

Projects 3 & 4: Original Expository Essay--Three Holiday Traditions

Favorite Holiday Traditions

Overview of Original Expository Essay

This week we will learn about essay writing (using the Sentence-by-Sentence method). Expository essay writing explains to the reader (or “exposes” him to information)—but without all of the statistics and data that more research-based informative writing contains.

I. TOPIC OF ESSAY

You will be writing an **Expository Essay** about **three** favorite holiday traditions.

- A. Trees
- B. Lights
- C. Cookies
- D. Candy-making
- E. Wreaths
- F. Caroling
- G. Others

II. NUMBER OF PARAGRAPHS IN THE BODY OF YOUR ESSAY

All students will write **3 Paragraphs** for the Body (P’soB).

*P’soB--Paragraphs of the Body

III. SENTENCES PER PARAGRAPH

- A. **Basic** students will write **5-7 sentences** per paragraph.
- B. **Extension*** students will write **6-8 sentences** per paragraph.

Note: PoB stands for Paragraph of the Body (referring to a non-opening or non-closing paragraph). P’soB stands for Paragraphs of Body (more than one PoB).

Note: This Overview Box, which is provided at the beginning of each project, is here to give students (and teachers) an at-a-glance look at the entire composition assignment. Each step of each lesson is assigned and detailed throughout the week(s).

*Extensions are older or more advanced writing students who can handle more paragraphs and/or sentences.

IV. OPENING PARAGRAPH

Students **will not** write an **Opening Paragraph**. You will add an Opening Sentence or two at the beginning of your essay.

V. CLOSING PARAGRAPH

Students **will not** write a **Closing Paragraph**. You will add a closing sentence or two at the end of your essay.

VI. SOURCES

Students will not cite sources, but will need to use **sources to find information** about their chosen traditions if needed or desired.

VII. OPTIONAL: QUOTATIONS WITHIN YOUR ESSAY

Students are not assigned the addition of quotes but should consider adding quotes if they will help further develop your essay topic. Any added quotes will not have to be formally cited; you may just include the author of the quote. (Optional quote lessons are given in the project.)

VIII. WRITE ON/ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Students will learn the following additional skills.

- A. **Brainstorming**
- B. **Research**
- C. **Thesis Statement (Without Opening Paragraph)**
- D. **Thesis Statement “Reloaded” (Without Closing Paragraph)**
- E. **Quotation Punctuation and Capitalization**
- F. **Transitions**

Lesson A. Study Skills/Prewriting: Planning Three Paragraphs For the Body of Essay

<> A. Read the student sample, "Three Favorite Holiday Traditions Essay" (Box A-1), paying close attention to:

- (1) 3 P'soB
- (2) Three Aspects
- (3) Thesis Statement (without Opening Paragraph)
- (4) Thesis Statement Reloaded (without Closing Paragraph)
- (5) Transition from one paragraph/one reason to the next

Student Sample "Three Favorite Holiday Traditions Essay"

Three of my favorite holiday traditions are the Christmas tree, Christmas lights, and Christmas cookies. The Christmas tree, with its green boughs and colorful ornaments, is the centerpiece of all my family's holiday decorations. For a number of years, we would go the nearest Christmas tree farm in early December, and the workers there would cut down the tree we chose from their field. However, we currently use an artificial tree, due to the potential for insects to climb out of the real tree and into our house. Once we put together our artificial tree, we plug in all its strings of lights to ensure they are in working order, replacing the strands that are not functional. Next, we string beads and ribbon around the green tower, before opening the boxes of ornaments. Finally, we place a bow on top of the tree, and finally, we shut off the lights and admire our work. The Christmas tree is a wonderful part of the holidays for my family, but I love other traditions as well. **[Topic of PoB A: Christmas trees]**

