

## Writing an Informative Essay

The samples provided in this article follow APA Style 7th edition guidelines.

Informative essays engage readers with new, interesting, and often surprising facts and details about a subject. Informative essays are educational; readers expect to learn something new from them. In fact, much of the reading and writing done in college and the workplace is informative. From textbooks to reports to tutorials like this one, informative writing imparts important and useful information about a topic.

### Reasons to Write Informatively

Your purpose for writing and the audience for whom you are writing will impact the depth and breadth of information you provide, but all informative writing aims to present a subject without opinions or bias. Some common reasons to write informatively are to

- report findings that an audience would find interesting,
- present facts that an audience would find useful, and
- communicate information about a person, place, event, issue, or change that would improve an audience's understanding.

### Characteristics of Informative Essays

Informative essays present factual information and do not attempt to sway readers' opinions about it. Other types of academic and workplace writing do try to influence readers' opinions:

- **Expository essays** aim to expose a truth about an issue in order to influence how readers view the issue.
- **Persuasive essays** aim to influence readers' opinions, so they will adopt a particular position or take a certain course of action.

Expository and persuasive essays make "arguments." The only argument an informative essay makes is that something exists, did exist, is happening, or has happened, and the point of the essay is not to convince readers of this but to tell them about it.

- **Informative essays** seek to enlighten and educate readers, so they can make their own educated opinions and decisions about what to think and how to act.

### Strategies for Writing Informatively

Informative essays provide useful information such as facts, examples, and evidence from research in order to help readers understand a topic or see it more clearly. While informative writing does not aim to appeal emotionally to readers in order to change their opinions or behaviors, informative writing should still be engaging to read. Factual information is not necessarily dry or boring. Sometimes facts can be more alarming than fiction!

Writers use various strategies to engage and educate readers. Some strategies include

- introducing the topic with an alarming fact or arresting image;
- asserting what is true or so about the subject in a clear thesis statement;
- organizing the paragraphs logically by grouping related information;
- unifying each paragraph with a [topic sentence and controlling idea](#);
- developing cohesive paragraphs with transition sentences;
- using precise language and terminology appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience; and
- concluding with a final idea or example that captures the essay's purpose and leaves a lasting impression.

### Five Steps for Getting Started

1. Brainstorm and choose a topic.

- **Sample topic:** The opioid epidemic in the United States.
- The opioid epidemic or even opioid addiction would be considered too broad for a single essay, so the next steps aim to narrow this topic down.

2. Next, write a question about the topic that you would like to answer through research.

- **Sample question:** What major events caused the opioid crisis in the United States?
- This question aims to narrow the topic down to causes of the epidemic in the US.

3. Now go to the [Purdue Global Library](#) to get the answers to your research question.

As you begin reading and collecting sources, write down the themes that emerge as common answers. Later, in step four, use the most common answers (or the ones you are most interested in writing and discussing) to construct a thesis statement.

- **Sample question:** What major events caused the opioid crisis in the United States?
- **Sample answers:** aggressive marketing, loopholes in prescription drug provider programs, and economic downturn.

4. Next, provide purpose to your paper by creating a thesis statement (written in the 3rd person point-of-view).

The thesis attempts to frame your research question. The sample thesis below incorporates three of the more common answers for the research question from step two: What caused the opioid crisis in the United States?

- **Thesis Statement:** Aggressive marketing, loopholes in prescription drug provider programs, and economic downturn contributed to the current opioid crisis in the United States.
- **Writing Tip:** For additional help with thesis statements, please visit our [Writing a Thesis Statement](#) article. For help with writing in 3rd person, see our article on [Formal Vs. Informal Writing](#).

5. Now follow each numbered step below in the “Suggested Outline Format and Sample” model.

Sample answers have been provided for “Part I. Introduction” and “Part II. First Cause.” A complete sample outline can be seen [here](#). A complete sample informative essay can be seen [here](#).

## Suggested Outline Format and Sample

### I. Introduction

A. First provide a topic sentence that introduces the main topic: **Sample topic sentence:** There is a current prescription pain medication addiction and abuse epidemic possibly caused by an excessive over prescription of these medications.

B. Now provide a couple sentences with evidence to support the main topic: **Sample sentence one with evidence to support the main topic:** According to Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), in testimony before the 115th Congress, “In 2016, over 11 million Americans misused prescription opioids ... and 2.1 million had an opioid use disorder due to prescription opioids” (Federal Efforts to Combat the Opioid Crisis, 2017, p. 2).

C. **Sample sentence two with evidence to support the main topic:** Volkow indicated “more than 300,000 Americans have died of an opioid overdose” since 2013 (Federal Efforts to Combat the Opioid Crisis, 2017, p.2).

D. **Sample sentence three with evidence to support the main topic:** According to Perez-Pena (2017), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported more than 25,000 people in the United States died in 2015 from overdosing on opioids Fentanyl, Oxycodone, and Hydrocodone.

E. Toward the end of the introduction, include your thesis statement written in the [3rd-person point-of-view](#): **Sample thesis statement:** Potential solutions to the growing opioid epidemic may be illuminated by examining how opioid addiction is triggered through aggressive pharmaceutical marketing, how opioid addiction manifests among prescribed patients, and how economic downturns play a role in the increase of opioid addiction.

F. Write down the library sources you can use in this introductory paragraph to help support the main topic.

1. Federal Efforts to Combat the Opioid Crisis, 2017
2. Perez-Pena, 2017

- **Writing Tip:** For more help writing an introduction, please refer to this article on [introductions and conclusions](#).

## II. FIRST CAUSE

A. First provide a topic sentence that introduces the first cause of the opioid epidemic: **Sample topic sentence that introduces the first cause:** One issue that helped contribute to the opioid epidemic is aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical manufacturers.

B. Now provide sentences with evidence to support the first cause: **Sample sentence one with evidence that supports the first cause:** Perez-Pena (2017) concluded that while the healthcare industry was attempting to effectively and efficiently treat patients with chronic pain, pharmaceutical companies were providing funding to prominent doctors, medical societies, and patient advocacy groups in order to win support for a particular drug's adoption and usage.

C. **Sample sentence two with evidence to support the first cause:** In fact, pharmaceutical companies continue to spend millions on promotional activities and materials that deny or trivialize any risks of opioid use while at the same time overstating each drug's benefit (Perez-Pena, 2017).

D. Next, add more information or provide concluding or transitional sentences that foreshadows the upcoming second cause: **Sample concluding and transitional sentence that foreshadow the second cause:** Although aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical companies played a large role in opioid addiction, patients are to blame too, as many take advantage of holes in the healthcare provider system in order to remedy their addiction.

E. Write down the library sources you can use in this body paragraph to help support the first cause:

1. Federal Efforts to Combat the Opioid Crisis, 2017
2. Perez-Pena, 2017

- **Writing Tip:** For more assistance working with sources, please visit the Writing Center's [Using Sources](#) page here.

## III. SECOND CAUSE

A. First provide a topic sentence that introduces the second cause.

B. Now provide sentences with evidence to support the second cause.

C. Next, add more information or provide concluding or transitional sentences that foreshadows the upcoming third cause.

D. Write down the library sources you can use in this body paragraph to help support the second cause:

1.

- **Writing Tip:** Listen to [Writing Powerful Sentences](#) for information and features of effective writing.

## IV. THIRD CAUSE

A. First provide a topic sentence that introduces the third cause.

B. Now provide sentences with evidence to support the third cause.

C. Next, add more information or provide a concluding sentence or two.

D. Write down the library sources you can use in this body paragraph to help support the third cause:

1.

V. Conclusion: Summarize key points and evidence discussed.