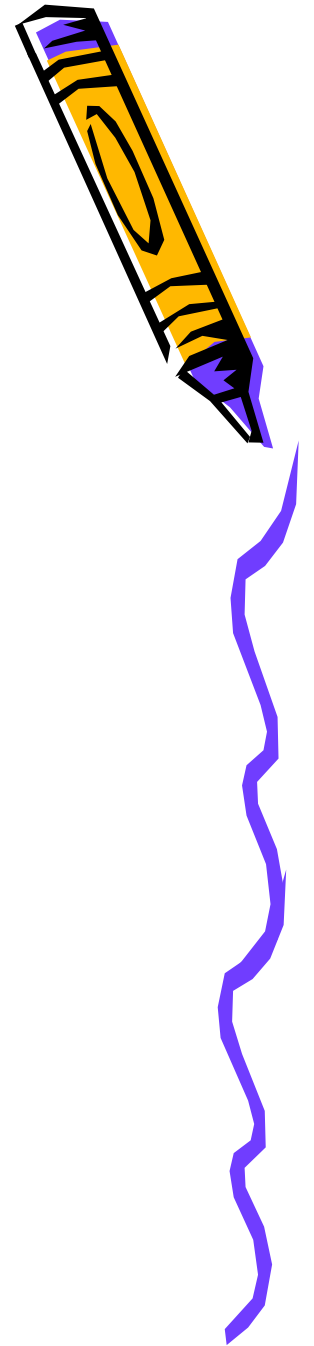
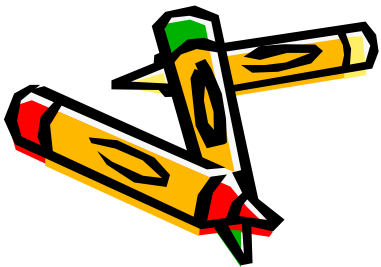
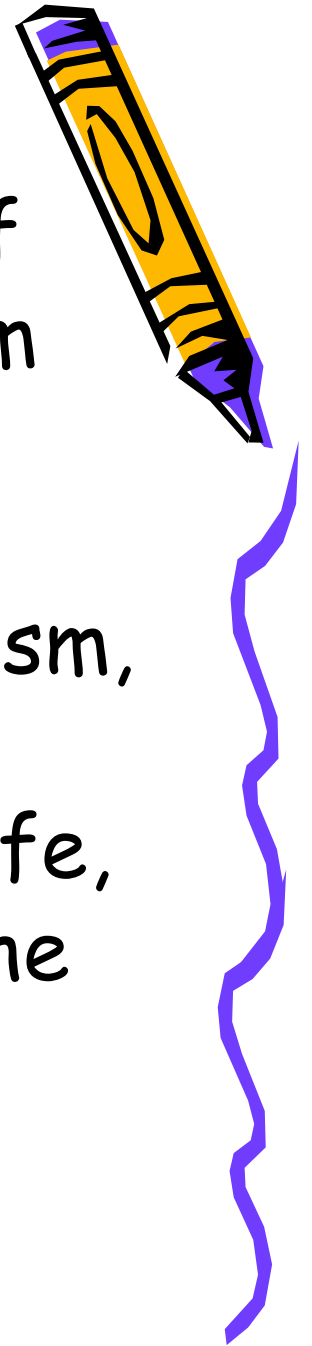


# Essays

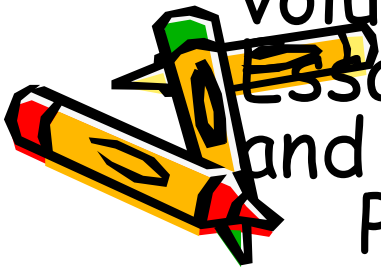


- An essay is usually a short piece of writing which is often written from an author's personal point of view. Essays can consist of a number of elements, including: literary criticism, political manifestos, learned arguments, observations of daily life, recollections, and reflections of the author.

