

Writing and structuring essays

Essay writing improves with practice. It is best to keep your writing style simple and straightforward. Don't try to sound 'academic', but concentrate on expressing your points clearly. Also, always use your own words, unless you are actually quoting someone else, and be clear about plagiarism (see below).

Key points

- **Have a clear structure for your essay.**
- **Make a plan that works for you.**
- **Answer the question and address the relevant issues.**
- **Show evidence of reading – use evidence to support your points.**

Key features of essay structure

- **Introduction** – addresses the title, outlines key areas essay covers
- **Main body** – sections of essay, each with main arguments, evidence, references
- **Conclusion** – sums up key points, showing subject is addressed.

Use a plan to help – based on word count

- Intro and conclusion – roughly 10% each of the word count.
- Identify your main areas of discussion – decide an order.
- Roughly decide number of words for each section.
- Plan out main points, with examples and explanations.
- Write up sections roughly first.

Re-reading and improving

- Introduction – does it address the title, and introduce the structure?
- Is each section relevant? Does it answer the question?
- Do the sections follow each other in a clear way? Is structure clear?
- Have you used evidence, and given references?
- Is there a clear conclusion?

Things to improve

- **Check for 'flow'** – link sections with 'signpost' sentences to show how one section follows another.
- **Referencing** – check the method outlined in the module handbook.
- **Reference list or bibliography** at the end – check the format is right.