Notes on Essay Writing

1. Determine what type of essay you are setting out to write. Some types are:
   1. Definition essay
   2. Problem-Solving
   3. Process (describing a process. For example, a historical process or a process about how something is made)
   4. Narrative
   5. Comparative
   6. Descriptive
   7. Explanatory
2. Determine the purpose of the essay. This stage is linked to the first. Often the type and purpose of the essay must be properly aligned.
3. Define the goals and objectives of the essay. What do you want to achieve in writing the essay and why? Revisit these goals frequently as you write your essay and certainly towards the end as of the essay in your summary ask yourself whether you have in fact achieved these goals.
4. Determine the nature of your argument: Again, this must be closely linked to the first three stages.
   1. analytic
   2. descriptive
   3. explanatory, etc.
5. Define and determine the thesis of the essay. The thesis is a short statement about the argument of the essay. It must be clearly aligned with the purpose of the essay.
6. Brainstorm and outline the stages of the essay. At this point you should also be thinking about your method, your approach i.e. how you are going to make the argument. This means stating the various moves you will make in advancing the argument and why you will make these specific moves. This is very important. Throughout your essay be attentive to the moves you are making and justify them. This will help you avoid making unjustified assertions and claims.
7. Your outline of the essay must include creating the structure of the essay by dividing it into at least six major areas: Title, Introduction, Body, Summary, Conclusion, and Bibliography.
8. When writing pay attention to the following:
   1. grammar
   2. punctuation
   3. spelling
   4. the structure and order of your paragraphs
   5. Clarity of expression, fluidity, well-edited prose
   6. Coherence of both argument and of ideas
   7. Footnotes/Endnotes (choose a system or style and use it consistently. Avoid mixing systems)
   8. Pagination

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