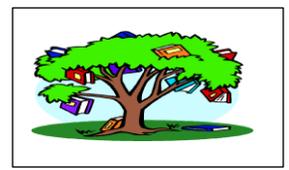


Toward Better Literacy: Reference Outlines



The Classification or Division Essay

Classification and division are two simple organizing techniques that can be very helpful in analyzing the world around us. When **classification** is used, this type of essay starts with a broad group of subjects to be put into descriptive categories. When **division** is used, it starts with a single complex subject to be analyzed and split up into distinct parts.

Purpose: to inform readers about or lead them to a particular view of a group or subject

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

Organization: in order of importance, with each point leading logically into the next

Typical Structure:

1. **Introduction:**
 - a. Introduction of the subjects to be categorized or single subject to be divided into parts
 - b. Background information showing the need for this classification or division
 - c. **Thesis:** broad description of this classification or division
2. **Body (each paragraph):**
 - a. **Topic sentence:** concise description of one category or part
 - b. Explanation with description and examples
 - c. Transition to the next category or part
3. **Conclusion:**
 - a. Concise summary of the main point emphasized
 - b. Overall significance of this analysis

Notes:

- For *classification*, the goal is to create a small set of non-overlapping categories into which each of the subjects can be sorted.
- Include enough examples to make sure your readers fully understand your categories.
- If your total set of subjects to be classified is something really large (like *all the people in the world*, for example), then it is fine if a few subjects don't fit neatly into one of your categories. Just try to minimize this.
- For *division*, be sure to indicate the function of each part and show how they all work together as a system.
- It is possible to describe multiple levels of classification or division, but this will make your essay much longer.