Christmas lights are another integral part of my family's holiday traditions. Though you can purchase a variety of lighting colors, we use basic, white (non-LED) strings of lights. At first, we only wound these strands around the two columns on our front porch; however, we now also decorate some of our trees and shrubs in our front landscape. This is a time-consuming process, especially because our front columns are high enough that my dad and brother need a ladder to string lights on the top parts of them. Once the lights are strung, it is a glorious sight to come down the dark street, lined with dark windows, on a dark winter evening, and spy the front of our house, blazing with light. Christmas lights truly are gorgeous, but I love another holiday tradition even more. **[Topic of PoB B: Christmas lights]**

Cookies are welcome any time of the year, but for me, these treats are especially special and delicious at Christmas. My family used to bake all the cookies on one huge day of cooking; however, we now spread it out over a week or so of making one or two types of treat each day. One of my favorite cookies that we make is a dessert we call a cut-out cookie. To make it, we make sugar cookie dough, roll it out flat, and then use various shaped cutters to punch different shapes out of it. Once those bake, we top them with icing and sprinkles to complete this delicious and beautiful treat. We also make a number of other desserts including sweet, gooey fudge and caramel. Yes, the tree, the lights, and the cookies are three of my favorite holiday traditions, and together they help make Christmas a special time for me. **[Topic of PoB C: Cookies]**

Shading = Thesis Statement

Underline = Thesis Statement Reloaded

Box A

Lesson B. Research and Study Skills: Design Working Thesis Statement

<> **B-1.** Choose three of your favorite holiday traditions that you would like to write about and write their names on the lines provided.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

A Thesis Statement is a statement declaring what your entire paper is going to be about. This is similar to when you learned how to write the opening sentence of a paragraph—a sentence that tells what your entire paragraph is about.

However, in the case of a **Thesis Statement**, you will not just write what one paragraph is about—but **you will write what the entire essay is going to be about.**

For instance, if you were writing an opening sentence about one of your paragraphs about Christmas trees, you might say *The Christmas tree, with its green boughs and colorful ornaments, is the centerpiece of all my family's holiday decorations.*

However, you can not use that sentence for the Thesis Statement of your entire essay because it only tells what the one paragraph is about—the paragraph about the Christmas tree. **The Thesis Statement must tell what the entire essay is about.**

For example, *Three of my favorite holiday traditions are the Christmas tree, Christmas lights, and Christmas cookies.*

<> **B-2.** Now that you have thought about your favorites and possibly researched them, you are probably ready to write a “Working” Thesis Statement about them. Consider these tips when you design your Thesis Statement:

1. **Write one sentence that tells the reader what your essay is about.**
2. Be sure it **includes all aspects of your essay**
3. Do **not** say, *In this essay, you will learn about...* or *In this essay, I will tell you about...*
4. **Include all three** traditions in your Thesis Statement **in the same order that they will appear** in the body of your essay.

Sample "Working" Thesis Statement

Three of my favorite holiday traditions are the Christmas tree, Christmas lights, and Christmas cookies.

My "Working" Thesis Statement for this essay: _____

Note: If you do not feel prepared to write your "Working" Thesis Statement at this time, you may skip this assignment and come back to it after you complete B-3.

<> **B-3.** Research your traditions online and fill in the Directed Brainstorming box provided with notes that you do not already know about each tradition.

Directed Brainstorming Box

Three Holiday Traditions

Tradition 1 _____

Tradition 2 _____

Tradition 3 _____

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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Box for B-3

Lesson C. Optional--Write On: Quotations

Including a quote in your essay for this project is optional. You will want to learn even more about quotations in order to do this well.

↔ **C. Optional:** Study the quotation boxes provided below, following these steps:

- (1) **Read the quote at the top of each one, noticing the capitalization and punctuation of it.**
- (2) Read the tips, one at a time, and **look back in the quote to see how those tips apply to that quote.**
- (3) **Read the Details of the Quotation Rule**, also one at a time, and **follow the underlining, bold fonting, and shading in the sample that explains the exact punctuation** of that type of quote, speech tag placement, capitalization needed, etc.
- (4) Get help from your teacher to review these, if needed.
- (5) Go S-L-O-W-L-Y through each box. Circle, underline, highlight—whatever is needed to help cement the rules and examples given.

