

Process Essay

For the second major assignment of the semester, you will do a process essay. This essay is worth **15 points** or 15% of your final grade.

- Your Process Essay must be between **3 and 5 pages**. The pages should be in 12 point font (Times New Roman or equivalent) and should be double spaced.
- Your essay will describe a process in detail. Basically, you will tell us “how to” do something. For example, you might:
 - Explain how to make something, such as a computer, a piece of art, or a meal.
 - Explain how to do one of your hobbies, such as go fishing, prepare for a marathon, or go paragliding.
 - Explain how to become better at something, such as a language, a sport, or a social skill.
- The process must have multiple steps from beginning to end, and each step must be described in detail.
- Your essay should use appropriate process language.
- Your essay is **not** a recipe or a list. You are describing things with words and not with short lists or pictures.

For this essay, you will need to do three drafts:

- The first draft will be due on **October 6th** (T/Th Class) or **October 7th** (M/W Class) for peer review.
- The second draft will be due on **October 15th** (T/Th Class) or **October 26th** (M/W Class) for instructor feedback.
- The final draft will be due on **November 5th** (T/Th Class) or **November 9th** (M/W Class) for grading.

Late or incomplete drafts:

- All drafts must be complete, including the first draft. If a draft is incomplete, it will lose up to 5 points.
- All drafts must be turned in on time. Late drafts will lose one point per day (up to 5 points). Late drafts begin losing points at the **beginning** of class on the due date. If you do not have the draft at that time, it's late. Drafts more than 5 days late will not be accepted.
- Second and final drafts must include all previous drafts. The second draft must include the first draft, and the final draft must include the first and second draft. If you do not turn in previous drafts, you will lose up to 5 points.
- Second and final drafts must be changed and improved for the next draft. If a draft is turned in unchanged, you will lose up to 5 points.

Your final drafts will be graded on the following:

- Do you follow the assignment, including format and page length?
- Do you have a clear process?
- Are there several steps to the process? Is each step described in detail?

- Can I follow this process?
- Does the essay use correct process language?
- Is your essay clear and easy to understand?
- Are spelling, grammar, and word choice correct?
- Does the paper improve between drafts? Are the second and final drafts better than the first?

Ryan Shepherd RPShep@yahoo.com

Process Words

When you are describing a process, there are several words and phrases that you will need to know. Let's take a look at several.

Simple Process Words

There are many simple process words and phrases that you can use to describe the steps of a process; however, you should avoid using these words too much. Your paper gets very boring and repetitive if you use too many of these words:

- Ordinal numbers: First, second, third, fourth, etc.
 - Ordinal numbers can describe what number this step is in the process. Notice they do not have “-ly” on the end. The words with -ly are not used often.
 - Don't use ordinal numbers very much, as using them to start your sentences gets very boring very quickly.
 - “First, take the sugar out of bowl. Second, put three spoons full of sugar in the cup. Third, pour coffee on the sugar.”
- Time Order Words: Next, then, After that, etc.
 - These words describe what you should do after the previous step.
 - Like ordinal numbers, they should not be used too often.
 - “Next, take the sugar out of the bowl. Then, put three spoons full of sugar in the cup. After that, pour the coffee on the sugar.”
- Final Words: Finally, Lastly, Last, etc.
 - These words describe the last step in your process.
 - “Finally, you can drink your coffee.”

Mixing Simple Process Words

To make your writing more interesting and less boring, you can mix simple process words right into your sentences instead of putting them at the beginning. You can do this by working them into longer phrases that you make yourself. For example:

- “The first thing that you can do is to take the sugar out of the bowl.”
- “After you have taken the sugar out of the bowl, you can then put three spoons full of sugar in the cup.
- “Pouring the coffee on the sugar is your last step.”

This will make for much more interesting writing.

Correctly using Subordinating Conjunctions

When writing a process essay, you will need to use a lot of subordinating conjunctions such as: after, before, when, while, as, and so on.

- Subordinating conjunctions much connect two full sentences:

- If the “dependent clause” (the sentence containing the subordinating conjunction) is first, you must put a comma at the end of that clause.
 - “After I went to the movie, I met my friend.”
- If the “independent clause” (the other sentence) comes first, you do not need to put a comma, but the two sentences are still connected.
 - “I met my friend after I went to the movie.”
- “When,” “As,” and “While” are three very useful words for a process essay, but don’t get confused: they do not mean exactly the same thing:
 - “When” generally describes a short time action. “When” is often used with other words to explain an exact time:
 - When I got up this morning, I noticed I was late for school.
 - When you finish your homework, go eat dinner.
 - I will go to the movies when my friend goes home.
 - “While” is used to describe two actions happening at the same time:
 - While I was doing my homework, I was listening to music.
 - While you cooking the steak, cut the lettuce.
 - Buy some beans while you are at the store.
 - “As” is very similar to “while,” but usually refers to starting a second action after the first one has begun.
 - As you beat the egg, pour in the milk.
 - As you cook the steak, cut the lettuce.
 - Don’t cut your finger as you cut the lettuce.
 - Koreans often use “-ing” words to start sentences, when in fact, “when,” “as,” or “while” would be much more natural:
 - Beating the egg, pour in the milk. (strange).
 - Cooking the steak, cut the lettuce. (strange).
 - Getting up this morning, I noticed I was late for school. (strange).

Commands

As part of your process essay, you will have to give several commands for your readers. There are several ways to do this:

- Direct commands using the imperative:
 - Imperative removes the subject from the sentence (called the “understood ‘you’”). This is telling someone directly what to do.
 - Cut the lettuce.
 - Buy a new towel.
 - Don’t hurt yourself.
 - Do not put a subject on the imperative.
- Indirect commands using “should”:
 - Should basically means that “it’s a good idea if you do” something.
 - It does not mean that something is necessary or must be done.
 - Because of this, should is weaker. It can be used as a command, but it’s much weaker than other forms of commands.

- You should cut the lettuce while cooking the steak (this means that it's okay if you don't cut the lettuce, but that it's a good idea to do it as you cook the steak).
 - You should then study at home alone (again, this means it's okay if you don't do this but doing this is a good idea).
 - Do not get "should" confused with "have to," "need to," "must," or "had better." They do not mean the same thing.
 - The negative of "should" only expresses that "if you do something, it is not a good idea," but you can still do it if you want.
 - You should not cook the steak too long.
 - You should not skip school.
- Commands using "had better":
 - Be very careful when using this sort of command. It is basically only used to give an order or to make a threat. It will probably not be used in your process essay.
 - You had better do your homework (threat; if you don't do your homework, you will fail).
 - You had better be quiet (threat; if you don't be quiet, I will hurt you).
 - Generally, do not use this form unless you are giving a very strong order or are threatening someone.
- Commands using "need to," "have to," or "must":
 - These express a necessity: something that must be done.
 - You have to use three eggs because two is not enough and four is too many.
 - You need to prepare the lettuce as you cook the steak, because you will need the lettuce right after.
 - You must then take the ice out of the freezer.
 - The negative of "have to" and "need to" express that it is not necessary to do that thing, but if you do it, it's still okay:
 - You don't need to buy another bottle of milk.
 - You don't have to come to class next week.
 - The negative of "must" expresses that you cannot do something, and if you do it, that it is not okay:
 - You must not cook the steak too long (or it will burn).
 - You must not remove the ice cream from the freezer before you are ready to use it (or it will melt).
 - You must be careful not to spill the juice. (with "be careful")