

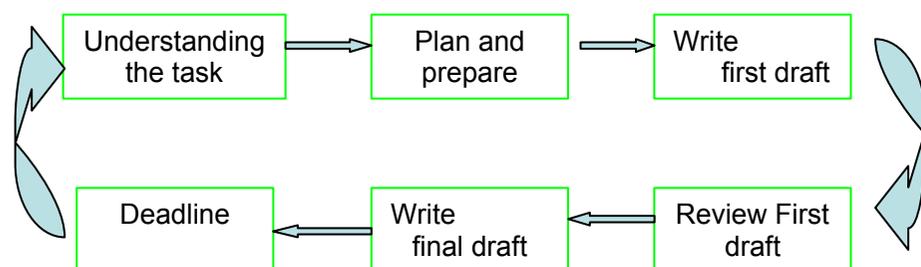
ESSAY WRITING

What is an Essay?

- An essay is a piece of structured writing
- Usually written in formal academic writing
- Analysis of the title
- Reason to do extra reading around your subject area
- Way to assess how well you understand a subject
- Method to consolidate the information you acquire in lectures, away on placement or in seminars.

Writing an Essay:

Essay writing is a process and needs to be done in various stages:



1. Understanding the task:

Types of Essays

a) Descriptive

- Usually specific e.g. Describe a method, Describe what happened, Describe the main features or functions, or Summarising the main points of a theory or article
E.g. - Does your house smell like fresh baked chocolate chip cookies?

b) Argumentative/analytical

- What? Why?
- Different opinions; for, against
- These need to be supported by examples or evidence (use Journals, Internet, Text books, your own views – some departments like to see personal opinion backed by fact)
E.g. - Should everyone go to university?

c) Evaluative (Compare and Contrast)

- Find similar points and show awareness of minor differences.
- Using different points, bring out the differences.
- A comparison shows how two things are alike.
- A contrast shows how two things are different.
E.g. - Write an essay comparing the weather in London and Barcelona.

d) Personal

- These are not usually used as academic writing. It is based entirely on personal experiences.
 - Involves a description of your personal experience
 - Analysis of your experience and its relation to your work, study, a theory etc.
- E.g. - How did you find your placement, discuss how it relates to your field of study.*

2. Plan and Prepare:

It is important to research your essay question and prepare a clear plan of what you are going to cover.

Sources of information to help you plan your essay:

Internet, textbooks, journals, questionnaires, lab work, lectures, friends, experience

3. The First Draft: Essay Structures

The Introduction

- Does the essay have a good opening/introductory paragraph?
- Is the topic clear?
- Is the thesis statement clear? Do you know where the essay is going?

The Body

- Is the body of the essay orderly? Are ideas in the best order?
- Does the writer present strong arguments/evidence?
- Are the writer's arguments convincing?

- Does the writer give enough evidence?

The Conclusion

- Is the conclusion clear?
- Does the conclusion restate the thesis?
- Does the conclusion give the reader closure?

4. Review the essay:

Overall Essay

- Does the essay follow essay format?

Grammar

- Are there run-ons, fragments, comma splices, endless sentences, or spelling errors?
- Does the writer have any problems with wordiness?
- Does everything *sound* right?

Proof-reading

This is a very important part of writing an essay, because badly structured sentences and incorrect spelling are not appreciated by the reader (marker)

Tips:

- Read it aloud – does it make sense?
- Look for typing and spelling errors – be aware that some may not be picked up by spellcheckers e.g. from and form.
- Reading your work backwards can prevent you skim reading through the essay.
- Note down mistakes that you make often, then you can use this as a checklist for the next time you write an essay, it will

remind you to be more careful about checking for them. e.g. its and it's

Referencing:

- Speak to the person who set the essay and find out which form of referencing they would like you to use.
- Library has some good information on referencing.

4. Review first draft:

Some people may need to rewrite and re-review the essay, this is perfectly acceptable.

5. Write final draft

Use feedback to help you with your next essay.

6. Deadline:

- Hand it in on time (or even early! – don't fiddle with it if it's finished)
- Give yourself a reward for a good piece of work

Summary

- Don't leave starting until the last minute
- Make an essay plan

- Don't lose yourself in research/reading – stay focussed on what you need
- Answer the question
- Make sure the final result looks good