

Essay Plan

Introduction (5-10% of your word count)

- Introduce the main subject and state your objectives, e.g. 'This essay will examine X using the theories surrounding Y and will consider its importance in relation to Z'.
- State the focus of your essay by outlining which aspects you will examine in detail.
- Say how the essay will be organised, e.g. 'It will begin by defining...and will move to an analysis of ...Finally it will provide a ...' This shows your reader that your essay and ideas will follow a logical sequence.
- First things last! It's okay to write your Introduction last. The reading and essay-writing process can make us re-think what we have set out to do and it is up to you if the content of your discussion changes as a result. Whichever way you do it, make sure that the Main body of your essay matches what you have announced you will do in your Introduction.

Main body (80-90% of your word count)

- Start with the background information and set the scene for the reader. Point to the major issues, theories or information the reader needs to understand the discussion.
- Create clear and structured paragraphs. You could use a model such as S.E.E.D. to help with this: Begin your paragraph with a Statement/idea/notion; Expand or explain this and include Evidence in the form of references; conclude the paragraph with a sentence (or two) which shows Development or new insight in relation to the point in the opening sentences.
- Academic writing should sound confident so make sure you have read and understood the subject, and terms and definitions, before you write about it.
- Use language that provides a link between paragraphs, e.g. 'Having explored the factors surrounding X and Y, it appears that there are links with X which require greater analysis'. This will help to guide your reader through the key points in your essay and you are less likely to stray from the essay title.

Conclusion (5-10% of your word count)

- Your conclusion should be a summary of the key issues explored in the Main body and, if possible, you should state a position or point of view that answers the assignment question and, importantly, is based on the evidence in your essay.
- Your conclusion should give a sense of completion and indicate what the essay has achieved, e.g. 'This essay has found that ...'
- You should not simply repeat details of all points made in the Main body.
- Conclusions can be the place to suggest new ideas or possibilities if they stem from the points raised in the essay; it shouldn't include any new information or anything that you haven't already discussed.