

ANNOTATIONS FOR THE “3” ESSAY

What makes this essay a ‘3’?

This is a 3 essay because, while it has all the elements of a successful essay, it lacks the coherence, focus, and unity needed to make its points. In several places the writer loses sight completely of the assigned question (should men and women have distinctly separate fashions?) and begins writing about other issues (shaving body hair and same-sex relationships). The essay does have topic sentences, but the first is not clearly related to the thesis, and the second is not logical. (Does the way people dress really prevent us from identifying gender?) While some points in the body paragraphs do relate to the thesis, most sentences do not follow a clear organizational pattern. Instead, sentences seem to follow each other randomly, in the order that they came into the writer’s mind. One result of this is that by the end of each body paragraph, the essay wanders off topic. Finally, the writer does have command of basic sentence structure, though there is little sentence variety.

What do you like best about this essay?

The writer has a good sense of structure and unity. Even if she loses focus on the specific question of distinct fashion, at least we are able to see the relationship of all elements to the general topic. The structure of the essay is also correct (it has an introduction, a thesis statement and topic sentences, and a conclusion), and the ideas are supported with specific points. The thesis is particularly effective. The author’s voice is strong and natural, giving the reader a clear sense of her main point. The first thesis point about the connection between fashion and romance is promising and could lead to an interesting discussion. Finally, the essay succeeds, for the most part on a mechanical level, containing only a few spelling errors, which appear largely to be typographical errors.

What could be improved in this essay?

The writer needs to focus and develop her points more effectively. The essay lacks organization and coherence within paragraphs, and body paragraphs are underdeveloped, showing a general lack of critical thinking. At several points, particularly the introduction and the second body paragraph, the writer seems uncertain of the direction of the essay as established by the thesis and the topic sentences. She loses focus on those main ideas, and in the result is a lack of unity overall. Instead of organizing body paragraphs in a series of supporting examples, the writer offers a number of opinions that have no clear connection to each other, that are not fully argued or developed, and that lack transitional words or phrases to show the movement of the writer’s thought. Finally, there are several ideas that are illogical, for example the idea that if men and women dress the same they “won’t be able to reproduce.” The writer might benefit from prewriting that would help her to develop and organize her ideas more fully and carefully.

Evaluate the opening paragraph.

Although the writer eventually addresses the assigned topic, the introductory statements leading up to the thesis are confusing. It is not clear how the idea, “We’re in the millennium” relates to the writer’s thesis that men and women should maintain distinct

fashions. The sentences that follow do not clarify the confusion. How does our intellectual and technological development relate to the thesis? Despite a disorienting introduction, the paragraph does come around to a thesis that responds to the question of distinct fashions and provides two distinct reasons for the writer's position.

Evaluate the first body paragraph.

Aside from the thesis, the first body paragraph is the most successful element of the essay. The topic sentence states a clear opinion that should give the paragraph direction. The second sentence explains to some extent, though without complete clarity. The first set of examples, however, is not specific or developed (referring generally to a need to compliment without developing any specifics), but supports the thesis nevertheless. The discussion of body hair is less successful in supporting the paragraph's main idea because it doesn't relate specifically to the question of distinct fashion choices and the discussion of sports doesn't relate to that question at all. Even with these problems, however, the outline of correct structure is clear: it has a topic sentence followed by explanation and examples.

Evaluate the second body paragraph.

Even though the wording is a little confusing, the topic sentence, establishes a clear direction for the paragraph that is then largely ignored by the writer, who begins talking instead about the morality of same-sex relationships. This discussion isn't logical and lacks specific support. The only support offered by the writer at all is a vague reference to the bible that supports a moral position but not the idea there would be more same sex relationships if men and women dressed similarly. Further, the idea of sex-change operations that follows has no clear relationship at all to the essay's main idea.. This lack of unity is largely responsible for the failure of the essay as a whole.

Evaluate the conclusion.

The conclusion lacks development and substance. For the most part, it repeats without additional clarification, the points made in the thesis and topic sentences. The last two sentences seem to be fragments of ideas. Neither is complete enough to make additional points or to clarify points that have come earlier in the essay.