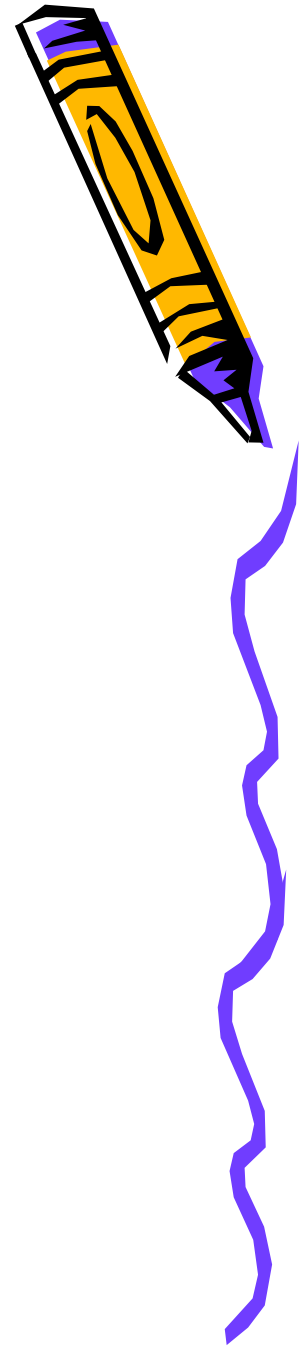




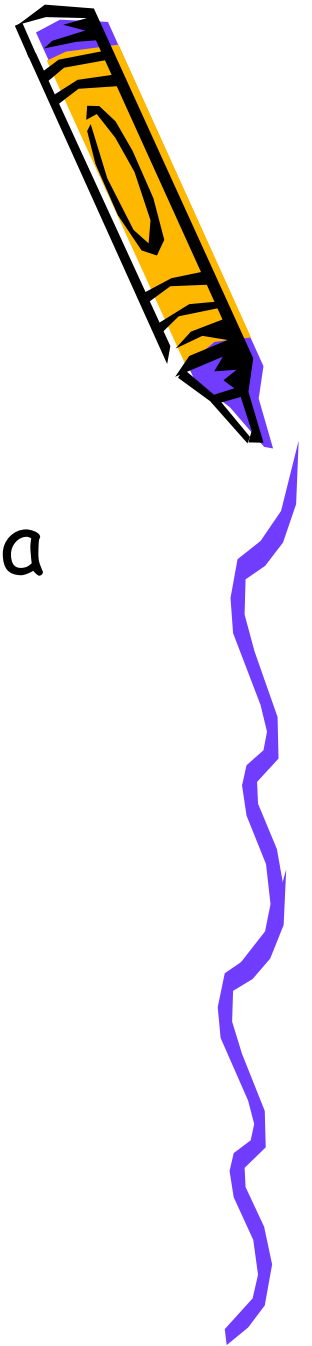
- The definition of an essay is vague, overlapping with those of an article and a short story.
- Almost all modern essays are written in prose, but works in verse have been dubbed essays (e.g. Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism* and *An Essay on Man*).
- While brevity usually defines an essay, voluminous works like John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and Thomas Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population* provide



# Definitions



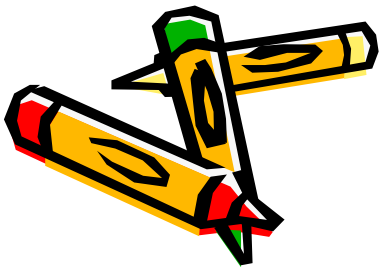
- An essay has been defined in a variety of ways. One definition is a "prose composition with a focused subject of discussion" or a "long, systematic discourse."



# As a Pedagogical Tool



- University students, like these students doing research at a university library, are often assigned essays as a way to get them to synthesize what they have read.

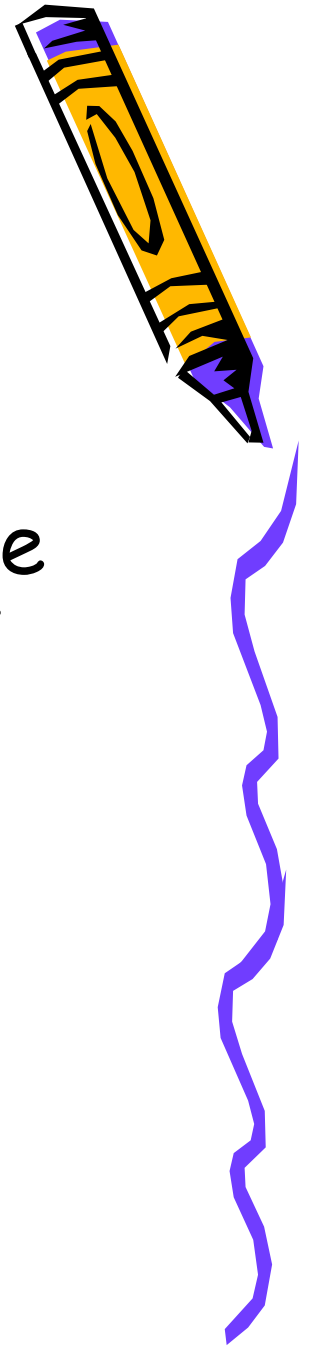


- Essays have become a major part of a formal education.
- Secondary students are taught structured essay formats to improve their writing skills, and essays are often used by universities in selecting applicants (see admissions essay).





