

Writing an academic essay

What should you consider when writing an academic essay?



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Planning an essay:

Questions to consider before writing your essay

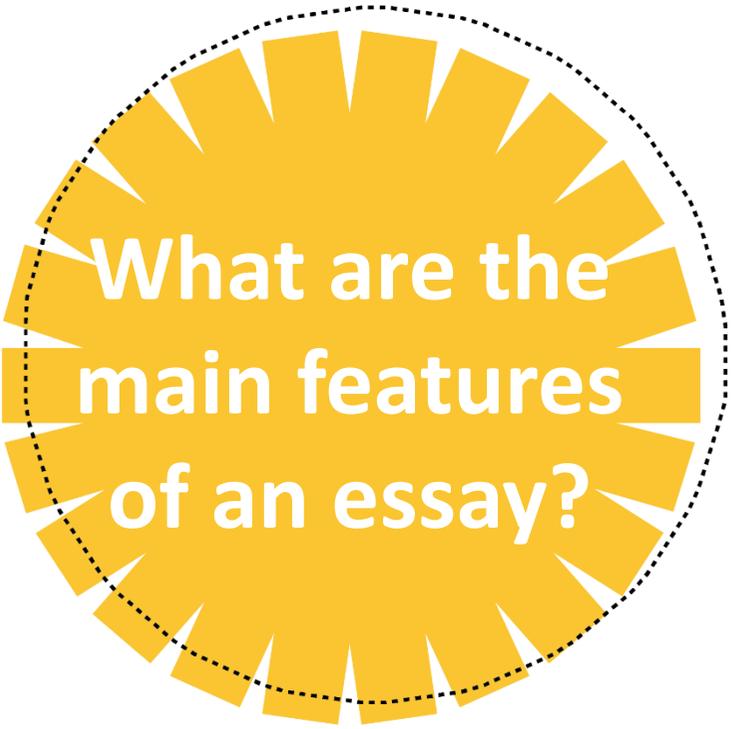
- What is my assignment brief? Do I understand the essay question/title?
- What must I include in my essay?
- Am I familiar with the assessment criteria?

Before you start writing - it is important you understand what you are expected to produce. Pick apart your assignment brief and ensure you understand what the essay question/title entails.

Pay attention to the assessment criteria. Think about what you need to include in your essay and what is not relevant.



Writing an essay



What are the
main features
of an essay?

- Introduction
- Main body of paragraphs
- Supporting evidence (references)
- Conclusion



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Writing an essay

An effective essay is well structured and is logically presented.

Academic essays are written in a formal way. Avoid using clichés, slang or contractions.

Use appropriate language. A well written essay includes academic vocabulary. However, before using a particular word – ensure you understand its meaning.



• Introduction

- An introduction should clearly inform the main content of your essay. It should demonstrate your interpretation of your assignment brief and the crucial issues that will be covered.
- Background – Set the context and explain what you will be exploring in your essay (Please remember in your introduction, you do not have to go into too much detail)
- Indicate the order of your discussion/inquiry

Some people prefer to polish up their introduction after they have written the essay. Editing and tightening up your introduction after you have written the main body and conclusion is a good idea.



- **Main body of paragraphs**
 - Signpost each paragraph
 - The first sentence of each paragraph should give a clear indication the topic/idea that will be explored
 - Paragraphs should not be too long or too short



- **Supporting evidence**

- Your essay should show evidence of wider reading. Referencing adds credibility to your work and promotes academic integrity.
- Remember if you paraphrase someone else's ideas or theories - you still have to reference in the main body of your essay as well as in the reference list.
- Back up any assertions (points) you make.
- Avoiding making vague or blanket statements. Support your points by referencing academic books, journals or articles.



- **Conclusion**

- Summarise the main parts/ideas of your essay
- Demonstrate a link back to the essay question/title
- Generally it is not advisable to introduce a new topic in the conclusion

