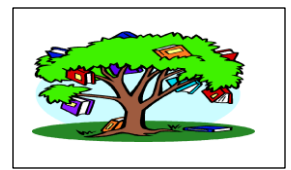


# Toward Better Literacy: Reference Outlines



## The Process Essay

This type of essay is used to explain a complex process in terms of simpler processes or steps. More often than not, this involves providing **step-by-step** instructions to the reader so that he or she has enough information to complete an unfamiliar task. In any case, clear organization and adequate detail are essential to this pattern.

**Purpose:** to inform readers about a particular process, often providing step-by-step instructions

**Perspective:** third-person (*he, she, it, one, they...*), second-person (*you*)

**Organization:** chronological, in the order the steps naturally or logically occur

### Typical Structure:

1. **Introduction:**
  - a. Attention-getter to get readers interested in the process?
  - b. Necessary background information
  - c. Overall description of the process
  - d. Potential benefits for the reader?
  - e. **Thesis:** point to be made about the process
2. **Body (each paragraph):**
  - a. **Topic sentence:** one major step to be explained
  - b. Ordered individual sub-steps with transitions
  - c. Supporting details
  - d. Transition to the next major step
3. **Conclusion:**
  - a. Concise summary of the main point emphasized
  - b. Summary of the process's major steps?
  - c. Overall significance of this analysis of the process
  - d. Advice on when to use the process?

### Notes:

- Identify your **audience** and keep them in mind throughout the essay. You don't want your readers to get bored by unnecessary details, but you certainly don't want them getting lost either.
- Communicate a clear **purpose**. How will the reader benefit from this essay?
- For how-to essays, addressing your reader directly is appropriate, but strictly informative essays should generally be kept in the third person.
- Use plenty of transition words such as *first*, *next*, and *finally*.