- In both secondary and tertiary education, essays are used to judge the mastery and comprehension of material.
- Students are asked to explain, comment on, or assess a topic of study in the form of an essay.



- Academic essays, which may be called "papers", are usually more formal than literary ones.
- They may still allow the presentation of the writer's own views, but this is done in a logical and factual manner, with the use of the first person often discouraged.



- Longer academic essays (often with a word limit of between 2,000 and 5,000 words) are often more discursive.
- They sometimes begin with a short summary analysis of what has previously been written on a topic, which is often called a literature review.
- Longer essays may also contain an introductory page in which words and phrases from the title are tightly defined.





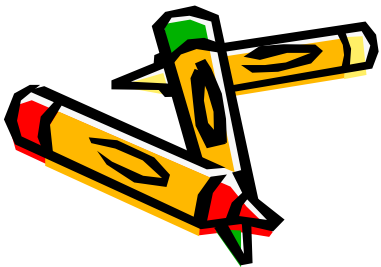
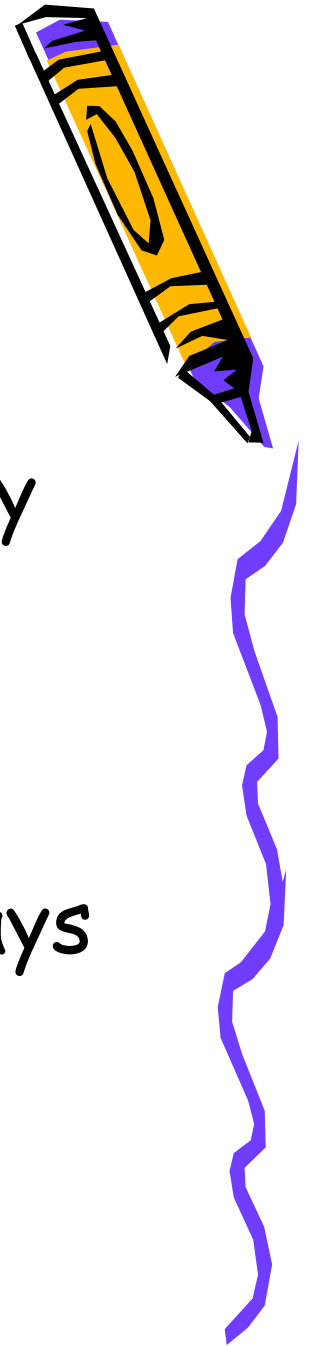
- Most academic institutions will require that all substantial facts, quotations, and other supporting material used in an essay be referenced in a bibliography or works cited page at the end of the text.
- This scholarly convention allows others (whether teachers or fellow scholars) to understand the basis of the facts and quotations used to support the essay's argument, and thereby help to evaluate to what extent the argument is supported by evidence, and to evaluate the quality of that evidence.



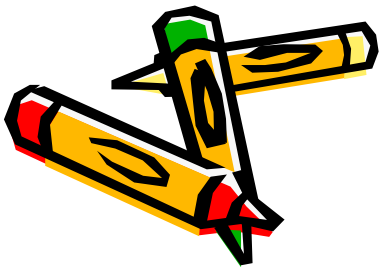
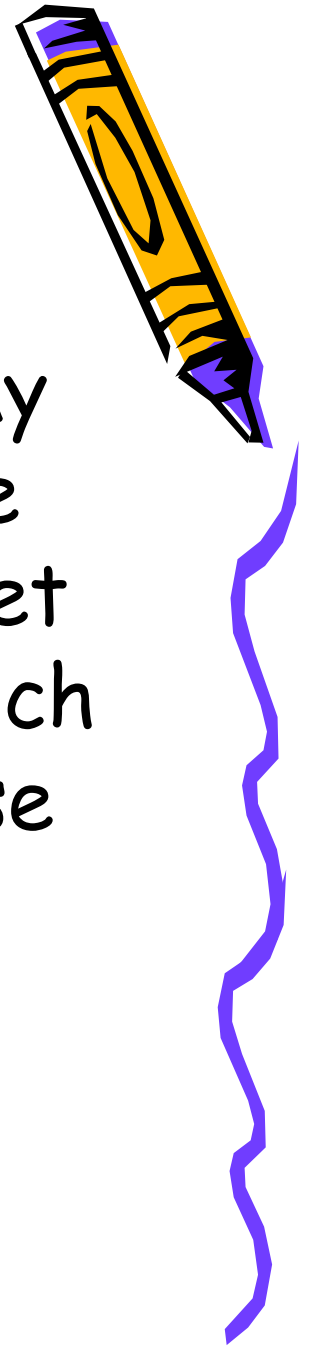
- The academic essay tests the student's ability to present their thoughts in an organized way and tests their intellectual capabilities.



