

UNIT 9

Lesson: *Editing Guidelines* *and* *Response Writing: Essay Exam (Part 1)*

9.1 Learning Objectives

- A. To know the guidelines for editing an essay.
- B. To edit and improve the historical figure essay submitted in Unit 6.
- C. To comprehend the proper approach to an essay question.
- D. To write an appropriate response to an essay question.

9.2 Editing Guidelines

Now that your instructor has graded your essay, you must change or improve those areas marked down. Editing is such an important skill. While you may be able to put your ideas on paper, it is equally, if not more important, to train yourself to see areas that need improvement. Thus, carefully read your instructor's remarks. If you do not understand exactly what is to be done, ask your instructor for more specific direction.

Improving your essay must begin at the foundational level. For instance, it will do no good to correct punctuation errors if your reasoning is flawed. Rather, you should begin at the level of logic and progress from there. In this course, you will edit essays in Units 9, 12, 15, 17, 22, and 23. Every time you edit a work, make corrections in the following order:

A. Organization and Content

This category includes the thesis, topic sentences, supporting material, transitions, specific examples and thorough explanation. Any issues pertaining to logic and reason must be dealt with here.

B. Creativity and Style

Employing creativity and style involves writing in a manner that appeals to the intended audience. Creativity begins with word choice and sentence variety. It progresses to the crafting of phrases that capture the reader's interest. Style is born of one's approach to the subject, but it can also include the structural type of writing used, such

Edit in this order:

- 1. Organization and content***
- 2. Creativity and style***
- 3. Mechanics***
- 4. Presentation***

as standard academic style, journalistic style, creative writing, technical writing, business writing, or any combination of these styles.

C. Mechanics

After reviewing logic and style, you should consider the mechanics. This means correcting errors in the area of spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, and even formality issues. Unfortunately, students often start here in their editing process. Do not fall into that error. Work through the mechanics after you have completed the larger priorities.

D. Presentation

Finally, go over the paper to determine if you have formatted it properly. For this course, all essays and documentation are to be done in APA Style as shown on page 42. Therefore, you should check:

1. **Title page:** Running head, page numbering, paper title, student name, class.
2. **Subsequent pages:** Page numbering, proper citation of sources in your text, proper spacing of all components.
3. **References page:** Page numbering, references, proper APA references with proper spacing.

Remember, that whatever your instructor corrects or mentions is important. Do not ignore directions or recommended changes. To ignore corrections is a level of insult to your teacher and could result in a lower grade. Put forth every effort to produce your best work. Your instructor will recognize your efforts.

9.3 Response Writing: Taking an Essay Exam

Response writing refers to the exercise of giving a written response to various types of prompts. A prompt might be a quote, a picture, an article, a hypothetical situation, or a test question. This type of writing is common in college courses and is now standard on the SAT exam. Whether you are in high school, in college, or in a job interview, the skill of coherently responding to an impromptu question is a must. Therefore, to prepare you for these situations this course will discuss strategies for a number of response writing scenarios during subsequent editing units.

The first type of response writing students are likely to encounter is the essay examination. In an essay exam, the question or prompt directs the

student to explain or elaborate on a given topic falling within the body of knowledge covered in the course. The following points outline an effective strategy for tackling an essay examination.

A. Preliminary Tasks

1. Mastery of course content and terminology is a must before even taking the test. This means that you must attend classes, take ample notes, and study any other course related materials.
2. Anticipate possible questions. Do not completely prepare answers to questions that may not be asked. However, ask the instructor which content areas are most important.
3. Do your best to know the style of writing desired by your instructor before test day arrives. Does your instructor want you to use standard essay form? Topic sentences? A thesis statement? Journalistic form? Combinations of styles? What about paragraph length? Sentence fragments? Bullet points?

B. Taking the Test

1. Read instructions carefully and evaluate the entire test.
 - a. Determine whether you are to answer all or only some of the questions.
 - b. If you have a choice, respond to the questions that you can best answer.
 - c. Consider the writing time allowed. Allot time for planning, writing, and revising so that you can accomplish the whole task.
 - d. If ideas come to mind as you peruse the test, jot these on the back of your paper or on scratch paper.
 - e. Answer easiest questions first so that you are then free to focus on the difficult ones.
2. Underline the key verbs and nouns that indicate what is being asked of you.

Mark all key verbs and nouns that indicate what is being asked of you.

