

Essay writing

When you're writing an essay on a novel or film, you'll be given an essay topic or prompt. Start by underlining the key phrases in the essay topic. This is what you'll need to write about in your essay. If you need to clarify the meaning of keywords, consult a dictionary. Sometimes it can be useful to restate the essay topic in your own words.

With the essay topic in mind, it's time to start planning the essay. Planning is one of the most important parts of writing an essay. It's a good idea to re-read your text. As you go, make note of interesting scenes and quotations relevant to your essay topic. Reading the text closely means you'll have lots of examples to discuss in your essay.

The importance of planning can't be overstated. If you don't spend time reading your text, taking notes, thinking about the essay topic and giving your thoughts time to develop, you won't be able to write a detailed and interesting essay.

Once you've got your ideas together, it's time to start organising them. Rewrite your ideas on a fresh sheet of paper, organising related ideas under headings drawn directly from the essay topic.

Introduction

The introduction features your contention for the essay. In most cases, you will agree or disagree with a topic. Sometimes, it will be a bit of both. A very important convention of analytical essay writing is that you never use 'I'. The introduction is like a roadmap for the rest of the essay, you will list the main ideas that you're going to discuss in order. Your introduction should make clear reference to the keywords that you underlined in the essay topic. Using these will help you stick to the topic.

Body paragraphs

Each paragraph in the body of your essay develops different idea related to the topic. Use the acronym TEEL to remember how to structure your body paragraph:

Topic sentence. Start off with a topic sentence which explains how the idea you're about to discuss is related to the essay topic.

Expand/Explain. Explore and explain ideas related to the topic.

Evidence/Examples. Make sure you use examples and quotations from the novel to support your discussion.

Link. Another topic sentence linking back to the essay topic.

Conclusion

The conclusion of your essay will briefly recap the main ideas and provide a conclusion to your argument.

General Hints

- Don't use the word 'I'.
- Leave a line space between paragraphs.
- Do not use subheadings or illustrations in an essay.
- Do not retell the story
- If an idea is not relevant to the essay topic, then leave it out!
- Try to have at least three body paragraphs.

Brainstorming

Underline important words

“You root for your favourite. You cry. When they get killed. It's sick.” Do you agree with Gale's assessment of The Hunger Games?

Define important words

The word sick also means 'gruesome' and 'cruel'.

Rewrite the topic in your own words

Do you think that The Hunger Games is gruesome and cruel?

Contention

The Hunger Games is absolutely gruesome, cruel and 'sick'.

Brainstorm ideas relevant to the topic

There are many examples in the film where the viewer is made to feel that The Hunger Games is gruesome and cruel.

- **The Reaping.** The reaping is one example of how cruel The Hunger Games is. Innocent children are herded into a town square where their names are selected randomly to see who will participate in the brutal event. In this scene, the audience is strongly encouraged to feel sorry for characters like Primrose and Katniss.
- **Death on television.** In the film, another reason that The Hunger Games is considered sick is because it is televised live and the people of The Capitol get great enjoyment out of watching these children fight to the death. When Katniss is on the journey to The Capitol, she switches on the television briefly where Caesar Flickerman and Claudius Templesmith talk excitedly about the moment when a 'tribute becomes a victor'. Director Gary Ross shows a close up of a bloody brick. Like Katniss, the audience is strongly encouraged to think that The Hunger Games is gruesome and cruel.
- **The cruelty of the career tributes.** When Katniss enters the arena, the audience is encouraged to feel that the actions of the career tributes are gruesome and cruel. There are many examples of this, including: when the career tributes kill an unsuspecting tribute and Glimmer mocks the dead girl;
- **Rue's Death.** Unquestionably the most dramatic part of the film, Rue's death is one of the reasons why the audience considers The Hungers Games to be sick. Rue is a kindhearted girl who is tragically murdered when she is forced to participate in The Hunger Games.

Planning your essay

Once you've come up with some ideas, it can be really useful to organise your ideas in a plan like this.

Contention: That The Hunger Games is 'sick', cruel and gruesome.

Paragraph 1: The Reaping

Topic Sentence: At the beginning of the film, The Reaping is the first indication of how sick The Hunger Games actually is.

Example 1: It is cruel because the children are selected randomly to fight for the death.

Example 2: In this scene, we are encouraged to feel sorry for the children through the use of high angle shots and other techniques.

Paragraph 2: Death on television

Topic Sentence: The fact that it is broadcast on television is another example of how sick and cruel The Hunger Games is.

Example 1: Katniss watches the television on the train and sees the moment a 'tribute becomes victor'.

Example 2: As The Hunger Games begins, director Gary Ross cuts from shots of the anxious tributes to shots of people in the Capitol cheering with excitement. The audience of the film is clearly meant to feel that The Hunger Games is sick.

Paragraph 3: The career tributes

Topic sentence: Once The Hunger Games begin, the ruthless and cruel behaviour of the career tributes is another example of how 'sick' the whole affair is.

Example 1: The tributes kill their first victim, Glimmer mocks her.

Example 2: When the career tributes pursue Katniss, they treat it like a game.

Paragraph 4: Rue's death

Topic sentence: Perhaps the most powerful example of how cruel and sick The Hunger Games is when Rue is suddenly killed by one of the career tributes.

Example 1: Death of Rue.

Example 2: The audience is encouraged to feel sadness through the use of camera techniques, acting, editing and music.

Writing the introduction

Remember that your introduction should:

- Clearly state whether you agree or disagree with the topic.
- Avoid using the word 'I'.
- List the main points you will cover in the essay.
- Strongly relate to the essay topic.

Sample introduction

At the beginning of *The Hunger Games*, a film directed by Gary Ross, Gale Hawthorne (Liam Hemsworth) describes the television program in which pits children against each other in a fight to the death as 'sick'. There is no doubt that *The Hunger Games* is a particularly cruel and gruesome event, not a "pageant of honour". Throughout the film there are many instances where the audience is encouraged to feel that *The Hunger Games* is cruel and gruesome, right from the moment the tributes are selected in *The Reaping* to when they are forced to fight each other to the death.