

# Process Analysis Essays

## Unit 2

**GOAL:** To learn how to write a process analysis essay

\* **Grammar Topics:** 2.1 Subject-verb agreement; 2.2 Apostrophes; 2.3 Modals; 2.4 Confusing words: *you're/your*; 2.5 Word parts

### What Is a Process Analysis Essay?

A **process analysis essay** explains in detail how a certain objective is accomplished. You might think of a process analysis essay as a set of instructions explaining the most effective means to achieve a desired result. The writer believes that the method he or she describes is the best way to accomplish the objective.

Although all process analysis essays describe how to accomplish a particular goal, the more interesting essays also include relevant information about the wider context of the process. Why is this process important? How is it useful to the reader who is learning about it? What are the benefits and/or limitations of the process? When you answer such questions as these before you write your essay, your writing will be better tailored to your specific audience.

When you write a process analysis essay, you need to pay special attention to your audience. Are your readers experts in the field? How much information do they need so that they can understand the process? For example, if you write an essay describing DNA splicing, it is quite important to know whether your readers are doctors of biology or high school freshmen.

### How Is a Process Analysis Essay Organized?

The two most common ways of organizing a process analysis essay are **chronologically** and **by priority**.

- In a process analysis essay that is organized **chronologically**, the writer describes the steps in the order in which they should be performed. This method is helpful for teaching a person a new skill, such as how to cook rice or how to change the oil in a car.
- In a process analysis essay that is organized **by priority**, the writer organizes the steps in order of the most important to the least important. This method is useful for teaching a new concept, such as diplomacy in a foreign country.



## Topics for Process Analysis Essays

What is a good topic for a process analysis essay? Process analysis essay topics can range from a task as simple as how to boil an egg to a task as complex as how to construct a house.

### ACTIVITY 1 Identifying Topics for Process Analysis Essays

Read these eight topics. Put a check mark (✓) next to the four that could be good topics for process analysis essays.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. the steps in applying for a bank loan to purchase a vehicle
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Dubai versus Istanbul as a vacation destination
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. how to get a passport most efficiently
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. ways to convince citizens to support a candidate
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. an analysis of driving routes in a certain community
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. reasons for stopping smoking
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. an argument against illegal immigration
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. teaching children to paint

Think of two additional topics that would be appropriate for a process analysis essay.

- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_



For more practice with topics for process analysis essays, try Unit 2, Activity 1 on the *Great Writing 5* Web site: [elt.heinle.com/greatwriting](http://elt.heinle.com/greatwriting)

## Supporting Details

Many of the apparently simple things that we do every day, such as paying bills and cooking meals, involve processes with many steps. However, if you made a list of all of the actual steps in each process, you would quickly see that no process is really so simple.

### ACTIVITY 2 Brainstorming Steps in a Process

Choose one of the following tasks and use the accompanying blank space to brainstorm the steps necessary to perform it. Then read your steps to a partner to check whether you included all of them.

- 1. directing someone to a building on the other side of campus
- 2. making your lunch
- 3. washing your clothes
- 4. taking care of your pet

## Studying a Sample Process Analysis Essay

In this section, you will study three versions of a process analysis essay: a first draft, the same first draft with teacher comments, and the revised essay.

### ACTIVITY 3 Warming Up to the Topic

Answer these questions individually. Then discuss them with a partner or in a small group.

1. What is the difference in meaning between *bargain* as a noun and *bargain* as a verb?

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2. Have you ever bargained to buy something? Describe the experience.

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3. What are two or three important things that you must do to bargain for the best price?

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What is one thing that you must avoid doing? \_\_\_\_\_

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For more practice with the structure of process analysis essays, try Unit 2, Activity 2 on the *Great Writing 5* Web site: [elt.heinle.com/greatwriting](http://elt.heinle.com/greatwriting)



## ACTIVITY 4 First Draft of the Essay

*As you read this first draft, look for areas that need improvement.*

### ESSAY 2A

#### A Bargain

As we all know, bargaining is a **tough** business. The buyer wants to take a product at the lowest possible price. The seller wants to maximize the **potential for profit**. The desires of the buyer and the seller really oppose each other. It is in the best interest of these people to **strategize** exactly how they will convince a seller to low his prices. Although prices are **inflexible**, it never hurts to attempt to bargain with the seller.

