

STUDENT HANDOUT: ESSAY WRITING SKILLS

Organising writing an essay can be a complex process. Here is an idea to help you remain focussed and organised.

Introduction

- Topic Sentence (Main Idea for your paper)
- Example Sentence ~1 (Subtopic)
- Example Sentence ~2 (Subtopic)
- Example Sentence ~3 (Subtopic)
- Concluding Sentence that repeats the Main Idea

Paragraph 2: Example ~1

- Topic Sentence Example ~1 (from the Introduction)
- 3 Examples sentences that prove your Topic Sentence
- Concluding Sentence that repeats Example ~1

Paragraph 3: Example Paragraph ~2

- Topic Sentence Example ~2 (from the Introduction)
- 3 Examples that prove your Topic Sentence
- Concluding Sentence that repeats Example ~2

Paragraph 4: Example Paragraph ~3

- Topic Sentence Example ~3 (from the Introduction)
- 3 Examples that prove your Topic Sentence
- Concluding Sentence that repeats Example ~3

Paragraph 5: Conclusion

- Topic Sentence (Main Idea for your paper)
- Example Sentence ~1 (Subtopic)
- Example Sentence ~2 (Subtopic)
- Example Sentence ~3 (Subtopic)
- Concluding Sentence that repeats the Main Idea

After you have composed your essay, re-work it by adding complex sentences and more interesting vocabulary.

PLANNING is important for:

- ensuring you cover all the points in a coherent and logical order
- ensuring the paragraphs flow from one to the other
- developing a balanced argument and perspective
- developing each point to the full
- demonstrating your breadth **and** depth of knowledge

HOW TO PLAN:

- Read the **text/question** carefully
- **Highlight** the command words which tell you what to do: e.g. compare, explain, describe
- **Highlight** the words in the text which provide you with the information
- What is the question asking you to write about?
- **Brainstorm** all the ideas which come into your head and write **words** associated with this
- **Use bullet points, mind mapping or a web** to add information as it comes to you
- **Plan each paragraph** to flow one to the next, so the information is **organised**
- **A paragraph** must contain information which is related

INTRODUCTION:

- Begin with the **context**: set the scene for the essay
- Consider the topic and issues
- What will you focus on and what will you ignore?
- Add **background** information
- What assumptions will you make?
- Do any terms need defining?
- What is your hypothesis that you are trying to prove/disprove? This is the main point to be developed
- Explain what you will be covering within the main body and why you have chosen to focus on this aspect
- You may want to provide a brief summary of both of the main sides of the argument/main point

MAIN BODY:

- Develop into paragraphs – one point per paragraph
- Provide examples/quotes from your experience where appropriate
- Demonstrate the depth of your knowledge
- Think **critically and objectively**
- Develop the essay in a logical manner
- Weigh up **both** views
- Begin a new paragraph for a new topic or argument



SENDISS

Access-Achieve-Empower

SUMMARY/DRAWING A CONCLUSION:

- Sum up the main ideas
- Evaluate and weigh up the wider implications
- What is your personal view: state your personal opinion, if appropriate
- What don't we know?
- Avoid a sudden ending – draw to a close
- Be sure not to add anything new -only sum up what you have discussed within the main body

PROOFREADING:

- Spelling – particularly subject-specific vocabulary
- Check the tenses are correct
- Content – Is there anything else you can add? Anything missing?
- Punctuation – can this be improved to effect?
- Vocabulary: are there any repeated words, is there another way of saying something?
- Have you answered the question?