

# **A Brief Guide to Writing Evaluation Essays**

Many of the features of evaluations are the same as those found in a cause and effect essay, although the writer is not showing a causal relationship. Evaluative essays seek to prompt readers to examine their own values and to perhaps accept the view of the writer. In this sense, evaluation is more like argumentation. Evaluation can be used in book and movie reviews or it can be used to describe a work process. We evaluate employees and employers; we evaluate the success of particular programs in government or education.

Features:

1. An adequately described subject. The writer should describe the subject of the essay in some detail, according to what he or she thinks the reader should know. Writers usually provide only enough information to allow their readers to accept their judgment. The emphasis, therefore, is on the authoritative voice of the writer. However, if you were going to evaluate a book, your reader would need to know the author, the date of publication, what it was about, etc.
2. A judgment. The writer must assert him or herself by making a definitive judgment. This judgment should be the writer's thesis sentence. All other paragraphs should seek to prove the thesis, even if a writer must give a balanced appraisal by anticipating objections.
3. A convincing argument. After you state your judgment, present an argument based on reasonable criteria. "Reasonable criteria" means using standards that are generally used to describe something. For instance, if you are evaluating a mystery novel but are using the criteria used to judge a self-help book, you might have difficulty. Writers should also provide evidence to make their argument. If you state that the mystery novel has a plot that is unlikely, then you must give several examples directly from the novel and tell why they are unlikely. Evidence should include description, examples, facts, statistics, and testimony of others. A writer may also choose to make comparisons when writing an evaluation. For instance, the mystery novel could be compared to an Agatha Christie novel to help clarify its strengths and weaknesses.