



ESSAY WRITING TIPS

What makes a good essay?

1. Assignment question - Do you understand what all the words in your assignment mean? Look them up. It is a good idea to write the title of the assignment in your own words to check that you really understand it.

2. Topic - Make sure that you have defined your topic. Are you sure that you understand what you should be writing about?

Sometimes questions are ambiguous (not clear) and you are not sure what your lecturer wants. ASK!

3. Time - Give yourself plenty of time. There is nothing worse than having to rush your research and then not having time to write it up properly. You should not try to write the essay all in one go. Give yourself time between drafts to think about what you have written.

4. Free writing - If you can't think of anything to write, then just write any old thing. It's called *free writing*. Just put all ideas that come to mind about the subject down on paper. Don't bother about editing what you are writing. Just write. When you read it over later you will probably find that you have some interesting ideas to follow up.

5. Writing structure/Introduction - If you are writing an assignment or project it isn't always a good idea to start with the introduction. Work out the main body of your argument and your conclusion. That makes it much easier to go back and write an introduction that links with the concluding paragraphs.

6. Writing structure/Body - Make sure that your essay is logical. Put your point of view forward clearly and tell the reader how you are going to argue your case. Make sure that you link your paragraphs and do not jump from one idea to another. Linking shows a connection between paragraphs and ideas.

7. Writing structure/Conclusion - Your conclusion should bring together all the different parts of your essay. Usually your concluding paragraph will summarise very briefly the main point/points of your essay. It allows you to point out why what you have said is significant.

8. Writing structure/Exams - In an exam when you don't have much time it is often a good idea to rephrase the question, e.g. if the question reads

Discuss the various stages of development in middle childhood, you can simply start by saying "In this essay the various stages of development in middle childhood will be discussed..." or even more simply "In this essay I will discuss the ...".