

MASTER'S ESSAY BASIC GUIDELINES:

The master's essay is not a pros and cons essay. Make sure you take a clear standpoint – FOR OR AGAINST, support it with relevant arguments, and follow the structure below.

I. Introduction

- A. Very general statement about the world
- B. Specify the topic
- C. *Optional: show the other side*
- D. Give your opinion

II. Body

A. State your first reason

- 1. Explain the reason if needed
- 2. Give a concrete example or detail
- 3. *Optional: Second example or detail*
- 4. Explain why the example supports your opinion

B. State your second reason

- 1. Explain the reason if needed
- 2. Give a concrete example or detail
- 3. *Optional: second example or detail*
- 4. Explain why the example supports your opinion

III. Conclusion

- A. Restate the main idea
- B. *Optional: Reference reasons or opposite opinion*
- C. Real-world result of your argument

Tips for success

1. Answer the question

Your grammar may be perfect and your ideas may be great. Even so, if you don't answer the question, none of that matters. If the question asks for your opinion, be sure to write about what *you* think--don't write about what other people think. On the other hand, if the question is about what other people think or do, don't write about yourself.

2. Use short and simple, but complex sentences

Good writers can express complex ideas in a very simple way. If you are able to do this, you will demonstrate strong writing skills. More importantly, short and simple sentences mean fewer grammatical mistakes.

3. Give your essays a beginning, middle, and end

Learn the essay structure. Your essay should have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. This structure helps organize your thoughts and makes it easier for readers to understand.

4. Have a thesis statement

The thesis statement is the most important sentence in the essay. It is last sentence in the first paragraph (the introduction), and it tells the reader exactly what your opinion is. Not writing a thesis statement is one of the biggest mistakes you can make.

5. Use topic sentences

A topic sentence is the first sentence of each paragraph in the essay's body. It gives the reader two things: 1) a summary of what will be in the paragraph, and 2) one reason that supports your thesis statement.

6. Learn the conditionals: *first, second, and third*

Learning the conditionals may actually help you more than studying the tenses. Conditionals are especially useful when expressing opinions and giving reasons,

Each conditional, however, has a slightly different meaning. This depends on reality, possibility, and time. Learn how to use the conditionals, and practice them often.

7. Never begin a sentence with a conjunction

The words *and*, *but*, and *because* are all conjunctions. In English, we only use conjunctions to connect sentences--we almost never begin a sentence with one.

8. Learn how to use the comma (,) in English

Using the comma correctly will bring your writing to life. The good news is that many languages use the comma. The bad news is that the rules for using the comma are often different in each language! Learn the rules for using them in English – it will make your writing much easier to understand.

9. Use the active and passive voice sensibly

There are two "voices" in English: *active* and *passive*. Here they are:

ACTIVE: Cats eat birds.

PASSIVE: Birds are eaten by cats.

10. Use linking expressions and phrases

Transitional words and phrases make your writing easier to understand. They connect ideas and present them to the reader in a logical order. Here are some examples: *First of all...*, *In addition...*, *More importantly...*, *In closing...*, *In conclusion...*