- One of the challenges facing universities is that in some cases, students may submit essays which have been purchased from an essay mill (or "paper mill") as their own work.
- An "essay mill" is a ghostwriting service that sells pre-written essays to university and college students.



- Since plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty or academic fraud, universities and colleges may investigate papers suspected to be from an essay mill by using Internet plagiarism detection software, which compares essays against a database of known essay mill essays and by orally testing students on the contents of their papers.



# Forms and Styles

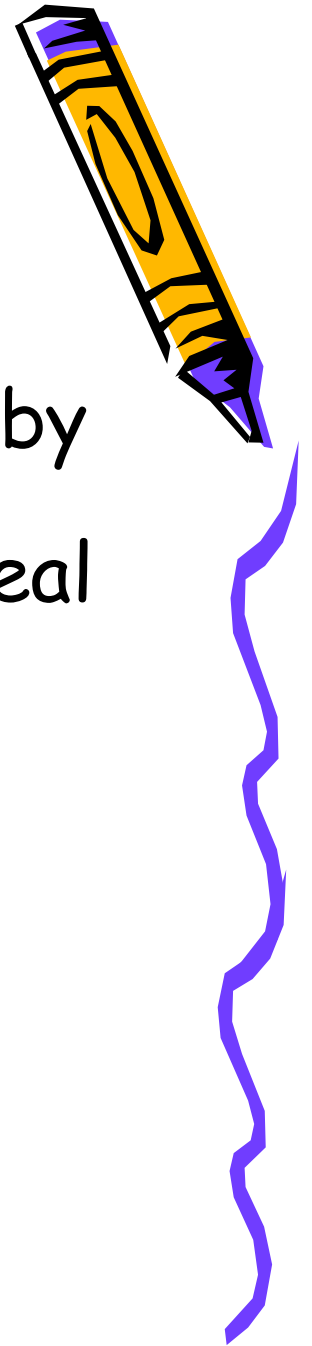




**Descriptive**



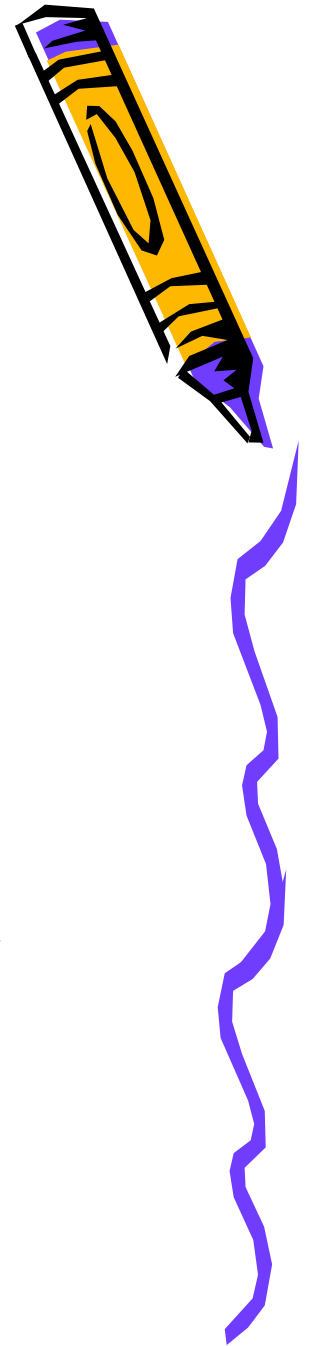
- Descriptive writing is characterized by sensory details, which appeal to the physical senses, and details that appeal to a reader's emotional, physical, or intellectual sensibilities.



- Determining the purpose, considering the audience, creating a dominant impression, using descriptive language, and organizing the description are the rhetorical choices to be considered when using a description.
- A description is usually arranged spatially but can also be chronological or emphatic.



- The focus of a description is the scene.
- Description uses tools such as denotative language, connotative language, figurative language, metaphor, and simile to arrive at a dominant impression.