Rule # 1: Basic Quote With Speech Tag at the Beginning

A wise person once said, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

Tips:

1. Write the **speech tag** (showing who said the words you are quoting), **then a comma, then the quote.**
2. An ending period always goes **inside** the closing quotation mark.
3. This type of quote inclusion is best if you are just assigned the addition of a quote (no book citation in parentheses, etc).

Details of Quote Rule #1:

A wise person once said, "If at first you don't succeed, try again."

*said.--A comma should follow most speech tags. (Only use a colon if the speech tag is a complete sentence.)

*"**If**—Most of the time, a quote begins with a capital letter.

* again."—Be sure your ending period goes inside the closing quotation mark.

Rule # 2: Basic Quote With Speech Tag at the End

“If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again,” said a wise person.

Tips:

1. Write the quote first, beginning with a capital letter.
2. At the end of the quote, **do not put a period**, but rather **put a comma**. (You may only have one period per sentence. If your quotation-with-ending-speech-tag is a statement, you must put a comma at the end of the quote rather than a period since your sentence will end with a period.)
3. The **comma** at the end of the quotation **must be inside the closing quotation mark**. (Ending periods and commas always go inside the closing quotation mark.)
4. This type of quote inclusion is best if you are just assigned a quote (no parenthetical book citation in parentheses, etc.).
5. Put a period at the end of the entire sentence.

Details of Quote Rule # 2:

“If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again, said a wise person.”

***If**—Most of the time, a quote begins with a capital letter.

* again, —Be sure to end your quote with a comma when you have an ending speech tag (rather than a period) since your complete sentence will end in a period. Also be sure that your comma is inside the closing quotation mark.

* said a wise person. —A speech tag found at the end of the quote begins with a lower case letter (unless the first word of it is a proper noun). The entire sentence ends with a period since the sentence itself is a statement.

Rule # 3: Question Quote With Speech Tag at the Beginning

Charlie Brown asked, “Where have I gone wrong?”

Tips:

1. Write your speech tag just like you do in any quote with a beginning speech tag.
2. **Follow the speech tag with a comma**, just like always.
3. Begin the quote with a capital letter, just like always.
4. Put the **question mark inside the closing quotation mark since the question mark itself is part of the quote**. **Question marks** and **exclamation points** go inside the closing quotation mark **when they are part of the quoted material**.

Details of Quote Rule # 3:

Charlie Brown asked, “**Where** have I gone wrong?”

* **“Where** —Most of the time, a quote begins with a capital letter.

* wrong? —A question mark or exclamation point goes inside the closing quotation mark if it is part of the quote itself, such as a question or exclamatory sentence that is a quote.

* asked, — A comma should follow most beginning speech tags. (Only use a colon if the speech tag is a complete sentence.)

Rule # 4: Question Quote With Speech Tag at the End

“Where have I gone wrong?” asked Charlie Brown.

Tips:

1. Start your quote with a capital letter (assuming it is a complete sentence).
2. Put your **question mark inside your closing quotation mark if the question mark is part of the quote.** **Question marks and exclamation points** go inside the closing quotation mark **when they are part of the quoted material.**
3. **Begin the speech tag with a lower case letter** (*asked Charlie Brown*) unless your speech tag starts with a proper noun (Charlie Brown): “Where have I gone wrong?” **C**harlie Brown asked.
4. End the entire sentence (following the speech tag) with a period.

Details of Quote Rule # 4:

“**Where** have I gone **wrong?**” asked Charlie Brown.

*“**Where** —Most of the time, a quote begins with a capital letter.

* **wrong?** —A question mark or exclamation point goes inside the closing quotation mark if it is part of the quote itself, such as a question or exclamatory sentence that is a quote.

* Charlie Brown.—Place a period at the end of the entire sentence. This is the punctuation for the whole sentence.

Note: If speech tag at the end does not begin with a proper noun, do not capitalize the first word of it:

“Where have I gone wrong?” he asked. Or “Where have I gone wrong?” asked Charlie Brown. Or

“Where have I gone wrong?” Charlie Brown asked.

Rule # 5: Exclamatory Quote With Speech Tag at the Beginning

He exclaimed, “Watch out!”

