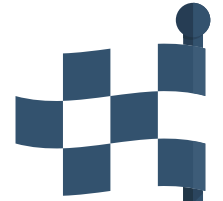


How to Structure an Essay



BEFORE YOU START

What is your argument or thesis statement?

In most essays you will be **setting out an argument**. This means using evidence from your primary texts or sources to convince the reader of something. It doesn't need to be something argumentative – it could be discussing a theme that carries through a narrative or how an author uses language in a certain way. You don't need to come up with something new no one has ever written about before. You just need to focus on **a main point** and structure your essay around this. This is sometimes called **a thesis statement** but whatever you call it, you need to have it planned out before you start!

Read the essay question and look for the command words

Essay questions often start with or include key phrases or command words that let you know how to answer it. We have listed some common ones below!

Analyse

Examine the parts of something in detail, such as a theme, topic or situation

Compare and Contrast

Identify similarities and/or differences between two or more things

Describe

Give an account or detailed description of something including key facts, information and events

Discuss

Set out both sides of an argument (for and against) and come to a conclusion

Evaluate

Consider several options, ideas, or arguments, and come to a conclusion about their importance, success, worth or validity

Examine

Give a detailed account or description of the topic

Justify

Give evidence to support an answer

How to Structure an Essay



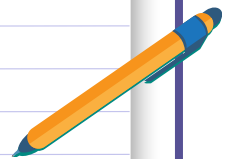
WRITING YOUR ESSAY

Introduction and conclusion

Your introduction

The start of the essay. It should set out your main point or argument and then explain what they can expect to see in your essay and in what order. This helps prepare the reader for what they will be reading and understand what to expect.

Essay 



Your conclusion

The end of the essay. It should summarise your argument and main points, and then draw this together with a final comment answering the essay question. If you have followed our tips and planned out what you want to say, it should be quite easy to sum up your argument at the end of the essay.

P.E.E.L Paragraphs

When writing paragraphs, you just need to remember to P.E.E.L:

P – POINT

Introduce and make the point

E – EXAMPLE

Support your point with evidence, for example a quote from the text

E – EXPLAIN

Explain how your point and evidence works for your argument and in the context of your essay e.g. analyse and comment on the quote you have used or point you have made

L – LINK

Link your paragraphs together and back to your main point or argument

If you follow the P.E.E.L structure, you can write a paragraph about each supporting point for your main argument or thesis statement. Each paragraph will then build up and support your argument. It will also make it easier to write a conclusion at the end: each paragraph will contain one point to be summarised.

How to Structure an Essay

WRITING YOUR ESSAY

Top tips

1

Read the essay question and circle the command words

These words will help you understand what kind of essay you need to write and what the examiner is looking for in your answer

2

Take the time to plan

Make a list of bullet points or a mind map with your main points or evidence before you start

3

Get your evidence ready

Spend a bit of time writing down key quotes, or making a note of when things happen in the story, this will help you find them again later

4

Remember to include an introduction and conclusion

This helps the reader understand your argument by knowing what you are going to say, and then summing up at the end

5

Use P.E.E.L paragraphs

This will help you make sure you support each point you are making with evidence and that you are linking back to your main argument