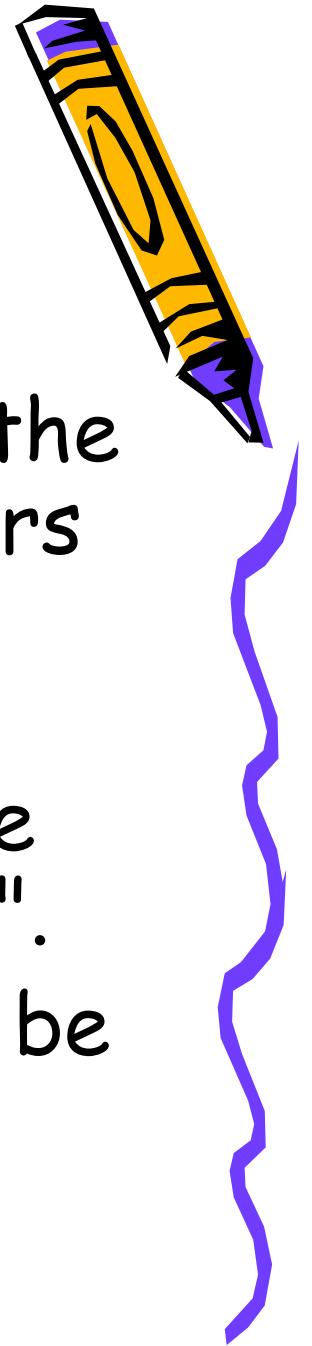
- One university essay guide states that "descriptive writing says what happened or what another author has discussed; it provides an account of the topic."



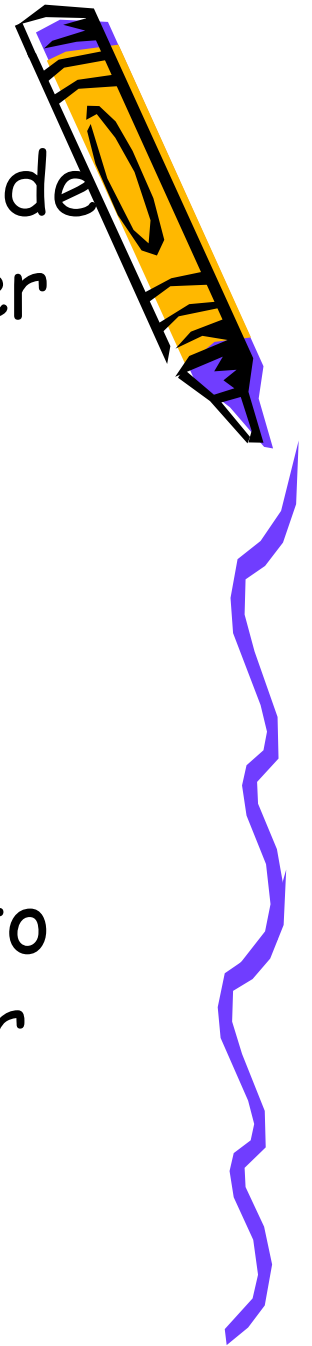
# Research vs. Discussion Papers



- One university essay guide makes the distinction between research papers and discussion papers.
- The guide states that a "research paper is intended to uncover a wide variety of sources on a given topic".
- As such, research papers "tend to be longer and more inclusive in their scope and with the amount of information they deal with."

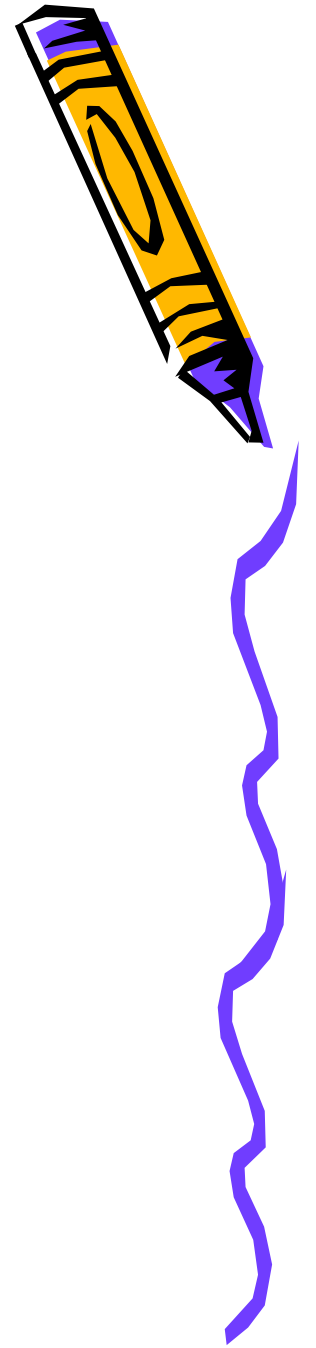


- While discussion papers "also include research, ...they tend to be shorter and more selective in their approach...and more analytical and critical".
- Whereas a research paper would typically quote "a wide variety of sources", a discussion paper aims to integrate the material in a broader fashion.

