

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 9, you learned how to plan, organize, and write an essay with an introductory paragraph, several body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. Chapter 10, you will learn how to write an **opinion essay**. In our daily lives, we express opinions about everything from politics to the latest fashions. In college courses, students are often asked to state their opinions more formally and give strong support for their ideas. At the end of Chapter 10, you will write an academic essay that expresses a well-supported opinion.

ANALYZING THE MODEL

The model presents one student's opinion about homeschooling. As you read the essay, look for reasons and details the writer uses to support her opinion.

Read the model. Then answer the questions.

Writing Model

In Support of Homeschooling

INTRODUCTION An increasing number of parents in countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United States have decided not to send their children to elementary or secondary school. Instead, the parents devote their time and energy to teaching their children at home. Opponents of homeschooling believe that students belong in a classroom with experienced professionals and other students of the same age. Although it may not be the best option for all students and all families, I am in favor of homeschooling for three reasons.

PARAGRAPH 1 First of all, homeschooling makes effective use of time. In Australia, Canada, and the United States, the average school day is six to seven hours long. However, children who are homeschooled can finish their lessons in four to five hours. One explanation for this is that traditional classrooms often have more than 20 students. As a result, teachers spend a significant percentage of their time simply making certain that their students are paying attention and doing their work. In addition, students in a large class are likely to have different abilities and learning styles, and there is often not enough time to address the needs of each student. In contrast, students who are homeschooled are able to receive individual attention more easily. Their parent-teachers can see that they are completing their assignments and offer assistance if necessary. After homeschooled students finish their daily assigned work, they then have time to play sports, enjoy hobbies, or continue studying.

PARAGRAPH 2 The second reason that homeschooling is a good idea is that it offers additional schoolwork and the opportunity for homeschooled children and teens to become independent learners. With the extra time they have, along with encouragement from their parents, homeschooled students can follow their interests and study subjects more deeply. They can choose some of the topics they want to investigate. For example, they might study such topics as ancient Chinese history, the physics of soccer (football), or computer animation. Through their research, which includes

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online reading, library visits, trips to local museums, and family vacations, they learn more about their chosen topics. They also develop strong skills in areas such as math, science, reading, and writing. As one of the admissions counselors at our university, Andrew Muller, said during my interview with him, "We like students who are homeschooled because they do not wait for others to tell them what to do. They are able to think for themselves." He then added, "Homeschooled young people ask their instructors for help when they need it, but they generally take charge of their own learning."

BODY PARAGRAPH 3

Finally, homeschooling helps young people to develop socially. One of my friends was educated at home until the age of 18. He and his brother played on baseball and basketball teams and participated in activities with other homeschooled students, so they had a chance to make friends who were their own age. However, they also spent a great deal of time with their parents and older relatives who taught them the importance of strong family relationships and showed them how to act maturely. Furthermore, their education involved volunteer work at their local community center. There they met people of all ages while they learned about the responsibility of having a job and the importance of helping their neighbors. As a result of the education his parents gave him, my friend is now a well-balanced individual who knows how to be an adult and still have fun.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, homeschooling is not easy and may not be for everyone, but it has certain benefits. For the most part, homeschooled students can complete their basic lessons in less time than students in a formal classroom. Therefore, they have more time to pursue their own interests. Because they learn how to ask questions and find answers, and because they develop strong social skills, they become intelligent, responsible adults. As far as I am concerned, even more parents should consider the option of homeschooling.

Questions about the Model

1. In the introduction on page 223, which sentence expresses the writer's opinion about homeschooling? Double underline it. How many body paragraphs can the reader expect?
2. How many body paragraphs does the model contain? Underline each topic sentence once, and circle the transition signals that introduce each paragraph.
3. Which body paragraph has a concluding sentence that restates the controlling idea of the topic sentence? Underline the concluding sentence once.
4. What kind of information is in the concluding paragraph?