



## DALLAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

### Process Essay

A Process, or How-To, Essay tells someone how to make something or explains the steps to complete a task.

#### **Two fundamental principles must be observed:**

- 1) All necessary steps and reasons must be given.
- 2) The explanation should be written in a systematic order, and can sometimes be structured by a time sequence.

If a detail has been left out, then the process's description is not adequate. For example, an automobile manufacturer's directions on how to change a tire would not be complete unless the manufacturer included a reminder to block the automobile from rolling. If the process is to be analyzed completely, all possible steps, details, and timeframes must be presented in the order they normally occur.

If one is reading the owner's manual while changing the tire, a suggestion to block the car from rolling would not be very helpful if it occurs in the last sentence of the directions. Everything needs to be put in order so that the process can come across clearly and effectively.

#### When you write your paragraphs:

- Everything should be written in the order that it was performed.
- Each new step or activity is a new layer of development and becomes one of your primary topic sentences.
- Write as if the person reading the paper was going to repeat the process that is being described. The paper should be detailed enough that the process can be recreated accurately.
- Make sure to use words such as *first*, *second*, *then*, and *afterwards* in order to denote the order of the steps.

Ex: *"First, preheat the oven to the correct temperature. This will ensure that the oven is hot enough upon completion of the batter. Secondly, grease the pan; this is a necessary step to keep the cake from sticking to the pan. Then, get out all the necessary ingredients, which can be done while the oven is still preheating. Afterwards, combine the proper ingredients in order to create the perfect birthday cake."*

Note: this is an example of using the correct transition words, not an example of a body paragraph. It would be wise to devote an entire paragraph to each of these steps.