

Some Logics of the Essay

Logic	Explanation	Example(s)	Metaphor
Argumentative or Rhetorical	Argumentation is based on the elaboration of a principle or series of principles. It relies on structures of classical logic, such as the syllogism, causality, and the exclusion principle. The academic article is a version of this type limited by empirical evidence and an exclusion of the personal perspective.	Swift, "A Modest Proposal" Plutarch, "Consolation to His Wife"	The essay is debate or persuasion.
Narrative	Narratives are stories. In an essay, the protagonist of the story may be a person, as in fiction, or it may be an idea. Philosophical essays are often structured around the idea-protagonist.	Tanizaki, "In Praise of Shadows" Walker, "Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self"	The essay is story.
Metonymic or Associative	Metonymy (Greek for "name change") is a figure of speech in which one thing is substituted for something closely related to it. "The pen is mightier than the sword" means, metonymically, that the written word is stronger than military action. Metonymy can be extended as the structure of an entire piece. Associative logic is related to, but looser than, metonymy. It can be a stream-of-consciousness structure based on sensory or intellectual experience. <i>It can include gaps in logic.</i>	Sei Shonagon, the beginning of <i>The Pillow Book</i> (xerox), in which she moves from the beauties of spring to the holiday in which court ladies beat one another with sticks. Thus, the desire for comedic social violence becomes a metonym for the energy of springtime. Kenko, "Essays in Idleness" Montaigne, "On Some Verses of Virgil" Journals, diaries, and blogs often possess an associative logic among the entries.	The essay is rumination or "chewing your cud". (Imagine having several stomachs in your brain to digest sensory and intellectual experience.)
Expository	Exposition, as the name implies, exposes or clarifies a complex structure in need of explanation. The academic expository essay is a version of this style limited by strict rules of evidence. The review is a more flexible version of this style which can include narrative and rhetoric.	Hazlitt, "On the Pleasure of Hating" Woolf, "The Modern Essay"	The essay is discovery.
Lyrical	Lyricism concentrates on the beautiful expression of personal emotion, as if in extended song.	Raymo, "An Ancient Brilliance"	The essay is song.
Hybridic	A combination of one or more of the above styles.	Eiseley, "How Flowers Changed the World," is both narrative and expository. Twain, "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses," is both expository and argumentative.	The essay is experiment.
Report (Boo! Hiss!)	The essay is an archive for information already understood.	Any five-paragraph essay.	The essay is container of information.