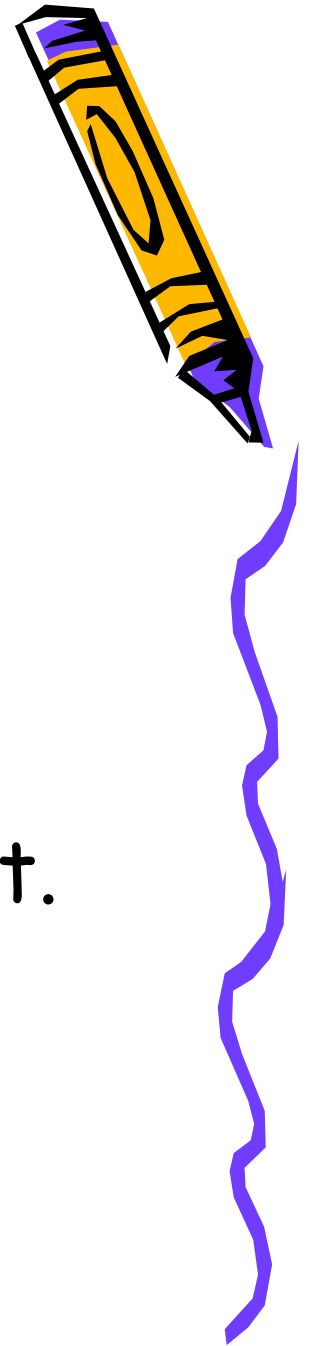




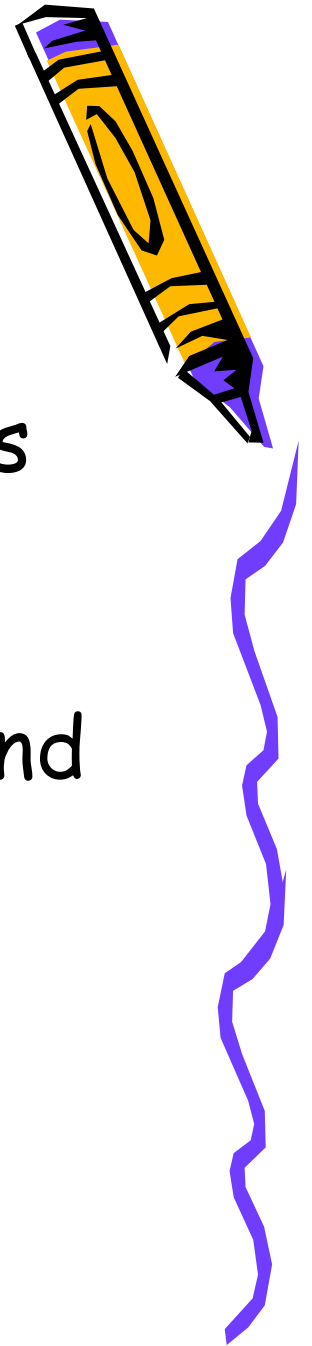
# Narrative



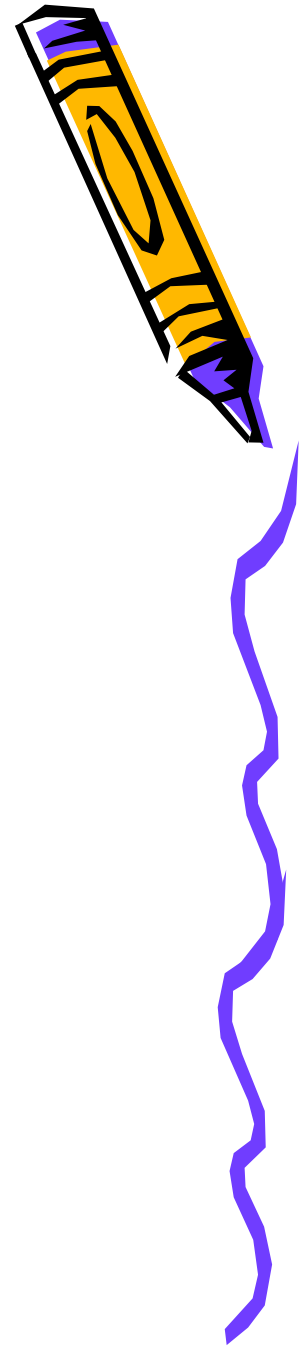
- A narrative uses tools such as flashbacks, flash-forwards, and transitions that often build to a climax.
- The focus of a narrative is the plot.



