



Informative Essay Cheat Sheet

KEEP THIS HANDY ↗

What is an Informative Essay?



An informative essay teaches the reader about a topic using facts, details, and examples — **without trying to persuade or share your personal opinion**. Your job is to explain, describe, and inform. That's it.

PART 1 · INTRODUCTION

STEP 1 · OPENING HOOK

4 Types of Hooks

~~"In this essay, I will tell you about..."~~



Surprising Fact or Statistic

"Every year, 8 million tons of plastic enter the world's oceans."



Vivid Description

"Imagine waking up in a city where the temperature never drops below 100°F."



Thought-Provoking Question

"What would happen if bees disappeared from Earth entirely?"



Brief Anecdote or Scenario

"In 1969, a 12-year-old watched a man walk on the moon from a tiny black-and-white TV."

STEP 2 · CONTEXT SENTENCES (2-3)

Bridge to Your Thesis

- 1 Introduce the **topic** in general terms
- 2 Explain **why this topic matters** or why it's interesting
- 3 Narrow the focus toward your **specific thesis**

⚠ **Don't jump straight** from the hook to the thesis. Context sentences are the bridge.

STEP 3 · THESIS STATEMENT FORMULA

For Informative Essays

Topic + What you'll explain + 3 Subtopics =

Strong Thesis

⚠ **No opinions allowed.** Don't write "I think" or "I believe" — just state what you will explain.

THESIS · TWO EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1 Grade 5-6 level

"The water cycle is an important process that affects weather, ecosystems, and human life in three key ways: through evaporation, condensation, and precipitation."

EXAMPLE 2 Grade 6-7 level

"The decline of the monarch butterfly population is the result of three interconnected forces: the widespread use of pesticides, the loss of milkweed habitat, and the increasing disruption of seasonal migration patterns caused by climate change."

PART 2 · BODY PARAGRAPHS

TOPIC SENTENCES

Start Every Paragraph Strong

- 1 States the **one main idea** of this paragraph
- 2 Connects directly back to your **thesis**
- 3 Does **NOT** include evidence — that comes after
- 4 Uses a **transition word** to connect to the previous paragraph (except paragraph 1)

Formula: Transition + [This paragraph is about ____] + [How it connects to the topic]

"One major cause of monarch butterfly decline is the widespread use of pesticides in agricultural areas."

TYPES OF SUPPORTING DETAILS

How to Back Up Your Topic Sentence

 **FACTS & STATS**

Numbers, percentages, data from research

"Over 80% of monarch habitats have disappeared since the 1990s."

 **EXPERT QUOTES**

Words from scientists, authors, or specialists

"According to the WWF, populations have dropped by 22% in one decade."

 **REAL EXAMPLES**


Specific events, places, or real-world cases

"In California's Central Valley, milkweed was eliminated from farmland entirely."

 **DEFINITIONS**

Explain key terms clearly for the reader

"Pesticides are chemicals used to kill insects that damage crops."

 After every detail, **explain it**. Don't just drop a fact — tell the reader what it means.

TRANSITION WORDS — ORGANIZED BY PURPOSE

Connect Your Ideas Smoothly

+ ADDING INFORMATION

Furthermore

Moreover

In addition

Additionally

Besides

▣ GIVING EXAMPLES

For example

For instance

Specifically

To illustrate

In particular

⚖ COMPARING / CONTRASTING

Similarly

Likewise

However

In contrast

On the other hand

🔗 CAUSE & EFFECT

As a result

Therefore

Consequently

This leads to

Because of this

WORDS TO AVOID IN INFORMATIVE ESSAYS

These Weaken Your Writing — Replace Them

say / says

states · explains · describes · reports · notes
shows that... / according to...

good / bad

beneficial · harmful · effective · damaging · significant
be specific about why

really / very

Use a stronger word instead
really big → enormous · very fast → rapid

thing / stuff

Name the actual thing
thing → factor · issue · process · element

a lot / many

numerous · a significant number · the majority · countless
or use an actual statistic

I think / I feel

Remove it entirely — just state the fact
informative = no personal opinions

PART 3 · CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION · DO'S & DON'TS

✗ DON'T

- ✗ Start with "In conclusion, I think..."
- ✗ Introduce new facts or details
- ✗ Copy your thesis word-for-word
- ✗ Simply list your paragraphs again
- ✗ End with "That is all I know about..."

✓ DO

- ✓ Restate thesis in *different words*
- ✓ Briefly connect your 3 main points
- ✓ End with a broader "so what?" — why does this topic matter?
- ✓ Leave the reader with something to think about

CONCLUSION · STRONG OPENING PHRASES

How to Start Your Conclusion

Ultimately, In summary, Taken together,

As this essay has shown, Clearly,

Understanding [topic] is essential because...

The evidence suggests that...

COMMA RULES · QUICK REMINDER

1 AFTER TRANSITION

Furthermore, scientists have found...

2 LIST OF 3 OR MORE

evaporation, condensation, and precipitation

3 AFTER INTRO PHRASE

For example, monarch butterflies...

TOPIC IDEAS + MODEL PARAGRAPH

SAMPLE TOPICS BY SUBJECT AREA

The water cycle
Science · Grade 5

How volcanoes form
Earth Science · Grade 5–6

The Civil Rights Movement
Social Studies · Grade 6

How the human heart works
Biology · Grade 6

The causes of World War I
History · Grade 7

Effects of deforestation
Environmental Science · 6–7

How social media affects teen mental health
Health / ELA · Grade 7

The history of the space race
Science / History · 6–7

How the brain processes memory
Biology / Psychology · 7

✦ MODEL BODY PARAGRAPH · TOPIC: DECLINE OF THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY

See Every Element in Action

TOPIC SENTENCE One of the most significant threats to the monarch butterfly population is the widespread loss of milkweed, the only plant on which monarchs can lay their eggs and on which their larvae can survive. **DETAIL** According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, milkweed plants across the Midwest have declined by more than 58% since the late 1990s, largely due to herbicide use in commercial agriculture.

EXPLAIN Without milkweed, monarch caterpillars have nothing to eat and no safe place to develop — meaning that even a small reduction in milkweed availability can cause population numbers to drop sharply within a single breeding season. **DETAIL** Researchers at the University of Minnesota found that restoring milkweed to just 1.8 billion acres of farmland could stabilize monarch populations within a decade. **EXPLAIN** This finding highlights how directly habitat loss drives population decline — and how targeted environmental action can reverse the damage.

LINK **Clearly**, the disappearance of a single plant species is enough to push an entire butterfly population toward collapse, making milkweed restoration one of the most urgent priorities in monarch conservation.

● Transition word ● Supporting detail (fact/stat)