Written expression

Lesson outline

1. The Thinking Process of Written Expression
2. The Planning Process of Written Expression
3. The Writing Process of Written Expression

Introduction

Students with learning disorders often have difficulty planning work and, organizing themselves to write a bigger text can be very demanding. In this section you will find writing templates that will help students to know how to find information and see what is expected from him/her.

1. The Thinking Process of Written Expression

In order to find ideas to write text, student might need to do some research or think about the ideas they want to discuss.
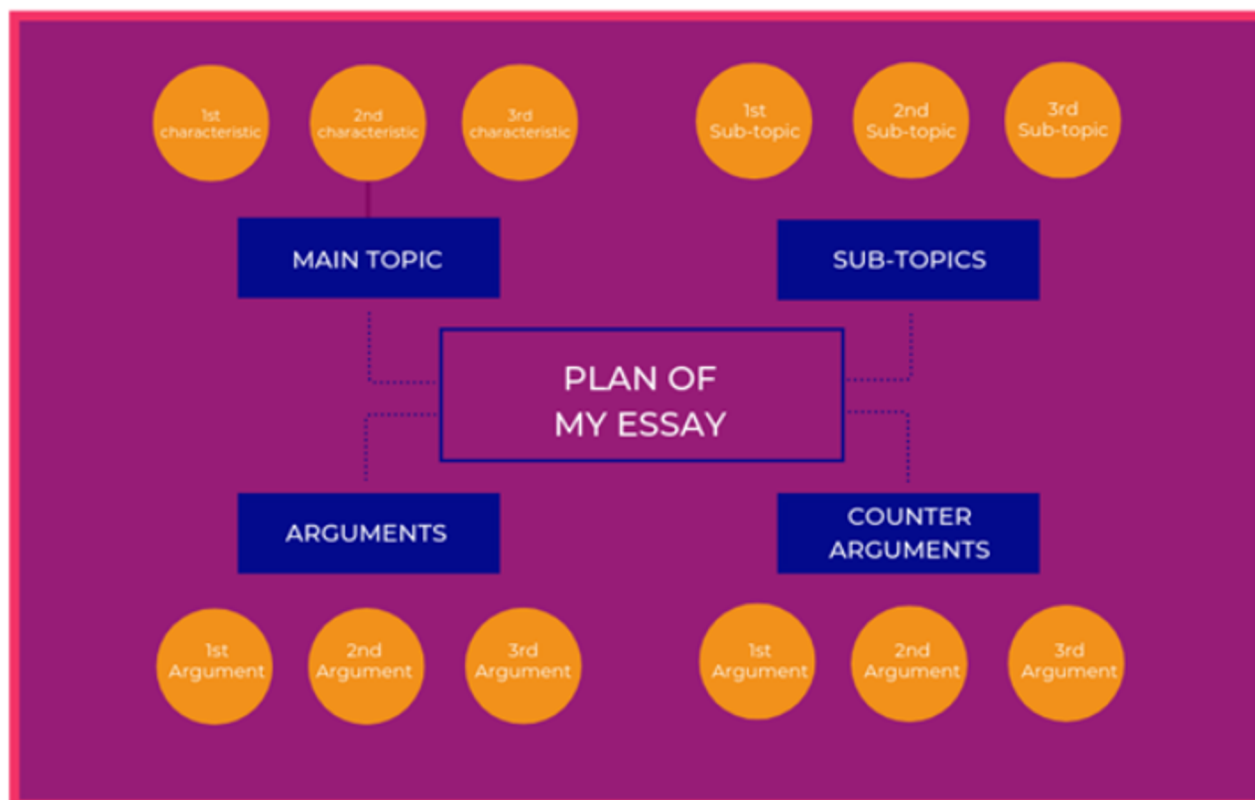
Activity

You can propose a quick activity which can serve as a warm-up before writing exercise in classroom. Like a game **chain of words**: teacher starts with by saying one-word example: pineapple. Then the student needs to say a word which starts by the last letter of the previous word. Last letter of word pineapple is E so student needs to say word that starts with E like evaluation. And then the chain goes through whole classroom until it comes back to teacher.

Remember to explain the activity in explicit way and provide an example before you start.

Next important step is helping student with decision on a few main themes that they want to emphasize in their text. This part is important in order not to deviate too much from the topic.

This step can be achieved with mind maps using an online tool such as MindMup or by simply drawing the mind map on a sheet of paper. Mind maps are very useful at the end of a thinking phase in order not only to remember everything that was thought of but also the links between ideas and a first organization all this information.

Here is an example

As students with SLD struggle with organization, they will benefit from the use of mind maps in all of their activities. Organizing their thoughts is the first step to developing their organizational skills!