- When creating a narrative, authors must determine their purpose, consider their audience, establish their point of view, use dialogue, and organize the narrative.
- A narrative is usually arranged chronologically.



# Exemplification



- An exemplification essay is characterized by a generalization and relevant, representative, and believable examples including anecdotes.
- Writers need to consider their subject, determine their purpose, consider their audience, decide on specific examples, and arrange all the parts together when writing an exemplification essay.



# Compare and Contrast





- Compare and contrast essays are characterized by a basis for comparison, points of comparison, and analogies.
- It is grouped by object (chunking) or by point (sequential).
- Comparison highlights the similarities between two or more similar objects while contrasting highlights the differences between two or more objects.

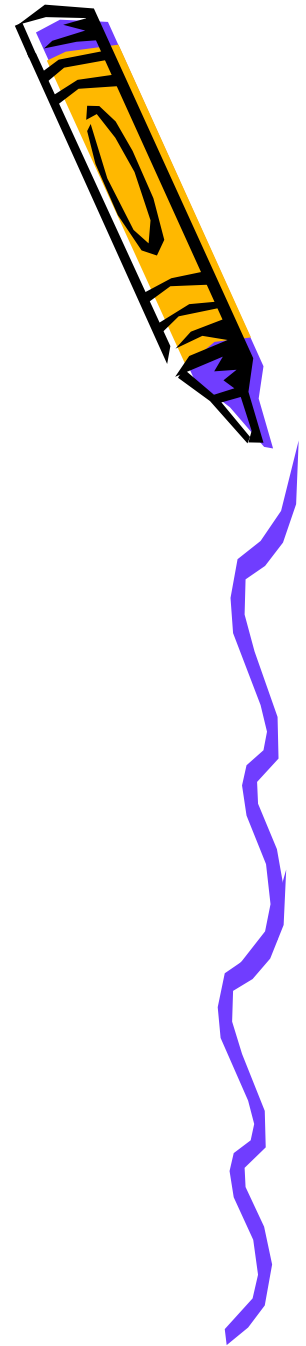


- When writing a compare/contrast essay, writers need to determine their purpose, consider their audience, consider the basis and points of comparison, consider their thesis statement, arrange and develop the comparison, and reach a conclusion.
- Compare and contrast is arranged emphatically.





# Cause and Effect

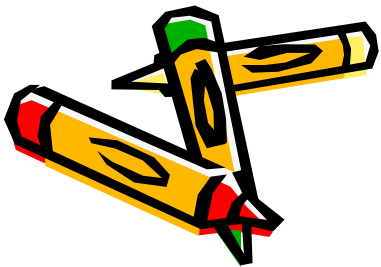




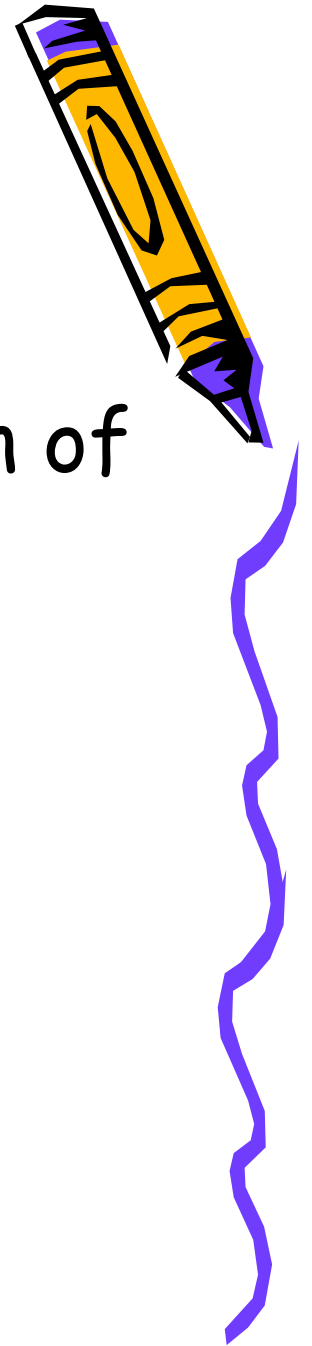
- The defining features of a "cause and effect" essay are causal chains, careful language, and chronological or emphatic order.
- A writer using this rhetorical method must consider the subject, determine the purpose, consider the audience, think critically about different causes or consequences, consider a thesis statement, arrange the parts, consider the language, and decide on



