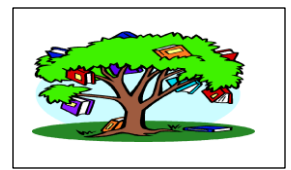


Toward Better Literacy: Reference Outlines



The Personal Essay

This type of essay, sometimes called a **personal statement** or **autobiographical sketch**, is your chance to let the reader know who you are and what you're all about. The organization may be more descriptive, using narration only to prove certain points, or it may be a true narrative, with description added in only where needed.

Purpose: to inform readers about yourself and possibly persuade them to accept you

Perspective: first-person (*I, we*)

Organization: chronological, in the order the events occurred, in order of importance

Common Structure:

1. **Introduction:**
 - a. Background information: name, location, etc.
 - b. Purpose of description or narrative
 - c. **Thesis:** point to be made about the highlighted events or personality traits
2. **Body (each paragraph):**
 - a. **Topic sentence:** one major event or personality trait
 - b. Supporting details or illustrative anecdote
 - c. Transition to the next event or personality trait
3. **Conclusion:**
 - a. Concise summary of the main point emphasized
 - b. Implications for the present situation
 - c. Predictions or plans for the future?

Notes:

- When using this type of essay as part of a job or college application, emphasize the aspects of your life and personality that are most relevant to the position you're seeking.
- If a resume is attached, avoid rehashing your education and work experience. If you present the same information over and over, your reader will get bored.
- Don't be afraid to brag on yourself. Just don't get carried away!