

# High School Essay Intensive

Andrew Pudewa, Director  
Institute for Excellence in Writing

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“By writing quickly, we are not brought to write well,  
but by writing well, we are brought to write quickly.”

– *Institutes of Oratory, Book Ten*  
Quintilian, c. 80 A.D.

Version 2

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Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW®)  
8799 N. 387 Road  
Locust Grove, OK 74352  
800.856.5815  
info@IEW.com [IEW.com](http://IEW.com)

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## Initial Exercise

Assignment: (Time 20 minutes) Choose either of the following two typical timed argumentative essay prompts, and write an essay to the best of your ability.

1. Some high schools require students to pass two years of a foreign language in order to graduate. Some teachers and parents think that the requirement is needed since the world is becoming more interconnected all the time. Other people think that the rule is not necessary since many of the people in the world speak English as a second language, and their numbers are increasing. In your opinion, should high school students be required to pass two years of a foreign language in order to graduate?

In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about one of the points of view mentioned above, or you may give another point of view on this issue. Use specific examples and reasons for your position.

2. Education has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading. – *G.M. Tevelyan, English Social History*

Is it true that most people today do not know the difference between something that is worthwhile to read and something that is not? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your argument with reasoning and examples from your experience, reading, or observations.

## Part One: General Strategies for Essay Writing

1. What is an Essay?
2. What are some general types of essays?
  - expository -
  - descriptive -
  - argumentative -
  - persuasive -
  - analytical -
  - narrative -
  - personal -

3. The two most important planning components are ...

Common ways length is given to students:

To translate one to another ... the best planning length is \_\_\_\_\_.

4. What is a paragraph?

Types of paragraphs and their jobs:

Introductory

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Body (development)—multiple paragraphs

Concluding

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Possible Ways to Organize Body Paragraphs**

(from *A Writer's Guide to Powerful Paragraphs* by Victor Pellegrino)

Chronological	Descriptive	Definition	Spatial
Example	Analogy	Enumerative	Comparison
Process	Q & A	Dialogue	General to Specific
Cause & Effect	Opinion & Reason	Problem & Solution	Specific to General

Or ... the “S\_\_\_\_\_ army knife” of paragraph models ...

T -

R -

I -

A -

C -

## 5. Possible Essay Structures

Basic Essay	Expanded	Expanded Topics	Super-Essay
Introduction	Introduction		Super-Intro
Topic A	Topic A	Introduction	Intro Essay I
Topic B	Topic B	Topic A <sup>1</sup>	Topic A
Topic C	Topic C	Topic A <sup>2</sup>	Topic B
Conclusion	Topic D	Topic B	Topic C
	Topic E	Topic C <sup>1</sup>	Concl. Essay I
Short Essay	Conclusion	Topic C <sup>2</sup>	Intro Essay II
Introduction		Topic D <sup>1</sup>	Topic A
Topic A		Topic D <sup>2</sup>	Topic B
Topic B		Topic D <sup>3</sup>	Topic C
Conclusion		Conclusion	Concl. Essay II
			Super-Concl.

## 6. The Five Canons of Classical Rhetoric

Invention -

Arrangement -

Elocution -

(Memory) -

(Delivery) -