

Good Essay Guide

Have a strong thesis

Your thesis, or argument, drives your essay. I would like you to take a position. Use this essay to say what you think about Susan Sontag's text, and about photography in general. Make it interesting. You can draw on your own experiences of and ideas about photography. Choose an image that you are curious about as a case study.

You can use I

It's *your* argument

[The questions in the description of the assessment task are to guide your thinking. These questions do not need to be answered directly in the body of your essay]

Your thesis needs to be supported by evidence

Evidence can include quotes from the text, and examples of photographs. Analyze the text and images carefully. Consider the counter-argument.

Work on your structure and organization

Start with a clear introduction. The introduction should outline what you are going to argue in the essay and why. The conclusion and introduction book end your essay and they can be reflections of each other. Sometimes it is better to write the introduction after you have completed the essay.

Think about your essay as a short series of paragraphs that flow into each other. Each paragraph should be the exploration and expansion of one idea or theme. For example: your second paragraph might be a summary of Sontag's text: You need to tell your reader what aspect of Sontag's text you going to focus on and why?

Checking the essay

Proof-read, spell check, and have someone read your paper. Does your argument make sense to your peers? Read your sentences out loud to check that they make sense. Don't try and fit too many ideas into one sentence. One sentence = one thought. Keep it simple: succinct and sharp.

Images

You can include one or more images in your paper. Please add these on a final page as Figure 1, or Figure 2. Reference these images as (Figure 1) in the body of your text. Please include the artist or photographers name (if known), the title (this is normally italicized), the date, and the medium.

References

This is not a research essay, so I do not expect a lot of references. You should reference any additional research you have done. Make sure your reference style is consistent and clear.

When choosing a source to reference, think about how credible that source is. Is it an anonymous blog, or a published academic paper? Ask a librarian for help finding sources on your photographer.

Extra Tips

Don't take Sontag literally

Read carefully

Write: Sontag states, ... or Sontag argues, ..., when referring to the text

Don't use colloquial speech.

Avoid broad generalization, such as, "since the beginning of time" "People always...." "back in the day"

Avoid clichés

There's no need to write "in conclusion" – it should be self-evident from the structure of your essay.