Always assume that the price tag represents the starting point of you're negotiations, not the final word on the matter. I am usually very good at bargaining. You might to begin by asking the salesperson whether any sales or discounts will soon be announced. If you do not ask for a special deal, the salesperson probably will not **volunteer** to give you one. Since salespeople often **work on commission**, is frequently to their advantage to hide this information from you.

Another thing, you must be prepared to walk away from an item when you are bargaining. Even if you really want it. It's important that you never let sellers to know that you really want their products.

Finally, patience. Looking for bargains take the time and the energy. Sometime you might need to **break down** and buy a product at a more expensive price simply because you do not have the time necessary for shop any more. Whenever that happens, remember that your time is important, too, and sometimes it is worth spend a little extra money. Especially if you really desire the item.

A best **aspect** of bargain-hunting is that it is a lot of diversion, and at the same time, it is cheap. Why pay more in something you can buy for less? If you practice your bargaining skills often, you will **get better at** it and will have more money to bargain with the next time you go shopping.

**tough:** difficult

**potential:** capacity for growth, development, or coming into existence

**profit:** money made from a business activity

**strategize:** to make a plan of action

**inflexible:** rigid, refusing to change

**volunteer:** to give something of one's own free will

**work on commission:** to earn money in the form of a percentage of the cost of item sold instead of receiving the same amount of money, or salary, each pay period

**break down:** to stop resisting something

**an aspect:** a feature

**get better at:** to become good at, improve



## ACTIVITY 5 Teacher Comments on First Draft

Read the teacher comments on the first draft of "A Bargain." Are these the same things that you noticed?

### ESSAY 2B

This title does not express the content of your essay exactly

#### A Bargain

If we all know this, you have no reason to write the essay

better: difficult process

wrong word choice

As we all know, bargaining is a tough business. The buyer wants to take a product

connect

at the lowest possible price. The seller wants to maximize the potential for profit.

poor word choice

combine

The desires of the buyer and the seller really oppose each other. It is in the best

who?

make plural

word form

interest of these people to strategize exactly how they will convince a seller to low

sometimes

his prices. Although prices are inflexible, it never hurts to attempt to bargain with

the seller.

confusing words

Add transition?

Always assume that the price tag represents the starting point of you're

Purpose of this sentence? Cut?

negotiations, not the final word on the matter. I am usually very good at bargaining.

You might to begin by asking the salesperson whether any sales or discounts will

better word: advertised

soon be announced. If you do not ask for a special deal, the salesperson probably

word missing

will not volunteer to give you one. Since salespeople often work on commission, is

frequently to their advantage to hide this information from you.

Add transition

Sounds like conversation → Another thing, you must be prepared to walk away from an item when you are

fragment

no contractions

fragment

bargaining. Even if you really want it. It's important that you never let sellers to know

You need more info here

that you really want their products.

fragment

S-V

Finally, patience. Looking for bargains take the time and the energy. Sometime

you might need to break down and buy a product at a more expensive price simply

because you do not have the time necessary for shop any more. Whenever that

happens, remember that your time is important, too, and sometimes it is worth

fragment

wrong word

spend a little extra money. Especially if you really desire the item.

article error                      hunting for bargains                      wrong word  
A best aspect of bargain-hunting is that it is a lot of diversion, and at the same  
time, it is cheap. Why pay more in something you can buy for less? If you practice  
your bargaining skills often, you will get better at it and ~~will~~ have more money to  
bargain with the next time you go shopping.

Bargaining does not have a cost, so it can't be cheap.

I enjoyed reading your content. You sound like a tough bargainer!  
Good first draft. Your introduction and conclusion are good. Work on the title.  
Work on paragraph 3—it needs more development. All body paragraphs  
should begin with a transition. You must proofread your paper for fragments!  
Three fragments in one essay are too many.



## ACTIVITY 6 Revised Essay

Read the revised version of the essay, now titled "Getting the Best Deal." What has been changed? What still needs improvement?

### ESSAY 2C

#### Getting the Best Deal

Bargaining is a difficult process. The buyer wants to purchase a product at the lowest possible price, but the seller wants to maximize the potential for profit. The desires of the buyer and the seller **unequivocally** oppose each other, and thus it is in the best interest of buyers to strategize exactly how they will convince sellers to lower their prices. Although prices are sometimes inflexible, it never hurts to attempt to bargain with the seller.