9A - Key Words in Essay Instructions

Key Word	Definition
Analyze *	Consider parts as related to a whole.
Classify	Arrange in groups or classes.
Define **	Explain the meaning of a topic.
* Likely requires longer answer ** Likely requires brief answer	

9A - Key Words in Essay Instructions

Key Word	Definition
Describe	Express details regarding the topic.
Compare	Consider how points are alike or differ.
Contrast	Consider differences.
Criticize	Discuss the merits or faults of something.
Discuss	Consider all sides or details of a topic.
Elaborate	Explain in great detail.
Evaluate	Consider the value or worth of the topic.
Explain *	Make a topic plain or clear.
Illustrate *	Explain a topic with the use of examples.
Interpret *	Explain the meaning of a topic.
Justify	Give reason for something.
Outline **	Create a plan outlining the main features of something.
Prove	Show as true and right.
Review	Examine with care again.
Show *	Point out or make known aspects of a topic.
Summarize **	Give the main points of a topic.
Support	Offer evidence in favor of a position.
* Likely requires longer answer ** Likely requires brief answer	

3. Identify the question or questions to which you will respond. Should the question contain more than one issue to address, number these or list them on a scratch-paper. If some of the terms in the question seem vague, you may want to offer your definition or explanation before answering.
4. If you are uncertain about anything on the test, ask your instructor.
5. Plan your response.
 - a. Create a brief outline or plan on the back of or in the corner of your paper.
 - b. Offer an assertion and prove it with thorough explanation.
 - c. Eliminate unnecessary material.
6. State your position in the first sentence or two. (No lengthy introduction here.) Then stay on topic. Focus.

7. Put each supporting point and its supporting detail into an individual paragraph. Your instructor will not want very lengthy paragraphs in this instance.
8. Use the last few minutes to proof your answer. Do not re-copy your answer. Use your time more wisely. Your well-organized first draft **has** to be acceptable with only minor changes.
9. Conclude your answer with a one or two sentence summary.
10. **Do:**
 - a. Use all of your time.
 - b. Write your composition on only one side of paper, neatly, and with appropriate margins.
11. **Do not:**
 - a. Double space your writing on the SAT exam.
 - b. Offer flippant or “smart-mouth” answers.
 - c. Use inflammatory wording.
 - d. Comment on your opinion of the exam or course.

Turn to the Unit 9 Addendum on the next page to see a sample response to an essay question.

**Avoid
Inflammatory
wording:
Wording or
phrasing that
instantly
alienates your
audience.
(See text page 222.)**

Addendum - Unit 9

Example Essay Question Response

A. Assigned Essay Question:

What standard steps should you follow when creating an academic essay?

B. Brief Plan Jotted Down by the Student:

Invention

- *Craft preliminary thesis*
- *Evaluate supporting material*

Arrangement

- *Create planning outline*

Writing

- *Formalize thesis*
- *Draft paragraphs*
- *Cite sources*
- *Add introduction and conclusion*
- *Edit content*

C. Student Response:

Not too many people enjoy extemporaneous writing assignments. However, creating strong essay is an important life skill for everyone, so mastering the standard steps in the process is necessary. Writing an academic composition involves a rather challenging process.

First, clarify foundational issues and conduct needed research. What is to be the topic and purpose? Who is the intended audience? Understanding these enables the writer to meet the exact assignment and accomplish the essay's goal. For instance, if the essay addresses specialists in a medical field, use technical terminology. On the other hand, if the article addresses medical issues for the public, the reader must generally understand the terminology. Considering the purpose of the essay will take you through a consideration of approaches and content. Should this be a narrative? cause and effect? Do you need to offer definition or explain processes? Are you refuting an opposing position? You may need to conduct preliminary research to decide on these issues. Broadening your body of knowledge prior to planning and writing will help you more adequately create an essay. With the basics clarified and a bit more knowledge on the topic, you are ready for the next step.

Now, it is time to plan the essay. First, draft several possible thesis statements. Select the strongest one or two and consider what it would take to prove each one. Do you have sufficient evidence? How might you organize it? Plan each point and sub-point during this outlining process so that the final essay stays logical and fully developed. In the planning process, you will want to determine what source quotes,

summaries, or paraphrases to use and where to use them in the essay. Naturally, you must gather the needed bibliographic information to cite sources within the text and to create a “References” page. Like a roadmap equips a driver to reach the intended destination, a well-developed plan will help the writer reach the appropriate goal.

Finally, write the essay. First, formalize the thesis for your paper. Be certain that it is still in keeping with whole of your essay. Second, work, point by point, to explain the supporting evidence that proves the thesis true. Do not fail to thoroughly develop the supporting details of an essay. Simply stating an assertion, does not make the reader will believe it. The supporting points must be “backed up” by thorough explanation and details to help the reader understand what is meant. This explanation could include any type of paragraph: description, definition, narrative, process, comparison, cause and effect, analogy, or any combination of these. Third, you must document the source material used in the essay. Follow the method of documentation prescribed by your instructor. Most methods use parenthetical references in the text. The parenthetical citation correlates with the “References” page, enabling the reader to know the source of the information. The writing process requires strong attention to detail.

By doing preliminary work, planning carefully, and explaining content thoroughly, the eager student can produce a well-written essay. Practicing these steps enables anyone to tackle the challenge of creating a well-written essay.

UNIT 9*Editing Guidelines and Response Writing: Essay Exam (Part 1)***Daily Assignments****----- Exercise 1 -----****A. Reading Assignment:**

Read the Unit 9 Lesson. Be certain that you understand the editing guidelines and the process for responding to an essay exam.