2. The planning process of written expression

When the thinking part is done, the next part is to write things down in an organized manner. This can be done with some graphic organizers as the one below or simply by establishing a plan for the text. Within this plan, they can include a few questions about their text's themes as to know what to write without deviating too much from the topic.

This part is very important, especially for students with SLDs. Therefore, we propose a planning technique for your pupils to use before writing a text. It is called the "**hamburger method**":

This method will help them organize the reflection and planning phases of their writing process. They will use a hamburger to show the different layers of their text. This model will help them draw a plan and have a visual structure before they start writing. It should be filled with some keywords, not long sentences.

This example is based on the writing of an essay. Here is a description of its different stages for the student:

- **Introduction**

  - explains what the text is going to be about,
  - gives the reasons why this text is relevant or interesting
  - is based on the plan to give the reader an outline of the text's structure

- **Thesis**

  - explains your thoughts
  - gives arguments in favor of the opinion you want the text to express

- **Antithesis**

  - gives some nuance to the opinion expressed in the thesis
  - cites a few opposed arguments, showing that you are aware of why some might disagree with what you previously stated.
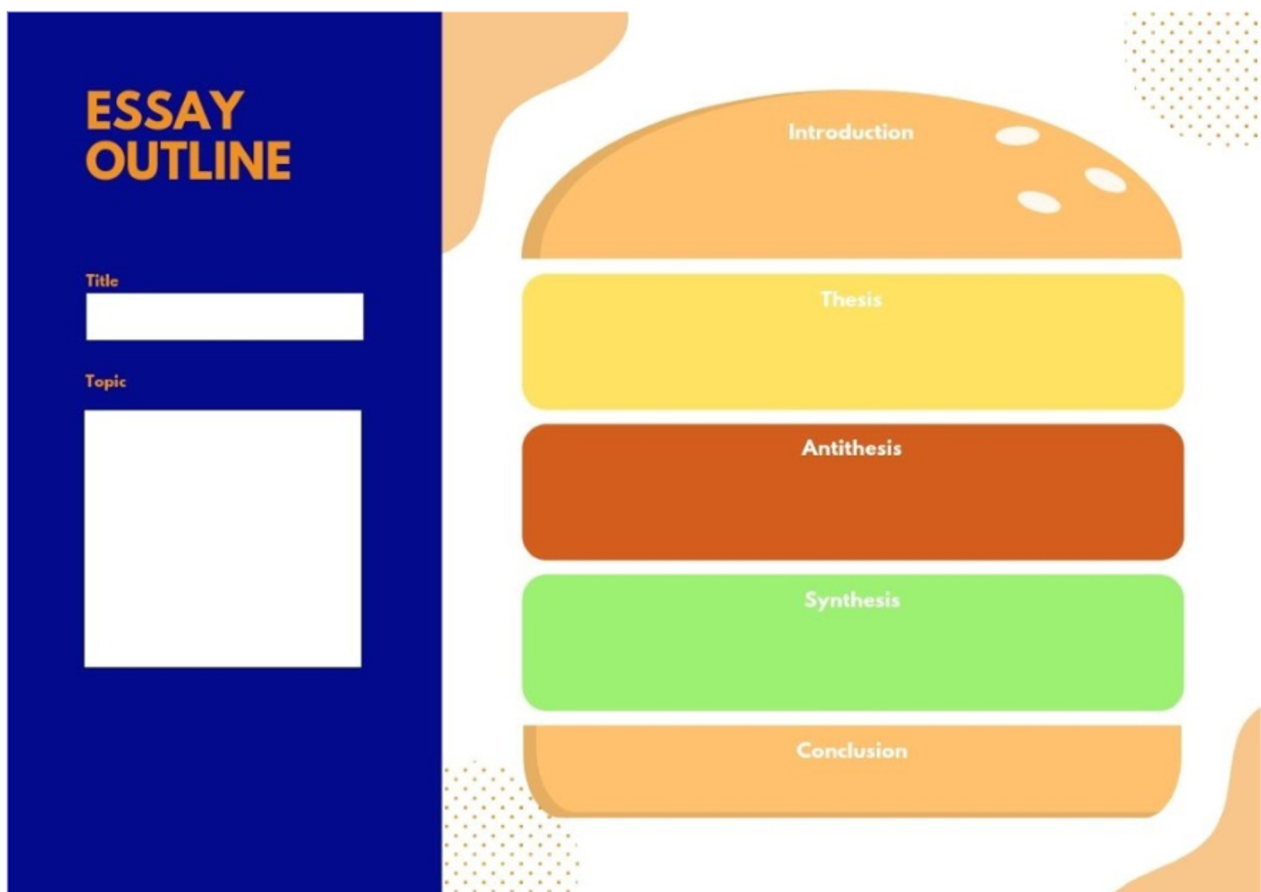
- **Synthesis**

