

Process Analysis Helpful Guide

Practically everyone knows how to do something very well. In fact, many people know how to do something so well that they could actually teach someone else to do it. That is the main purpose behind the process essay. You are to select something (a process) that you know how to do very well and then write a regular essay which “teaches” the reader how to do that same thing.

The formal name of the mode is process *analysis*:

Process = a step-by-step movement from a beginning point to an ending point.

Analysis = a careful examination; a close, detailed look at something

One of the most important purposes of this whole assignment is your ability to look at the process critically (analyze) and to divide the whole thing into several concrete steps.

- a. Have at least three steps. Obviously, the more complex the process, the more steps you will have.
- b. Each step should be easy to visualize as you explain it to the reader.
- c. Each step must be distinct and different from the previous step.
- d. Write one whole paragraph to explain each step. When a new paragraph begins, the reader of your paper should correctly assume that a new step in the process is also beginning.

Your introductory paragraph contains no steps; instead, it simply prepares the reader for the topic of your paper. You might try including such information as the following:
When did you first try this process? Why is this process important? Why should the reader care about this process or be interested in it?

NOTE: By the time the introductory paragraph ends, the reader should know clearly what the process is and that you are about to explain to him how to do it. Don't make your reader have to “guess” what you're going to talk about.

By the same token, the concluding paragraph of your essay also contains no steps. The purpose of the concluding paragraph is to “ease out” of the topic by talking somewhat generally about the product or the service and then ending on a nice, warm, positive note about the topic in general.

A process paper either tells the reader how to do something or describes how something is done. As you write your process essay, consider the following:

- What process are you trying to explain? Why is it important?
- Who or what does the process affect?
- Are there different ways of doing the process? If so, what are they?
- Who are the readers? What knowledge do they need to understand this process?
- What skills/equipment are needed for this?
- How long does the process take? Is the outcome always the same?
- How many steps are there in the process?
- Why is each step important?
- What difficulties are involved in each step? How can they be overcome?
- Do any cautions need to be given?
- Does the process have definitions that need to be clarified?
- Are there other processes that are similar and could help illustrate the process that you are writing about?
- If needed, tell what should not be done or why something should be done.

Your responses to these questions and statements should enable you to write an effective process essay.