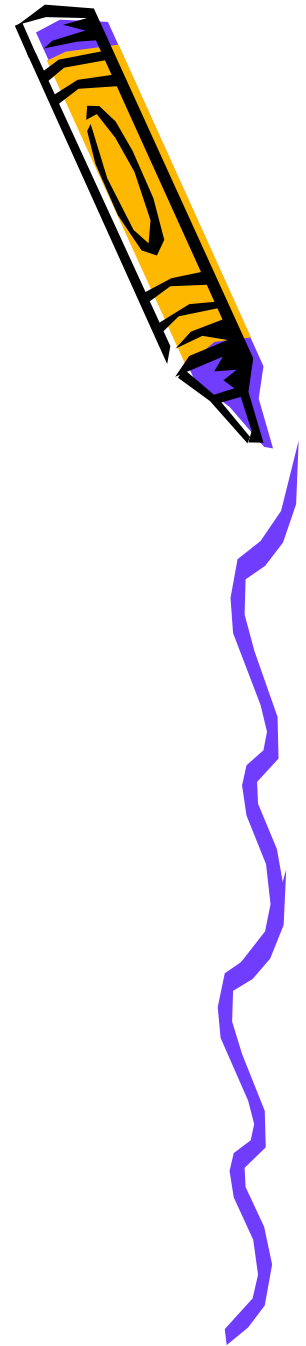
# Classification and Division



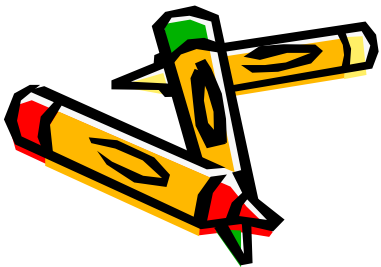
- Classification is the categorization of objects into a larger whole while division is the breaking of a larger whole into smaller parts.



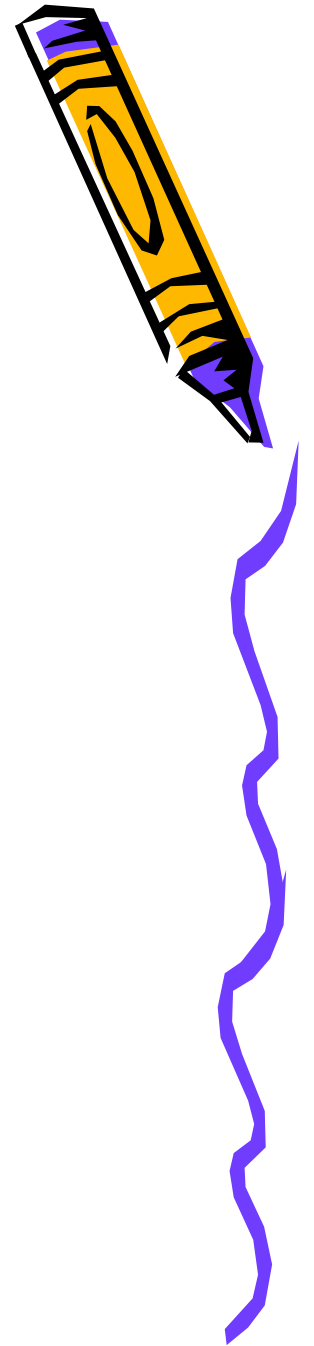
# Definition



- Definition essays explain a term's meaning. Some are written about concrete terms, such as trees, oceans, and dogs, while others talk about more abstract and hard-to-define terms, such as liberty, happiness, and virtue.



Dialectic



- In the dialectic form of essay, which is commonly used commonly in Philosophy makes a thesis and argument, then objects to their own argument (with a counterargument), but then counters the counterargument with a final and novel argument.

- This form benefits from being more open-minded while countering a possible flaw that some may present.





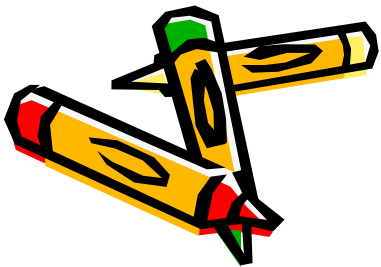
# Other Logical Structures



- The logical progression and organizational structure of an essay can take many forms.
- Understanding how the movement of thought is managed through an essay has a profound impact on its overall cogency and ability to impress.
- A number of alternative logical structures for essays have been visualized as diagrams, making them easy to implement or adapt in the construction of an argument



# Magazine or Newspaper





- Essays often appear in magazines, especially magazines with a more intellectual bent, such as The Atlantic and Harpers.
- Magazine and newspaper essays use many of the same types of essays as those described above in the section on academic essays (e.g., descriptive essays, narrative essays, etc.).



Some newspapers also print essays, often in the "Op-Ed" (Opinion and Editorial) section of the paper

