

Essay Writing Guidelines

Essay Contest Judging Committee

An essay is a discourse that logically and empirically develops a reasonable, lucid argument on ideas/discoveries that are unfound in previous literature.

Essays should be written as something to be read by others, rather than as a collection of the author's notes. To accurately convey the gist of the author to readers, it is important to use conventional essay style. In essay writing, particular attention should be paid to the points outlined below.

1. Defining the thesis statement & Referring to previous studies

Define the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph in reference to previous studies as supporting evidence.

- (1) Since an essay is a thesis, it is desirable to clarify at the beginning (Preface, Foreword, Introduction, Prologue, Chapter 1, etc.) your concern with the subject of the paper.
- (2) The essay should be developed centering on this concern, and a consistent argument should be made from the beginning to the end. If the point of the essay is unclear, the reader may not be able to accurately follow its argument.
- (3) It is a basic rule in essay writing to thoroughly examine previous works related to the thesis statement. You should know what existing studies have clarified and to what extent, and have a clear idea of what the paper will demonstrate. It is important to establish a question based on your research of previous literature.

2. The end of your essay

At the end of your essay (conclusion, closing remarks, afterword, final chapter, summary, epilogue, etc.), you should summarize your ideas to answer your thesis stated in the introductory paragraph. The conclusion must be consistent with the introduction.

3. The survey

In theses based on qualitative or quantitative surveys, the following points should be clarified:

- (1) Whether you conducted the survey individually, or you participated in the survey conducted by the seminar members.
- (2) The date, place, the number of subjects, response rate, method (personal interview, mail-in questionnaires, etc.) of the survey
- (3) The questionnaire or other material that show the content of the questionnaire must be attached.

4. Academic responsibility

Academic researchers are required to act in a responsible manner as professionals based on social ethics. Specifically, special attention should be paid to privacy protection and to the treatment of individual and corporate information obtained from surveys and interviews. For reference, see Research Ethics Regulation on the Hosei University Research and Development Center website (<http://kenkai.ws.hosei.ac.jp/fuseiboshi.html>).

5. Plagiarism

Your own words should be clearly distinguished from those of others. As a basic rule, the thesis should clarify what previous studies have achieved. Essays containing extensively copied text will be deemed plagiaristic and invalid.

Accordingly, direct quotes should be indented to indicate that they are someone else's, and the cited literature should be referenced.

6. A table of contents, notes and references

A table of contents, notes and references must be provided in a proper style.

(1) Notes must be numbered consecutively and listed at the end of each chapter or the end of the essay or must be listed as footnotes on each page. Each citation must include the page number of cited material.

(2) In addition to notes, references must be listed at the end of your essay.

Each reference must include the names of all authors/editors/translators, book/article title, journal title, year of publishing, publisher and other necessary information. It may be impossible to identify the source of material obtained via the Internet. In such a case, the URL and access date must be added. (When material found on the Internet is also available as a book, a journal, a report or other printed form, the printed material must be used as a reference.)

7. How to write abstract

The selection of the topic, the analytical method, the development of the argument and the conclusion of your essay must be clearly summarized in approximately 300 words. An abstract is a key to appeal the significance of your essay to judges.

8. Essay writing

Get started well in advance and revise your essay.

(1) In general, it is extremely difficult to write a good essay without revising it. It is better to revise your essay as many times as possible until it is finalized.

(2) You should therefore get started well in advance to secure enough time to revise your essay. It is unfortunate to see many essays that fail to fully develop the argument throughout them probably due to a lack of time.

In preparation for writing essays, you are advised to keep your reading logs and store your ideas in two types of notebooks (cards). It is impossible to write good essays without organized accumulation of knowledge and ideas.

9. Recommended books

There are a number of books that explain how to write essays. Some of them are listed below.

The Hosei University Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) System available on the University Library's web site and the Pathfinder (guide to subject searching) are also useful tools.

James D. Lester, James D. Lester Jr., *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide, 15th Edition*, Pearson, 2014.

Adrian Wallwork, *English for Writing Research Papers (English for Academic Research)*, Second Edition, Springer, 2016.

Stephen Bailey, *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*, Fourth Edition, Routledge, 2014.