Tips:

1. Write your speech tag just like you do in any quote with a beginning speech tag.
2. Follow the speech tag with a comma, just like always.
3. Begin the quote with a capital letter, just like always.
4. **Put the exclamation point inside the closing quotation mark since the exclamation point itself is part of the quote.** **Question marks and exclamation points** go inside the closing quotation mark **when they are part of the quoted material.**

Details of Quote Rule # 5:

He exclaimed, “**Watch out!**”

* “**Watch** —Most of the time, a quote begins with a capital letter.

* **out!** --A question mark or exclamation point goes inside the closing quotation mark if it is part of the quote itself, such as a question or exclamatory sentence.

* exclaimed. – A comma should follow most beginning speech tags. (Only use a colon if the speech tag is a complete sentence.)

Rule # 6: Exclamatory Quote With Speech Tag at the End

“Watch out!” he exclaimed.

Tips:

1. Write your quote beginning with a capital letter just like always.
2. **Put the exclamation point inside the closing quotation mark since the exclamation point itself is part of the quote. Question marks and exclamation points go inside the quotation mark when they are part of the quoted material.**
3. Begin the speech tag with a lower case letter (unless its first word is a proper noun).
4. Follow the entire sentence (after the speech tag) with a period.

Details of Quote Rule # 6:

“**Watch** out!” he exclaimed.

- * **“Watch** —Most of the time, a quote begins with a capital letter.
- * **out!”** --A question mark or exclamation point goes inside the closing quotation mark if it is part of the quote itself, such as a question or exclamatory sentence.
- * exclaimed. – A period should follow the entire sentence.

Lesson D. Study Skills and Prewriting: Outline Original Paragraphs

<> D. Outline each paragraph of your three favorite holiday traditions essay on the outlining lines provided, following these tips:

- (1) **Review the list of the three** traditions that you put in your Brainstorming Box earlier that you might want to include in your essay.
- (2) “Work” in your Brainstorming Box by doing the following:
 - a. **Review it** and **add to it** as you think of more ideas.
 - b. **Mark through** anything you do not want to include in your essay.
 - c. **Number** the ideas you have in the order that you think you would like to include them in your paragraph.
- (3) **Outline your essay one paragraph** at a time in a **Sentence-by-Sentence (S-by-S) manner**.
 - a. You may use complete sentences, statements, or key words for each sentence.
 - b. You may want to outline using words from your source and then write the material in your own words when you write your essay.
 - c. You **may or may not use all of the outlining lines** provided.
- (4) Somewhere in your first sentence or two, you need to **transition** into your paragraph--a sentence or two that does all of the following:
 - a. **Transitions from the previous paragraph into this one**
 - b. **Introduces the next tradition**
 - c. **"Links" that tradition with the thesis.** This is why the first two outlining lines for each paragraph have the word LINK Sentence provided--to remind you to include that LINK/transition.

Note: This is why the first two outlining lines for each paragraph have the words **LINK/Transition** provided--to remind you to include that LINK/Transition.

All--Paragraph A of Body

Topic of PoB-A--First Tradition: _____

LINK/Transition (+) _____

LINK/Transition (+) _____

Support Sentence 1 (SS-1) _____

SS-2 _____

SS-3 _____

SS-4 _____

SS-5 _____

SS-6 _____

SS-7 _____

SS-8 _____

SS-9 _____

SS-10 _____

All--Paragraph B of Body

Topic of PoB-B--**Second Tradition:** _____

LINK/Transition (+) _____

LINK/Transition (+) _____

Support Sentence 1 (SS-1) _____

SS-2 _____

SS-3 _____

SS-4 _____

SS-5 _____

SS-6 _____

SS-7 _____

SS-8 _____

SS-9 _____

SS-10 _____

All--Paragraph C of Body

Topic of PoB-C--**Third Tradition:** _____

LINK/Transition (+) _____

LINK/Transition (+) _____

Support Sentence 1 (SS-1) _____

SS-2 _____

SS-3 _____

SS-4 _____