Classification Essay Hints and tips

Classification is sorting things into groups or categories on a single basis of division. A classification paper says something meaningful about how a whole relates to parts, or parts relate to a whole. Like skimming, scanning, paraphrasing, and summarizing, classification requires the ability to group related words, ideas, and characteristics.

Prewriting and purpose  
A classification paper requires that you create categories, so prewriting for a classification paper involves grouping things in different ways in order to discover what categories make the most sense for the purpose you intend.

An important part of creating useful categories is seeing the different ways that things can be grouped. For example, a list of Canadian Prime Ministers may be grouped in any number of ways, depending on your purpose. They might be classified by political party, age on taking office, or previous occupations, but you could just as well, depending on your purpose, classify them by the pets they keep or how they keep physically fit. If your purpose was to analyze their accomplishments, you would group information focusing on the Prime Ministers' actions–such as, cabinet appointments, political achievements etc.. On the other hand, if you intended to write about the private lives of Prime Ministers, you might select information about personal relationships or hobbies.

Make sure the categories you create have a single basis of classification and that the group fits the categories you propose. You may not, for example, write about twentieth century Prime Ministers on the basis of the kinds of pets they kept if some of those Prime Ministers did not keep pets. The group does not fit the category. If you intend to talk about all the Prime Ministers, you must reinvent the categories so that all the Prime Ministers fit into it. In the example below, the group is "all Prime Ministers" and the two categories are "those who kept pets and those who did not":

Some Canadian Prime Ministers have indulged their love of pets, keeping menageries of animals around, and others have preferred to be pet-free.

Alternatively, in the following example, the group is "twentieth century Canadian Prime Minister pet-keepers" and the three categories are "dog lovers, cat lovers, and exotic fish enthusiasts."

Among the twentieth century Prime Ministers who kept pets, these pet-keepers can be classified as dog-lovers, cat-lovers, or exotic fish enthusiasts (for who can really love a fish?).

Developing a thesis  
Once you have decided on your group, purpose, and categories, develop a thesis statement that does the following three things:

* names what group of people or things you intend to classify
* describes the basis of the classification
* labels the categories you have developed

Here is a thesis statement for a classification paper written for a Health and Human Fitness class that includes all three of the above elements, underlined:

Our last five Canadian Prime Ministers have practiced physical fitness regimens that varied from the very formal to the informal. They have been either regular private gym-goers, disciplined public joggers, or casual active sports enthusiasts.

Ordering categories  
Order is the way you arrange ideas to show how they relate to one another. For example, it is common to arrange facts and discussion points from most- to least-important or from least- to most-important, or from oldest to most recent or longest to shortest. The example thesis statement above is ordered from most- to least-formal physical fitness activities. There is no one right way; use an ordering system that seems best to suit your purpose and the type of information you are working with.

For example, suppose you are writing about the last five Canadian Prime Mininsters for a psychology class. If you wish to show that their public decisions spring directly from negative issues in their personal relationships, you might order your information from most private to more public actions to clearly establish this connection. Or, if you wish to give the reader the impression that he is moving into increasingly intimate knowledge of personal foibles, you may choose the reverse, ordering your information from public to private.

Signal words  
Signal phrases, or transitions, typically used for classification papers include the following:

this type of... several kinds of... in this category... can be divided into... classified according to... is categorized by...

Classification requires that you invent (or discover) abstract categories, impose them on a concrete whole, and derive something new-a tall order that you can, nevertheless, manage if you resist the temptation to skip the brainstorming steps. Remember that clinical dissection is never an aim in itself; the point of classification is to reveal and communicate something meaningful.

How should I go about choosing my topic?

Classification Essay: think about the categories we place things in everyday and the characteristics of those categories. The topic you choose should allow you to argue that something has been misplaced.

How should I organize this essay?

As you write, keep these guidelines in mind:

1. Your [thesis statement](http://www.roanestate.edu/owl/Thesis-Statements.html) and introduction will need to explain why these classifications should matter to your reader.
2. Your thesis statement and introduction MUST define or explain the category you plan to discuss (i.e. A sport is a competitive, physical activity therefore cheerleading should be considered a sport.)
3. You should organize your body paragraphs so that each division or category has it's own paragraph or section. (i.e. cardio exercise is paragraph 1 and weightlifting is paragraph 2, etc.)

To write this type of essay, we'll need to think about things that should or should not be placed in a particular category.

Example: Batman (that's our topic!) is not a superhero (category people place him in), but is simply a local vigilante (category he belongs in).

Ask yourself: Why do I think that...?

* Does not possess super powers (powers most humans don't possess).
* Chooses to be a hero, rather than being "chosen" by others/other forces.

Example: Cheerleading (That's our topic!) should be considered a sport (It belongs in the category, "sports").

Ask yourself: Why do I think that...?