B. Lesson Assignment:

Answer the following questions in complete sentences:

1. What most important aspect of an essay should you edit first?
2. What is response writing?
3. What do you look for in an essay question that indicates what is being asked of you?

C. Writing Assignment:

1. *Based on your instructor's feedback, you will begin to edit and improve the historical figure essay that you submitted in Unit 6.*
 - a. *Start by correcting your essay in the areas of organization and content.*
 - b. *Also, improve any areas that the instructor noted as underdeveloped.*
 - c. *Check these against your Essay Edit Checklist to see if you overlooked the errors. If you did, purpose to work more methodically and carefully on your next essay.*
2. *If necessary, create a new planning outline and re-write portions that are not correct. Additionally, do more research as needed in order to support your points more adequately. Work to explain fully your supporting details.*

----- Exercise 2 -----**Writing Assignment:**

Now, print a copy of your essay with the corrections and changes made in Exercise 1. Read the essay aloud slowly and listen for more problem areas. Make note of these on the paper.

----- Exercise 3 -----

Writing Assignment:

1. Continue the editing process by correcting any problems identified in Exercise 2.
2. Now, work to improving your historical figure essay in the area of style and creativity. Craft innovative wording and sentence structure that attracts the reader. Work in every way to stimulate the reader's interest.
3. Review Section 9.3 of this unit's lesson. Today, you will create your first response essay to a general essay topic. Select one of the two topics below, quickly draft a planning outline, and write a one to three page, hand-written response to the topic. When your time limit is up, organize your papers and submit them to your instructor. (Check with instructor for time limit. Suggested time: 20 or 30 minutes)
 - a. **Describe** a time when you were frightened and explain how you made it through the situation.
 - b. **Justify** the need for parents to set curfews for their teenagers.

----- Exercise 4 -----

Writing Assignment:

During Units 10 and 11, you will write a narrative essay. This will be either a historical narrative essay or a personal narrative. Find out from your instructor which will be assigned. Then, brainstorm possible topics and begin to gather research material for the essay. You do not need to make a planning outline now. This is the time to gather sources. Consider what will be needed for your possible topics. Do you need to:

- locate materials in your home library?
- order or obtain books or periodicals from your public or school library?
- search for additional information on the Internet?
- gather any other source material?

----- Exercise 5 -----

Writing Assignment:

1. Once again, read through a draft of your historical figure essay, making certain that you have corrected the logic and stylistic problems.
2. Now, move on to correcting the mechanical errors. Be certain to correct all spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, and even formality issues. Correct all errors – even if they were not noticed by your instructor.
3. Compare your edited draft with your original corrected essay from Units 5 & 6. Using a pen,

check off every item, marked by your instructor, that you have corrected. Make certain that you have corrected every problem.

4. *If needed, correct the APA Style "References" page. If you used and cited any additional sources during this editing process, be certain to add them to this page.*
5. *Print an edited copy and ask someone to read your essay, mark corrections, and give you feedback on your entire essay.*

----- **Exercise 6** -----

Writing Assignment:

Continue doing preliminary research for the next essay in this course. Use this time to narrow the possible topics down to some useable for your essay.

----- **Exercise 7** -----

Writing Assignment:

1. *Based on the feedback given you, work to improve confusing areas or any other flaws found in your essay.*
2. *Finally, complete the editing process by correcting all the formatting problems with your paper. Be certain that it is in APA Style. Check your paper in these areas:*
 - a. *Cover page: Running head, page numbering, paper title, student name, class.*
 - b. *Subsequent pages: Page numbering, proper citation of sources in your text, proper spacing of all components.*
 - c. *References page: Page numbering, references, proper APA references with proper spacing.*
3. *Complete your essay entirely so that it is ready to submit.*

----- **Exercise 8** -----

Writing Assignment:

Continue doing preliminary research for the next essay in this course. By now, you should be focused on a specific topic for your essay so you will be ready to brainstorm possible perspectives in the next unit.

----- **Exercise 9** -----

Writing Assignment:

If needed, review section 9.3 of this week's lesson. Today, you will create your second response essay to a general essay topic. Select one of the two topics below, quickly draft a planning outline, and write a one

to three page, hand-written response to the topic. When your time limit is up, organize your papers and submit them to your instructor. (Check with instructor for time limit. Suggested time: 20 or 30 minutes)

- a. **Define** friendship and **illustrate** its meaning using literary, historical, or personal examples.
- b. **Evaluate** how you are benefiting from a current activity or course of study.

----- Exercise 10 -----

Writing Assignment:

Submit your work to your instructor.

Writing Assignment work:

- a. Edited essay formatted in APA style:
 - Title page
 - Final draft of your essay
 - "References" page
- b. Any other rewritten or corrected items
- c. The evaluation form filled out by your instructor
- d. The original essay on which your teacher wrote corrections.