

**Nadia Ghounane**

# Academic Essay Writing for EFL Learners

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# Introduction

Writing is both a challenging and an interesting task that requires much writer's attention, that is, it is a type of communication that expresses ideas and makes a chain between the writer and his readers. Thereby, it is unique, creative, and is done for purpose.

Among the most essential forms of academic writings are essays that writers start to learn and write from college. They develop an idea in four or five paragraphs, or in a whole book, but the most commonly used are five paragraphs essays or timed essays because they can be written in class period.

'Lectures on Academic Essay Writing' is a booklet for second year students. It is an outgrowth of teaching academic writing for many years. Our experience as teachers and writers has taught us that writing is the most difficult task that requires much practice. Learning how to write essays needs more basics rather than instructions especially in classrooms. Indeed, classrooms are learning communities that are improved through evaluating their members' writing skills. Henceforth, this booklet provides an unpretentious manner on teaching students how to write different types of essays through practices that reinforce their writing skill and provide them with a supportive learning environment that helps them to be good writers.

The first part of the booklet provides a detailed rehearsal of the different stages of essay writing, followed by a part that introduces the different elements of an essay, while the last part displays essential explanations on argumentative, process, cause/effect, and comparison/contrast essays. Hence, this part addresses the writing process from paragraph to essay.

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# Unit 1

## Getting Ready to Write

### **Goals of the following lessons:**

- **Identifying the different stages for essay writing**
  - **Pre-writing Stage**
  - **While-writing Stage**
  - **Final-writing Stage**

# Getting Ready to Write

This unit is intended to give the learner an overview about the process of writing an essay through introducing the student to the necessary stages. It will also provide some activities since the best way to learn how to write an essay is through practice. Hence, planning an essay takes more time because the writer has many ideas to organise. Let's introduce some points concerning how to plan an essay:

## Section 1

### Pre-writing Stage

In this stage, the writer has to select the topic depending on two essential points:

- **According to his attitudes.**
- **According to an assignment.**

After selecting the topic, the writer has to narrow it in order to be discussed in an essay of five paragraphs or a timed essay since students are required to write an essay in a precise period of time.

After selecting and narrowing the topic, the writer has to gather ideas for his subject. In fact, there are many ways including listing, clustering, freewriting, journal writing, interviewing classmates, friends and gathering data from secondary sources such as books and journals.

After collecting references, the writer has to generate a thesis statement which will form the basis of the whole essay. This idea (thesis statement) has to be developed through supporting ideas (generating supporting ideas). Hence, he has to brainstorm ideas that fit the thesis statement. After formulating the main idea, the

learner has to keep sure that his idea suits the purpose of the essay. In order to develop the outline of the essay, he has to follow these steps:

### **Brainstorming Techniques: Freewriting, Listing and Clustering**

Brainstorming is the first step through which the learner generates and organises his ideas. He has to write everything that comes to his mind, so that he will not forget any point later on. In fact, brainstorming has many advantages. For instance, it helps the learner to select the topic according to an assignment and the time allotted. Hence, this part will teach the student how to brainstorm his ideas employing either freewriting, listing techniques or mapping:

#### **► Freewriting**

Most of students prefer to employ the freewriting technique since it helps them especially when they have a short timed essay on one hand and many ideas about the topic. This technique involves writing without stopping. It should be called flow writing since the writer remains focusing on analysing the topic until it is finished. He does not take into consideration grammar, spelling or punctuation at this stage.

#### **Example**

The student's essay assignment:

Adrienne Rich wrote "Lying is done with words and also with silence". Do you agree? Use your personal experience and/or your observations to support your answer.

#### **A Short Freewriting Draft on the Subject**

Do I agree? I think so. Is it a lie if you don't say something when you know something? Not technically, but it has the same effect, doesn't it? I remember when I saw Jay with someone else but I didn't tell Karen. She never came out and asked me if Jay was cheating on her, but I knew. But that's not really a lie is it so what do you call it? But there are more important cases where not telling the truth can be deadly. Like if you know someone is planning to commit a crime, and you don't tell anyone. Didn't