

ESSAY 3 — INFORMATIVE ESSAY

Write a 500–800 word (2–3 page) essay on a topic of your choice that presents new and surprising information to your reader. Your essay should include some research and should employ a Surprising Reversal structure.

Surprising Reversal

A *Surprising Reversal* essay first presents a common answer to a question, then presents the writer’s new, surprising view on that question.

Before you start drafting your essay, make sure you can answer each of the following questions:

1. What question does your essay address?
2. What is the common, expected, or popular answer to this question held by my audience?
3. What examples and details support your audience’s view?
4. What is your own surprising view?
5. What examples and details support this view? Why do you hold this view? Why should a reader believe you?

Thesis

Rather than appearing at the end of the first paragraph, the thesis in a Surprising Reversal essay appears after the writer has summarized the common view. A Surprising Reversal thesis will generally take this form: “Although many people believe X (*common view*), I am going to show you Y (*new, surprising view*).”

Here are some examples of Surprising-Reversal thesis statements:

- You may think a tarantula bite is a death sentence, but in fact a tarantula bite can’t harm you.
- Although most people believe Native Americans lived in harmony with nature, many Native American tribes altered their environment aggressively, burning down forests to make farming easier and hunting some animals to the edge of extinction.
- To most audiences, *The Bride of Frankenstein* is a monster movie about science run amok, yet many in the gay community interpret the film as an allegory about homosexual identity.

Structure

Your first paragraph should arouse the reader’s curiosity by posing an interesting question. The next paragraph should first summarize a common or expected answer to the question, then present your thesis — your surprising answer to the question. Then, in two or three paragraphs, provide new, surprising information that reverses or modifies the common view. (Imagine readers who hold a mistaken or overly narrow view of your topic; your purpose is to give them a new, surprising view.) In

your final paragraph, summarize your main points and clearly present the significance of your new perspective. Each paragraph should have a clear topic sentence.

STRUCTURE OF AN INFORMATIVE ESSAY

Introduction

(1 paragraph)

- Engages a reader's interest in the writer's question.
 - Provides background and context.
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Common View

(1 paragraph)

- Presents the common or popular answer to the writer's question.
 - Provides delayed **thesis** — the writer's surprising answer to the question.
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Surprising View

(2–3 paragraphs)

- Develops and supports the thesis with information from personal experience and research.
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Conclusion

(1 paragraph)

- Makes final comments about the significance of the writer's new perspective on the question..
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Evidence

For this essay, you must include at least **four** sources documented in proper MLA format. (Encyclopedias—including on-line encyclopedias like Wikipedia—do not count as sources for this assignment.) The essay must have a Works Cited page with full bibliographic information on your sources and employ in-text citations and parenthetical references with page numbers. Use proper MLA style for formatting your document.

For details on MLA format and documentation, see *A Writer's Reference* (376-440), and drmarkwomack.com/mla-style/ — especially “Documenting Sources,” “Anatomy of a Citation,” and “How to Quote Prose.”

SCHEDULE FOR ESSAY 3 — INFORMATIVE ESSAY

Mind Map	April 4	Brainstorming Writing Exercise
Informal Outline	April 11	Outlining Writing Exercise
Peer Review Workshop	April 16	THREE copies of your First Draft.
Final Revision	May 2	Revised Draft, First Draft with Peer Reviews, Outline, and Mind Map (in a two-pocket folder with your name on the front cover).

Please Note

Since this essay builds on the skills you learned from writing your first two essay, everything the assignment sheets for those essays said about Thesis, Evidence, Structure, Style, Audience, Drafts, Proofreading, Evaluation, Quotations, and so on applies to this essay too.