



OPINION ESSAYS

Opinion essays are **discursive essays** in which you present your **personal opinion** on a particular topic. Your opinion must be stated clearly and supported by justifications. You should also include the opposing viewpoint in a separate paragraph.

Opinion essays are **formal** in style. Therefore, you should avoid using colloquial expressions, short forms or personal examples.

STRUCTURE OF AN OPINION ESSAY:

a) Introduction: in which you state the topic and your opinion clearly.

b) a main body which consists of two or more paragraphs. Each paragraph should present a separate viewpoint supported by reasons / examples. Another paragraph giving the opposing viewpoint and reasons should be included

c) a conclusion in which you restate your opinion using different words.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Decide whether you agree or disagree with the subject of the topic and make a list of your points and reasons.
- Write well-developed paragraphs. Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence which summarises what the paragraph is about.
- Linking words should be used throughout your essay.
- Use the techniques of a *For and Against* essay to begin and end your composition.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

To express opinion: I believe, In my opinion, In my view, I strongly believe, The way I see it, It seems to me (that)

To list points: in the first place, first of all, to start with, secondly, thirdly, finally, last but not least

To add more points to the same topic: what is more, furthermore, also, in addition to this/that, besides, apart from this/that, not to mention the fact that

To introduce contrasting viewpoints: It is argued that, People argue that, Opponents of this view say, There are people who oppose, Contrary to what most people believe, As opposed to the above ideas

To introduce examples: for example, for instance, especially, such as, in particular

To conclude: To sum up, All in all, All things considered, In conclusion, On the whole, Taking everything into account, As was previously stated

BEGINNING AND ENDING OPINION ESSAYS

First paragraph: state the topic and your opinion clearly. Techniques:

- Make reference to an unusual scene/situation etc. idea/.
- Address the reader directly
- Ask a rhetorical question.
- Start with a quotation

Last paragraph: restate your opinion, using different words. Techniques:

- Finish with a quotation.
- Ask a rhetorical question.
- Give the reader something to consider.



OPINION ESSAY – MODEL

Read the main body of the essay below on the topic:

“State benefits should be available to all.” Do you agree?

A. Read the beginnings and endings and say which of the techniques has been used in each one.

B. List the viewpoints presented and the justifications or examples given for each.

BEGINNINGS

1. A man wakes up and sees well-shoed feet rushing by within inches of his face. His filthy sleeping bag is damp, and the sodden cardboard box which shelters him is about to collapse. Yet, he cannot afford a real home and state benefits and are not available to him. This situation is not uncommon although, in my opinion, such unfortunate people should all be eligible for financial aid.

2. Have you ever wondered what it must be like to wake up on a cold pavement, knowing that you will have to spend the day wandering from place to place, penniless, and hungry? For thousands of people in the western world this is an every day experience although, in my opinion, it does not have to be that way if the state administers benefits properly and fairly.

3. George Bernard Shaw once wrote, "The greatest of evils and the worst of crimes is poverty." The question is why the homeless, the disabled and the elderly should be treated like criminals by the state rather than be given the help and services they rightfully deserve. I believe that all people in need should be given help and support by the state.

In the first place, I think, it is wrong to deny state benefits to any person in need. **It seems to me** totally unfair that a homeless person should be denied state benefits simply because he or she has no fixed address. **In effect,** the homeless person is being punished for being homeless, **whereas** state benefits would allow that person to find and maintain a home.

In addition, it is not only the homeless who suffer from lack of state aid but the handicapped are also neglected. **Although** all disabled people are entitled to state benefits, many are unaware of the range and variety of benefits they could be receiving in order to improve the quality of their lives. **This is a result of** the complexity of the state system and the lack of clear information about benefits. **It appears that** these people are suffering for the simple reason that the state does not care enough to make information freely available to those who are clearly in need of financial help.

Furthermore, the elderly are another sector of society who suffer both from lack of information and lack of concern. It is often the case that medical benefits are denied simply because a person is not visibly or dramatically ill, **whereas** in fact this person is in need of additional benefits **in order to** maintain a reasonable level of health. Such people **obviously** deserve to receive all the benefits they are entitled to.

There are those who argue, on the other hand, that many people receive state aid although they do not deserve it. **It is true that there** is such a problem. Certainly people take advantage of the system by registering for benefits in more than one country, or claim to have dependents who do not even exist. **It is my belief that** it is the responsibility of the state to impose tighter controls so that only those who are truly in need of benefits receive them.

ENDINGS

1. While it cannot be denied that state benefits are sometimes wasted on those who do not deserve them, **it is my firm belief that**, with proper controls, all those who are truly in need should receive financial aid from the state. **I believe** that the homeless, the disabled and the elderly should all be given a chance to lead productive and healthy lives.

2. **All in all, I believe** that all deserving people should receive state benefits so that they have the chance to lead productive and healthy lives. If you suddenly found yourself out of work and homeless, wouldn't you expect the state to help you get back on your feet again?

3. **To sum up**, it would seem that benefits should be available to all who deserve them, and that clear information should be made available to all who may be in need of help. It is the responsibility of the state to give all its citizens the chance to lead productive and healthy lives.

Example from: [Successful Writing Students Book Proficiency](#)

