

PerfecTIC

General description	
Title	Essay writing
Learning goal	<p>Teaching objectives: To understand and write a proper essay by learning to organize ideas and make a plan, as well as the possibility of integrating a speaking exercise into the lesson.</p> <p>Learning objectives: To define the various types of essays, and to understand the structure of an essay including topic sentences, the thesis statement, arguments, the introduction and the conclusion.</p>
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One hour for research on the Internet.• 30 minutes for classroom exchanges, where students explain to others what an essay is and what types of essays are available (this activity can also be used to grade an oral presentation).• One hour for each of the three writing workshops.• Writing an outline on a given topic in groups of three (providing arguments orally only).• Writing the arguments, the paragraphs, and other filler and transitional elements based on a given outline, again in groups of three (students are actively speaking at this point).• Writing the essay individually, choosing from a variety of topics, to be corrected and re-written.
Technological skill required	<p>By the teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggesting sites on essay writing, if students get confused, and answering questions or troubleshooting.• Using overheads to project some of the students' findings.• Knowledge of <i>Microsoft Word</i>. <p>By the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surfing the Internet and gathering information on essay writing to peer teach.• Use of an overhead projector, to print from the Internet on transparencies.• Knowledge of <i>Microsoft Word</i>.

Material needed

By the teacher:

- An explanation to the students that they will learn to write a proper essay by understanding the structure and the kinds of essays.
- In order to concretize this explanation, a list of questions or a lexicon would be useful.
Ex: what is a topic sentence? Or find the definition of...
- Although not absolutely necessary, a computer with an Internet connection and a data projector will be useful to discuss research results.

By the students:

- A discussion of what they think is an essay before looking for answers to given questions by surfing sites produced from a search using the key words *ESSAY WRITING*.
- A computer with an Internet connection.

Advantages of using ICT

For the teacher:

- Less explaining, less paper to print.

For the students:

- Finding out what a good essay requires before writing their own.
- Becoming resourceful by learning to use the Internet to collect information.
- Reinvesting previous learnings.
- Using *Microsoft Word* for correction and revision.

Step-by-step sequence

Preliminary pedagogical preparation

By the teacher:

- Explain to the students that they will learn to write a proper essay by defining the various types of essays and understanding the structure of an essay.
- A list of questions or a lexicon would be useful.
E.g.: What is a topic sentence? What is the definition of...?

By the students:

- Discussing their view of what an essay is, before looking for answers on Internet sites about *ESSAY WRITING*.

Preliminary technical preparation

For the teacher:

- Knowing how to use the computer and which sites are of interest.
- There are numerous sites available on essay writing, even some with charts and applications.

During the activity...

For the students:

- Knowing how to use the computer, an Internet browser and the *Microsoft Word* spellchecker.

Teacher	Students	Duration
Teacher prompts and inquires about essays	Students respond	15 minutes
Teacher hands out terms and questions		5 minutes
Teacher brings students to lab	Students surf the Internet, finding examples and definitions to questions	1 to 2 hours
Teacher asks students to share their findings	Students peer teach by explaining to others	30 minutes, or 1 to 2 hours if this activity is also being used to grade an oral presentation.
Teacher gives a topic to students	In groups of 3, students formulate a thesis statement and write an outline (topic sentences)	1 hour
Teacher collects and corrects papers, and hands them back to students	Students compare their results with those of other groups	30 minutes
Teacher hands out a prefabricated outline	Students write up paragraphs in groups working in or out of the lab, with or without <i>Microsoft Word</i> .	1 to 2 hours
Teacher collects papers and provides feedback		30 minutes

Note:

Students at the intermediate and advanced levels seem to lack the skills required in organizing an outline to write an essay. Also, the process is different in French, so students must understand that concepts are not the same in both languages. For example, the "Sujet Divisé" in French becomes the *Topic Sentence*, which appears in various paragraphs rather than all in the introduction.

It is important for students to build an essay outline on a given topic, in groups of three. This forces them to speak English and verbalize some of the problems. Students then gather arguments, and fill out a given outline, still in groups of three. This will allow them to write their own individual essay more easily.

**For more
information**

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