

Shanell Bailey
EN 102
Diagnostic Essay

How to Write a Diagnostic Essay

Instructors ask students to write diagnostic essays in class, responding to a writing prompt or question. The essay enables the instructor to diagnose which skills students are bringing into a class and which skills they need to work on to meet course objectives. Write a diagnostic essay well by dividing your time effectively and using good prewriting techniques. Write a clear thesis statement, logical body paragraphs, and a clear conclusion that echoes the thesis.

Pre-writing Techniques

When you receive a prompt for a diagnostic essay, consider the amount of time you've been given to write it and set aside at least 10 percent of the time for prewriting tasks. For example, if you're asked to write for 40 minutes, set aside four minutes to read the prompt and write a preliminary answer. Write a list of at least three main ideas that you will include in your thesis and body paragraphs.

Writing the Introduction

Review the three main ideas you have written during your prewriting. Begin your introduction by echoing or restating the essay prompt. For example, if you have been given a prompt asking you to write about the hardest thing you have ever done, such as moving to a new country, write an explanation of your move. Include three reasons why this task was the hardest thing you've ever done. The three reasons will form your thesis statement.

Writing Body Paragraphs

After you have written your introduction and thesis, write a transition sentence leading to your first body paragraph. For example, if you are writing about moving to a new country, write "I did not think I would be able to adjust to life in a new country." Then write about the thoughts you had before you moved. Write succeeding paragraphs about your adjustment to the new country. For example, you may devote a paragraph each to ways you adjusted to your new life. Write about how you learned a new language in one paragraph. In the next, write about how you made new friends, and specifically mention some of the

Writing the Conclusion

Echo or restate the main points of your introduction and thesis statement in your conclusion. For example, if the three main challenges you faced moving to a new country were learning a new language, making new friends and adjusting to a different culture, write, "When I moved to the United States three years ago, I did not think I could learn a new language, make new friends, and adjust to the culture." In your concluding paragraph, mention the ways you learned the language, and perhaps some of the friends you made who helped you adjust to your new country, unifying the essay.

- When students have a bad teacher, they not only often fail to learn, but they also lose interest in school, or in a particular subject. There are probably more ways to be a bad teacher than to be a good one.

What are some ways in which a teacher can be a bad teacher?

- Many people are excited about the possibility of becoming parents. However, there are many aspects of parenthood that should be considered before bringing children into this world.

What should people consider before deciding to have children?

- Some students claim that they attend college because parents and other relatives told them they should. Other students say that they attend college because they believe they will be able to get better jobs when they graduate.

Why are the benefits of obtaining a college degree?

- Nutrition specialists have told us that fast food is bad for our health, partly because of the high fat content, and yet many people continue to eat it.

Why do so many people eat fast food?