* cheerleaders go to "practice" and must be in good physical shape
* cheerleaders work together toward a common goal
* cheerleaders must "try out" for their squad and often compete against other squads

Sample essay#1

## Rehabilitative Therapies: Physical, Occupational, and Speech by Rebecca Patton

When many people hear the word "therapy," they think of something that has caused a problem and has to be fixed. In most cases, that is true. Most people think the problem may be an injury that has to be rehabilitated or an extreme mental problem where the person needs serious help. However, therapy does not always deal with injured or mentally troubled people. Three types of therapy that help a wide range of people with their problems are physical, occupational, and speech therapies.

Physical therapy is the one that deals mostly with injuries and their rehabilitation. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, "Physical therapists provide services that help restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent physical disabilities of patients suffering from injuries or disease" (205). Disabling conditions such as lower-back pain, cerebral palsy, arthritis, heart disease, and fractures, as well as physical injuries, are among the cases physical therapists often evaluate and treat. This therapy often includes strength-building exercises. Therapists in this field work on the person's flexibility, endurance, strength, balance, and coordination. Most therapy is done in specializing clinics or hospitals by a licensed physical therapist who has a bachelor's degree ("Physical").

Physical therapy is a fairly new practice of rehabilitation. The treatments were not widely practiced until after World War I when soldiers returned home with injuries that were able to be rehabilitated by this therapy. The profession immediately began to grow and has been popular in the U. S. since that time. The vocation is also expected to continue growing for several more years. But physical therapy is not the only type of therapy that involves the rehabilitation of injuries (The Princeton Review).

The other type of therapy that may deal some with injuries is occupational therapy. Enhancing fine motor skills is the focus of this therapy. Occupational therapists set a goal for their patients which enables them to have more "independent, productive, and satisfying lives" by teaching them how to perform daily functions without the aid of others. Some of these functions may include eating, getting dressed, or using the bathroom. Exercises that improve balance, coordination, trunk control, dexterity, and basic muscle movement are used towards a person's road to an easier lifestyle. Occupational therapists work mainly with people who have disabilities. These may include people with spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, or people who have had a stroke ("Occupational").

Occupational therapy is my current major of study, so I am doing volunteer work for several therapists right now at Parent-Child Services in West Knoxville. It is very interesting to sit and observe each session. I am presently observing a four-year-old victim of near drowning who was thought to be dead, but was brought back to life. His focus is on balance and coordination right now. I am also observing a child with cerebral palsy. He is one of my favorite children to work with. He is working on strengthening his muscles in his trunk and legs while continuing to work on balance and coordination. Most patients are treated with therapy in clinics, hospitals, or schools. An occupational therapist must have a bachelor's degree and be licensed by the state in order to practice. As well as physical and occupational therapy, speech therapy is another type of therapy that works with some disabilities and injuries.

Speech therapy is usually grouped with the other two but does not involve as much physical injury. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists help people who have speech and hearing defects. They identify the problem, then use tests to further evaluate it. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists also try to improve the speech and hearing defect by treating the patient ("Speech" 551). These therapists also treat patients with communication, voice, or swallowing problems. The person's problem may be a result of hearing loss, brain deterioration, stroke, or mental retardation. Speech therapists help a person with pronunciation of words, making sounds, or pitch control. For those who are hearing impaired, therapists may teach them sign language to help them better communicate with others. A great deal of this type of therapy takes place in specializing clinics while some takes place in schools, teaching children how to relate to others. All licensed speech therapists are required to have a master's degree to practice therapy ("Speech").

These three types of therapy--physical, occupational, and speech--are just a few that are offered to those with disabilities or injuries. Even though these are totally different in their realm of patients, problems, and solutions, the main goal of each therapist is to work with the patient to help them recover and live an easier lifestyle. Some people cannot fully recover, but all the help they can receive is a step forward. The job market for these services is continually growing as more and more people are beginning to need these treatments and services. These therapies have been very beneficial to an abundance of people over the years. The outlook for therapists in these fields looks good as employment is expected to increase at a rate faster than average through 2008.

Works Cited

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Sample essay #2

Different Computer Users

The sound of the keyboard typing away and the clicking of the mouse throughout the night has become a normal occurrence in every American household. Staying up until 3 or 4 in the morning, knowing work starts at 9AM is a characteristic of many computer users today. Since the invention of the computer, life has become much easier for humans. With the birth of the Internet communications now have limitless possibilities around the world. People are now able to communicate with others from all over the world, not even having to meet them face to face. With these two entities working together, computers have become a necessity for home users as well as businesses today. It has affected various aspects of our daily life and has advanced society towards the future. “The University of Cincinnati study found that problematic computer users tend to be most mesmerized by interactive pursuits--frequenting chat rooms and other multiuser domains, writing e-mail, surfing the Web, playing games” (Seaman par. 5)[DCS 4]. Although all computers are basically the same, hardware and software wise, people are known for using the computer for different purposes. Some use their computers for communication and others for a source of entertainment. There exists various types of computer users. [DCS 5]

