

## DEV 110 Notes -- Classification

In a classification essay, the writer analyzes a subject by arranging it into groups, types, or categories. Each category is then examined and discussed separately by the writer. A classification paper is easily developed if the following guidelines are used:

1. Select one principle of classification and stick to it.

If you are classifying cars by size, do not switch and begin classifying them by manufacturer, price, body style, and so on. Choose the principle of classification suitable to your purpose and then be consistent throughout your paper.

2. State the purpose of the classification.

Do not simply begin the paper by stating, "There are four kinds of \_\_\_\_\_." Let the reader know why this classification is important and meaningful to him/her. Here are some sample thesis statements:

- a) Knowing the four types of movie ratings will enable the cinema enthusiast to select a film which will be most suitable to his/her tastes.
- b) While karate has become a popular form of exercise as well as self-defense, few people actually know what the six levels of achievements--or "belts," as they are called --really stand for.

Remember to classify your material according to a particular purpose and then let the reader know what that purpose is.

3. Account for all parts of the classification in the body of the essay.

If you state that there are four types of movie ratings in your introduction, you must discuss all four categories in the body of the essay.

4. Avoid under-developed categories.

Each category should contain enough specific details, facts, or examples to make it clearly recognizable to the reader.

5. Avoid indistinct categories.

Each category should be a separate unit with no overlapping between the various groups. Therefore, it is important to think through the characteristics of each group very carefully so that each group is unique. Overlapping of characteristics will make your essay less effective and will confuse the reader.

6. Avoid too few or too many categories.

A classification paper should contain at least three categories to avoid the either-or dichotomy. In a short essay, three to five categories are easily handled. Remember to use transitional devices to get from one category to the next smoothly.

## Essay Topics

The following is a list of possible topics for the classification essay. Some may lend themselves to humorous analysis. Remember to narrow down the topics and use only one principle of classification for your topic.

1. doctors
2. dentists
3. roommates
4. neighbors
5. parents
6. friends
7. fans
8. babies, teenagers, etc.
9. patrons of a bar, restaurant, mall, etc.
10. politicians
11. television detectives, comedians, etc.
12. methods of making excuses
13. sports cars
14. attitudes toward money, jobs, sex, etc.
15. teachers
16. students
17. business machines
18. coaches, managers, sponsors, etc.
19. employees: cashiers in supermarkets, department stores, etc.
20. bad dates, blind dates, etc.
21. employers, supervisors, etc.
22. diets
23. music
24. hobbies
25. shoppers
26. holidays
27. marriages
28. husbands
29. wives
30. schools