First, always assume that the price tag represents the starting point of your negotiations, not the final word on the matter. Assuming that the price tag is the final price of an item is the single worst mistake that a shopper can make in the bargaining process. You might begin by asking the salesperson whether any sales or discounts will soon be advertised. If you do not ask for a special deal, the salesperson probably will not volunteer to give you one. Since salespeople often work on commission, it is frequently to their advantage to hide this information from you.

Second, you must be prepared to walk away from an item when you are bargaining, even if you really want it. This step in the bargaining process requires determination and good acting skills, but it can pay off financially. It is important that you never let sellers know that you really want their products. At street markets and festivals, **scout out** the booths first to see whether anything interests you. If you



go back to buy at the end of the day, the sellers will often give you discounts so that they will have fewer products to pack up.

Finally, be patient. Looking for bargains takes time and energy. Sometimes you might need to break down and buy a product at a more expensive price simply because you do not have the time necessary to shop any more. Whenever that happens, remember that your time is important, too, and sometimes it is worth spending a little extra money if you really want the item. However, if waiting two weeks or even two months saves you a **considerable** amount of money, then it is **worthwhile** to wait.

Hunting for bargains is a lot of fun, and at the same time, it can save you a great deal of money. Once you start bargaining, you may find that it becomes an addictive game in which you are competing with the salesperson for your money. If you practice your bargaining skills often, you will get better at it and have more money to bargain with the next time you go shopping.

**unequivocally:** without a doubt, clearly  
**scout out:** to investigate

**considerable:** large, great  
**worthwhile:** valuable, sensible

## Analyzing Content and Organization

### ACTIVITY 7 Analyzing the Content

Answer these questions about the revised version (Essay 2C) of "Getting the Best Deal."

1. Is this process analysis essay organized chronologically or by priority? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why does the writer want to give advice about saving money?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Write the thesis statement here.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What specific suggestions does the writer offer about bargain hunting?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ACTIVITY 8 Analyzing the Organization

Read the outline of "Getting the Best Deal." Then use the information in the box to complete the outline for the essay.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the end of the day</li><li>• patience</li><li>• successful bargaining</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• effective bargaining skills</li><li>• the salesperson's interests</li></ul> |
|---|---|

#### I. Introduction

A. Economics of shopping: both buyer and seller want to maximize profit.

B. Thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_ will help the reader to shop more effectively.

#### II. Body Paragraph 1

A. Use the price tag as the starting point for negotiations, not as the final word on the price.

B. \_\_\_\_\_ often are not the same as the buyer's.

#### III. Body Paragraph 2

A. You should walk away from an item.

B. Best to shop at \_\_\_\_\_

1. Salespeople are tired.

2. Salespeople want to make a final sale for the day.

SUPPORT

SUPPORT



## IV. Body Paragraph 3

- A. Suggest that \_\_\_\_\_ is key to bargaining.
- B. Sometimes you need to stop bargaining and buy an item in order to save time.

## V. Conclusion

- A. Indicate that \_\_\_\_\_ can be fun.
- B. Practice at bargaining helps you to get better and have more money for future bargaining.



## Writer's Note

### Outlines

The purpose of an outline is to help you, the writer, organize your ideas and include sufficient and logical details that support your ideas. Some formal outlines contain only nouns or only full sentences, but some writers prefer to include nouns, phrases, sentences, or a mixture of these elements.

Note that the outline for “Getting the Best Deal” includes a mixture. If your instructor has not given you instructions for your outline, choose the system that is most comfortable for you.



## Building Better Sentences

Correct and varied sentence structure is essential to the quality of your writing. For further practice with “Getting the Best Deal,” go to Practice 2 on page 204 in Appendix 1.

## Transitions and Connectors in Process Analysis Essays

The most commonly used transitions and connectors in process analysis essays are time words and phrases. A process analysis essay outlines the steps in achieving a goal, so the transitions that are needed are typically words and phrases that indicate sequence.

Transitions and Connectors Commonly Used in Process Analysis Writing		
after	finally	second
after that	first	soon
at first	immediately following	then
at the same time	last	third
before	later	until
during	meanwhile	when
eventually	next	while



