

Literary Analysis

ESSAY

An **essay** is a brief work of nonfiction that gives the author’s opinion on a subject. Its purpose may be to express ideas and feelings, to inform, to entertain, or to persuade. A formal essay is tightly structured and written in a serious, impersonal style. Sir Francis Bacon wrote essays to persuade the reader to accept his opinions. Bacon also used **aphorisms**, brief statements that express general observations about life in a witty, pointed way.

Directions: As you read the two essays, record sentences that show a serious, impersonal style and also sentences that show the use of aphorisms. Then answer the questions that follow.

“Of Studies”	“Of Marriage and Single Life”

1. What advantages did Bacon gain by using a formal essay form to present his ideas?
2. What disadvantages might this form have in communicating with his audience?