

Essay 4: Presentation of Surprising Information

Write a two-to-three-page (500-800 words) essay on a topic of your choice that presents new and surprising information to your reader. Your essay should include some research and should employ a Surprising-Reversal structure.

A Surprising-Reversal essay first presents a common answer to a question, then presents the writer's new, surprising view on that question. Rather than appearing at the end of the first paragraph, the thesis in a Surprising-Reversal essay appears after the writer has summarized the common view. A Surprising-Reversal thesis will generally take this form: "Although many people believe X (*common view*), I am going to show you Y (*new, surprising view*)."

Here are some examples of Surprising-Reversal thesis statements:

- ▶ You may think a tarantula bite is a death sentence, but in fact a tarantula bite can't harm you.
- ▶ Although most people believe Native Americans lived in harmony with nature, many Native American tribes altered their environment aggressively, burning down forests to make farming easier and hunting some animals to the edge of extinction.
- ▶ To most audiences, *The Bride of Frankenstein* is a monster movie about science run amok, yet many in the gay community interpret the film as an allegory about homosexual identity.

In a Surprising-Reversal essay, your first paragraph should arouse the reader's curiosity by posing an interesting question. The next paragraph should first summarize a common or expected answer to the question, then present your thesis—your surprising answer to the question. Then, in two or three paragraphs, provide new, surprising information that reverses or modifies the common view. (Imagine readers who hold a mistaken or overly narrow view of your topic; your purpose is to give them a new, surprising view.) In your final paragraph, summarize your main points and clearly present the significance of your new perspective. Each paragraph should have a clear topic sentence.

Outline for Surprising-Reversal Essay	
Introduction (1 paragraph)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Engages the reader's interest in the writer's question.▶ Provides background and context.
Common View (1 paragraph)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Presents the common or popular answer to the writer's question.▶ Provides delayed thesis—the writer's surprising answer to the question.

Outline for Surprising–Reversal Essay	
Surprising View (2-3 paragraph)	▶ Develops and supports the thesis with information from personal experience and research.
Conclusion (1 paragraph)	▶ Makes final comments about the significance of the writer’s new perspective on the question.

For this essay, you must include at least FOUR sources documented in proper MLA format, with in-text, parenthetical references and a list of Works Cited. (Please note: encyclopedias—including on-line encyclopedias like Wikipedia—do not count as sources for this assignment.)

Before you start drafting your essay, make sure you can answer each of the following questions:

1. What question does your essay address?
2. What is the common, expected, or popular answer to this question held by my audience?
3. What examples and details support your audience’s view?
4. What is your own surprising view?
5. What examples and details support this view? Why do you hold this view? Why should a reader believe you?

Write your essay in a classic prose style: clear and concise, specific and engaging.

Make every word count.

Due: November 28

(Bring THREE copies of your essay to class for Peer Critiques.)