



Worksheet: Essay writing

Taking your words for a walk with Susheila Nasta

Essay writing uses lots of different skills. You can think of yourself as a writer and an editor, analysing your essay to find how to keep a reader interested. An essay isn't a thing, it's an action – it is active, not passive. You can use it as a way to convey an idea and make something happen in the world.

Get writing:

Write a paragraph describing a daily journey you know well.

Before you start writing, list 12 evocative words that come to mind linked to the journey, then use these words to write an opening to your piece. **(11:14)**

Remember: You can use techniques to help make your piece interesting and powerful:

- A good opening sets the tone, giving a hook that makes someone reading carry on.
- Establishing a voice for the piece, knowing who is speaking and being direct helps your reader to remember your voice – don't hide it!
- Make the scene, setting or context seem real - how do you bring it alive?

Your paragraph should do three things. It should:

- **Hook the reader** - why should the reader stay with you for paragraph two?
- **Decide who is speaking** - what voice are you writing in?
- **Begin creating a scene that will develop** - think about what else can happen to keep a reader interested for the rest of your essay.

Now that you have your first paragraph, keep writing! Take us on your journey.

As you're writing, think about:

- What is distinctive about your piece?
- What ways does it give an original perspective on an issue, idea or experience?
- What makes the thing you're writing about feel real to the reader? What are the details?
- What needs to happen to keep you - as both reader and writer - interested?

Bonus challenge: (12:17)

Choose a subject of your own that you're passionate about. This could be something that impacts your personal existence, or something that impacts your local community.

What you write about could be something that involves big global issues, but you have to describe it in relation to yourself - how does it impact you, your family or your friends? Be specific

about the issue.

Use the three techniques you learnt in writing your opening paragraph about a journey.

Your piece should:

- Have a **good opening** to set the tone, giving a hook that makes someone carry on reading.
- **Establish a voice** for the piece – don't forget that knowing who is speaking and being direct helps your reader to remember your voice – don't hide it!
- Create a scene, setting or context that seems real – think about how you bring it alive.

About Susheila:

Susheila Nasta is a British academic, editor and literary activist. She is the Founding Editor of Wasafari, the Magazine of International Contemporary Writing which she launched in 1984. Susheila has published many books, especially on issues affecting the Caribbean and South Asian diaspora and on Black Britain. She is currently Professor of Modern and Contemporary Literatures at Queen Mary College, University of London.

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