The hacker spends most of their time breaking into other computers. The word hacker is synonymous with Internet crimes, but most people overlook the fact that they are highly intelligent individuals with a vast knowledge of computers. They spend their time trying to break through security systems of various networks connected to the Internet. There have been infamous hackers who have penetrated through the CIA database and others into credit card companies. There was even a movie made a couple years ago called Hackers, which told of the many exploits of hackers in high school. These people stay up for hours looking for codes and passwords for various systems on the Internet in the hopes of obtaining some valuable information. There are also many websites dedicated to this past time which educates the general public as well as new hackers to the game. They know how the computers operate and are usually very familiar with programming languages, so they can create their own programs to break passwords. Hackers are not really hurting anybody by the activities that they perform, they just do it for the experience and bragging rights for other hackers.

The game freaks are the people who spend their time playing games online. These are the people who stay up to till dawn shooting and dodging bullets from other people on the Internet. There are many games which incorporate the online play such as Counterstrike and Starcraft, just to name a few, that gamers all over the world are so addicted to. The first thing they do when they get on the computer is check for people playing online or start new games to play. Most of these gamers even have all the accessories for the whole online experience such as headphones with a microphone to hear other players and a special joystick that can be used instead of the regular keyboard. Some even show their pride for their favorite games by wearing t-shirts and other types of clothing, as well as putting up many posters in their room. They use the computer as an extension to the Play-station 2 and X Box, which can also be connected to the Internet and played online. Many of these gamers use their computers to scavenge the Internet for any new tips or strategy guides which will help them in their favorite games. Their main purpose of using the computer is to play various games and learn everything they can about each game. These individuals are addicted to playing games online, and can be seen staring in front of their computers until the sun comes up.

The shoppers are the people who are constantly surfing the Internet for the newest clothes or other types accessories. These people are the ones who are on E-bay watching auctions for days, waiting until the last minutes to outbid everyone else. They browse many websites such as Gap.com, Jcrew.com, Banana Republic.com, looking for the newest styles and colors of their favorite clothes. They stay up late at night just looking for the newest clothes or coolest gadgets out in the market right now. They want to be able to brag about their clothes which no one else has or how cheap they bought it for. Instead of going to the malls and looking for all these accessories, they just sit in their chair for hours and visit various websites on the Internet. If they do not have money at the time to purchase the item, they will bookmark their favorite sites and plan to buy them at a later time. They use the Internet to research new clothes and accessories instead of academic purposes. These people are addicted to buying stuff online and spend most of their time on the computer deals with looking for the best deals or where else it can be purchased. These users are probably the most expensive because of all the money that is involved with the shopping trend.

The downloaders are the people who use the computer mainly for the purpose of downloading anything that is free. These are the people who leave their computers on through the night or even through the day downloading music, movies, and pretty much anything that can be downloaded on the web. Programs such as Napster and Morpheus are just a few of the programs that these people are very familiar with. They might not know how to navigate the web with ease, but they will be able find any song or video using Morpheus. They know every function of each button in the Morpheus program and they are experts in the various techniques of searching for songs. Anyone who is familiar with computers will know something about these programs. These people spend hours on end looking for anything that is free on the Internet.

The e-mailers are the people who live to check their email accounts. These are the people who are checking their computer every hour on the hour just to check if anyone has emailed them recently. Email providers such as AOL and Hotmail are their favorite programs to use whenever they are logged onto the Internet. They prefer to use email as the main communication tool instead of using phones and even voicemails. They also jump at the chance to provide websites with email addresses, just so they can be added to their mailing list. They are also very happy to see they have new mail in their mailbox every time they open it up. Also, they are more than happy to reply to anyone who has emailed them, just for the satisfaction of receiving email. These people use the computer for mainly communication purposes by writing letters to their friends, colleagues, and family. They spend most of their time on the computer replying and writing new messages to certain individuals.

The chatters are the people who spend most of their time in chat rooms. These are the people who spend endless hours talking to people from all over the world in a chat rooms. Popular programs such as AOL offer various chat rooms for their members to choose from, which connect AOL users from all over the globe. They spend hours typing away, meeting new people, and making new friends in this online community. Their favorite program to use is the AIM software, AOL Instant Messenger, which runs in the background of the computer and enable communication with people who on their buddy list. Expert users even customize their type of font which is displayed to other users as well as adding an picture icon to their screen name. They can be seen typing away in various chat rooms meeting new people almost every night of the week. These are the people who you can see on the buddy list for almost half of the day even when they are at work or at home.

Each type of user is similar in a way that they spend many hours in front of their computer screen, staring and typing away through the night. Computers have made life much simpler for people as well as bringing together people from various regions on the planet. Not only has it made an impact on American culture, but as well as other countries. Most professions have been centered around computers such as programmers, network administrators, web page designers, etc.