have fewer structural requirements.
  - ◆ Even if there are no explicit introduction, body, and conclusion paragraphs, the essay should still have a logical flow.

# Descriptive Essays

**Descriptive essays** provide detailed descriptions of something (places, objects, etc).

- While they are less structured than argumentative and expository essays, they are more structured than narrative essays because they are still used to convey information.
- Descriptive essays are a great opportunity to use figurative language, unique word choices, and other creative techniques.