



Exemplification/Illustration Essay

What is an Exemplification Essay?

Exemplification is a mode of writing that uses examples to show, explain, or prove a point.

Steps for Developing an Exemplification Essay:

1. Make a point.
2. Give detailed and specific examples to show, explain, or prove a point.
3. Give enough examples to get the point across.

Giving Examples:

This is a key step in writing an exemplification essay. Use a variety of specific, detailed examples that appeal to readers and help them understand your main point. Effective examples add vitality to your writing and make your essay stand out.

Types of Examples:

Essays often combine both brief and extended examples.

- **Brief.** These examples appear rather frequently within the essay, and they usually function as concrete examples of straightforward ideas.
- **Extended.** These examples contain more detail. Such detail is needed because extended examples function as concrete illustrations of ideas that are too complex to be made clear by a brief example.

Note: Whether brief or extended, the examples must be representative, meaning they must reflect the majority. For example, a writer may attempt to refute the hazards of smoking by citing the example of a man who smoked two packs of cigarettes a day until he was eighty-nine, without ever having had a health problem. However, this example is not valid, for it does not represent the fate of the majority of heavy, lifetime smokers. Thus, it is not representative.

Thesis Statement of an Exemplification Essay:

The thesis statement usually includes the topic and the main point the writer wants to make about it.

(topic) (main point)

Ex: Bus drivers in my city have no sense of direction.

How to Write an Effective Exemplification Essay:

1. **Find your main point.** The main point is the main idea you want to get across about your topic. To find a main point, review your ideas about your topic and look for the strongest message. An effective main point is interesting; can be shown, explained, or proven; and is limited to one idea.
2. **Use examples, whether extended, brief, or both.** Make sure the examples are representative and do support your main point. Sometimes one extended example is sufficient, but often, writers use a series of brief examples. Your exemplification essay is only as strong as its examples.
3. **Examine the examples.** Reread your examples to see if they are specific and detailed enough to get across the main point. Eliminate any examples that do not fit or are too vague. Your examples are only as strong as their details.

Remember:

Exemplification is a mode of writing that uses examples to show, explain, or prove a point. When writing an effective exemplification essay, remember to make a point; to give detailed and specific examples to show, explain, or prove a point; and to provide enough examples to get the point across.