**The Definition of an Essay**

The word *essay* comes from the French *essai*, a try or attempt. The essay is an attempt to communicate information, opinion, or feeling, and usually it presents an argument about a topic. In the university context, an essay is an exercise that gives the student an opportunity to explore and clarify thoughts about a subject.

An essay is a short piece of writing made up of several paragraphs joined together to discuss ***one single topic*.**The topic of an essay is relatively broad and complex; it cannot be discussed in detail in a single paragraph. Therefore, the writer needs to divide it into subtopics (fragment it) to be discussed separately in separate paragraphs.

**e.g.** Smoking is fatal habit that has bad effects on one’s health including lung cancer, risks of heart attacks and a damaged nervous system

(the topic ‘effects of smoking’ is divided into three subtopics, the underlined ones)