

Division and Classification Essays

A division and classification essay can be defined as breaking a large subject into smaller ones so a person can understand the subject more clearly.

The **division** part of the essay looks at how one big project or subject can be broken into several smaller parts.

Classification is taking the items and putting them into different categories.

The writer must decide how he/she wants to classify the items. What are the most important elements of the subject? How can these be classified?

One distinct difference between division essays and classification essays is that in **classification** essays, the members of each class must be distinct from the members of other classes (no item can be a member of more than one class).

Division essays identify the parts or subsystems of something in relation to the whole. Description or narration can be used to illustrate those parts or subsystems *after* the parts or subsystems have been defined and related to the whole. Topic sentences in division essay body paragraphs should clearly define the part as it functions in the whole.

In division essays, individual parts might be members of more than one subsystem; however, the *function* of the part will be examined as it relates to each individual subsystem. For instance, the human body can be divided into subsystems that include the circulatory, the respiratory, and the excretory. The blood is an element of each of those systems, but its function is interpreted differently depending on the subsystem being discussed.

Because division essays examine functionality, they frequently use process as a method. What distinguishes the division essay from the process essay is the focus on the interrelationship of processes both within subsystems and within the total system.

Sample Paragraph of a Classification and Analysis Essay

A teacher sets a paper clip, a pen, some markers, some old magazines, some construction paper, and two one dollar bills on top of her desk. How are these objects alike? Could these be classified together? The teacher plans on giving two of her students a reward if they can do something useful with all six of the items. She explains to the students she wants them to divide the objects into different categories. She challenges the students to divide these into one classification of how these objects could be used for one project or purpose. The students begin by dividing and classifying the objects. The first objects would be the pen and markers because a person writes or draw with these. Also, the construction paper can come into this classification because a student could write or draw on it. Pictures could be cut out of the old magazines. The paper clips could be used to place the magazine pictures on the construction paper. Paper clips could be used to hold the money on the construction

paper too. Seeing all the objects together might be overwhelming for elementary students but dividing the objects would make it easier. While each of the items is different they all could fit into the classification of art objects. What was the purpose of the teacher challenging the students with these objects? The goal of the teacher was to see how creative the students were. She wanted the students to use their higher thinking skills.

This is a brief sample paragraph of a classification and analysis essay. It begins by listing five different objects. The challenge was to find a way to classify these together. The next step was deciding why the teacher asked the students to do this. The teacher was challenging the students to use their higher thinking skills.

Instructions for developing a Division/Classification Essay

- 1
Decide on a topic. Think carefully about what you want to discuss in your classification and division essay. It should be a topic that you clearly understand so that it is easier for you to write.
- 2
Determine your purpose. Why do you want to organize this group of items? Having a clear purpose will help you develop your thesis statement and write the essay.
- 3
Consider the audience. It is very important to understand your audience so that you know how to explain the information to them.
- 4
Develop a thesis statement. The thesis should, in one sentence, clearly state your point in writing the essay and identify what the essay will be about. Remember that the thesis guides the rest of your essay.
- 5
Write an introduction that clearly tells the reader what to expect and states the thesis.
- 6
Decide on a way of grouping your information and set up categories. Make sure that your categories are consistent, exclusive (meaning that categories do not overlap) and complete.
- 7

Organize your information chronologically, logically or emphatically—from least important to most important, for example.

- 8

Use topic sentences in each body paragraph that relate directly to the thesis. Topic sentences also will help to introduce each category to the reader.

- 9

Make sure that the body fully supports the thesis. Do not include any information that does not directly support the thesis.

- 10

Include only details and examples that explain each category.

- 11

Use transitional words to move the essay along and to help guide your reader through it.

- 12

Write a conclusion that restates the thesis and basically sums up what the essay is about. In the conclusion, clarify what you want the reader to know or remember about your essay.