- compares both opinions
- defends your position in light of the reflection allowed by the writing of this text

- **Conclusion**

- short conclusion of what was discussed in the text
- a few main thoughts that can be retained from the text
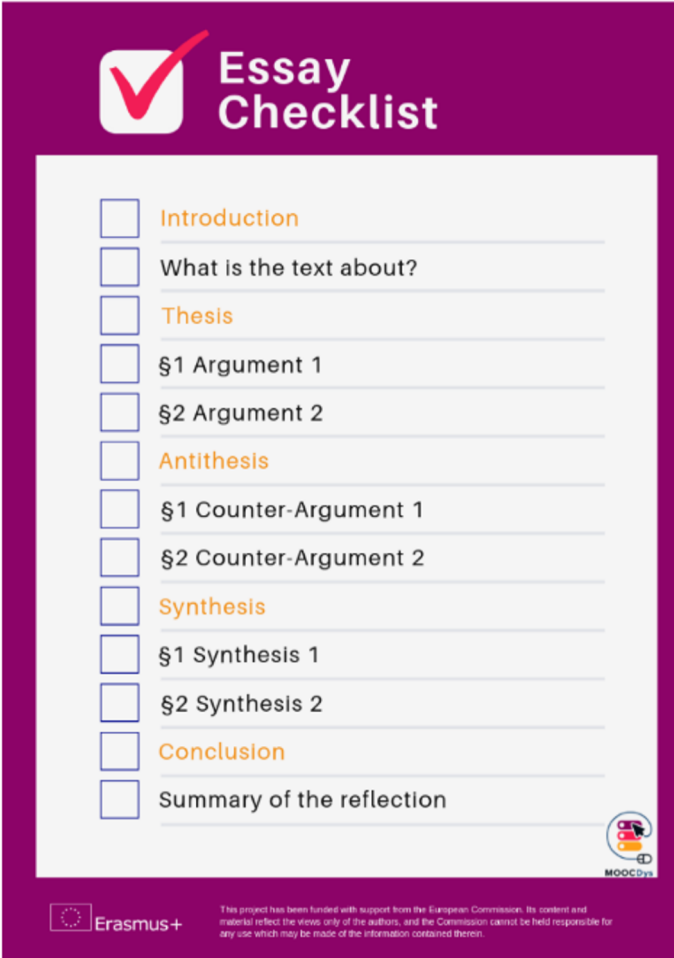
Look at the following model:

The hamburger method can be applied to many other activities, writing is just one of them. When printing the worksheet be sure that you follow the adaptation advices from project tool "What to do if.. you need to adapt material?"

3. The writing process of written expression

a) Writing the draft

Writing a draft is very important as it allows your students to focus on the content before focusing on the form of the text. It is normal to need a draft before reaching perfection!

A checklist such as the following one can help them make sure they haven't forgotten any important item!

By answering the questions and filling the different paragraphs, they will almost reach their final version, but this phase is necessary to make sure the text is well-structured and contains all the elements.

Note for the teacher:

For younger children, the structure of the draft will be less complex, and will only include the different things they want to talk about. The mind maps can help connect the different parts of their texts in this case. The checklist is also very useful to develop their organizational skills.

b) Writing the final text

Now that your students have the structure and draft of their texts, they will be able to focus on the following points:

- Linking between paragraphs
- Formulation
- Typos, spelling/grammar mistakes

Note for the teacher:

Allow students with SLD to use a **dictionary**. Make sure they have **enough time** to write their draft and the final version of their text **without pressure.**

c) Proofreading

Before your pupils hand their text over for evaluation, remind them to proofread their work.

This step will allow them to make sure that the final text:

- is readable,
- doesn't contain any more mistakes,
- reflects what they wanted to say initially.

Note for the teacher:

Students can also add these items on their checklist. Encourage them to create these kinds of tools for all their written assignments. This will be useful to gain some organizational skills.

Here are some more tools that you can propose for your students:

Noisli: to choose a background sound specially designed to help focus. This can work for some learners with SLD, but its efficiency can vary from one person to another.

To find a topic: this tool is meant for blog posts, but it can also help your students find a topic for their written assignments. They just need to type a word and they will get several ideas to build their text from.

Visuwords: This tool can be used to find the different possible meanings of a word, some other words it is connected to as well as its synonyms and their definitions. It is presented as a mind map, which helps them represent those connections visually.

Grammarly: This tool is a grammar checker that can really help the students who struggle more with written tasks. You can tell them to use it when the grammar is not the main focus of the task.

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