

HOW TO WRITE THE ESSAY

Some helpful advice on doing the essay

Contents

Assessment Criteria	3
How to submit.....	3
How to write the assignment.....	4
In the Introduction.....	4
Writing the Middle Sections	4
Conclusion.....	5
Referencing.....	5
Plagiarism.....	6

Assessment Criteria

- **Writing Style:** Well-structured sentences, i.e. clearly expressed, easy to understand, not too long. Paragraphs are coherent and refer to an identifiable topic. Out of 10.
- **Evidence of Research:** Reputable sources used (e.g. published books, educational or government websites). Key facts and evidence referenced in the text. Out of 10.
- **Content:** Important aspects of the essay topic successfully covered. Not too much irrelevant material unconnected to the main argument. All relevant course material is referenced. Out of 10.
- **Coherence of Argument:** Argument clearly stated, sections logically ordered and linked, counter arguments discussed, sensible conclusions drawn. Out of 12.
- **Correct APA Style:** Bibliography correctly formatted, citations used appropriately and correctly formatted (zero if APA style not used). Out of 8.
- **Overall Impression:** How did it all fit together? Depth of thought, arriving at a satisfying understanding of the issues, care taken over details. Out of 10.

How to submit

Use Turnitin submission link in L@G (further down the same page that you obtained this document) no later than midnight on Friday of Week 10.

Late penalties apply (10% of total mark for each day late). The weekend counts as one day. So, if you submit on the Monday of the week following the Friday due date, 20% will be deducted from the mark you would have received had the assignment been handed in on time. Submit it five days late, and 50% is deducted.

How to write the assignment

In the Introduction

The first sentence of an introduction needs to capture the reader's interest and make a general assertion about the topic. For instance, you could say *"The pace of technological change has been proceeding exponentially for the past 50 years."*

You then need to briefly justify your assertion, and give the reader a flavour of the topic.

The main purpose of the introduction is to capture the reader's interest and give a general background to the rest of the essay. One approach could be to describe the historical background of technology development since the Second World War.

Then, the introduction needs to summarise the rest of the essay. The idea is for the reader to get an overall idea of the content of the full essay, so that he or she can decide whether it is worth reading further. Therefore, the introduction should end with a guide to the rest of the document. For example, you could say: "In the next section we introduce ..."

Writing the Middle Sections

The middle sections, or body of the document, are where you present the details of your work. Each section requires a well-defined topic, with each paragraph addressing a single aspect of that topic. It should be easy for a reader to identify the topic you are discussing at any point in the essay. Paragraphs and sections need to be linked by some kind of logical association. This may be chronological, i.e. starting with the original ideas that preceded the development of the machine or idea and then describing how the machine or idea evolved year by year, or you may prefer to divide a topic up by the different areas needed for an overall understanding.

Whichever categorization you select, it is important to make things obvious to the reader. Section topics are given by the section title, but the first sentence should also make the topic clear. Sub-paragraphs, within a section, can be given optional subheadings, but the topic of the paragraph should emerge clearly with or without a heading.

A good way to think of sections and paragraphs is that they are like mini-essays in their own right. Each section needs an introductory and concluding paragraph, to introduce and describe the section's topic and then to summarise what the section has said. Just like the middle sections of the essay, the middle paragraphs of a section provide the actual details, with all the details relating to the topic of the paragraph. Similarly, a paragraph requires an introductory and concluding sentence. A good concluding sentence not only sums up the main point of a paragraph, but can also provide a link to the next paragraph (this may sometimes require two sentences, depending on your writing style and the general flow of the essay).

The main quality that should emerge from your work is that of an organic unity. Everything in the essay should link together and flow. This requires planning the document in advance, so that you understand the logical structure behind what you are saying. Then each sentence should be logically linked to its successor, both in terms of content and with the judicious use of connectives (i.e., hence, therefore, in addition, consequently, as a result of this, etc). Sentences link to form paragraphs, which logically link to form sections, which create the finished document.

Conclusion

A summary or conclusion (as with an introduction) is a necessary part of an essay, and is used to sum up the body of the material presented. Therefore, it should not introduce any new idea rather it should pull out and simply re-express the most important ideas that have already been explained. An exception to this rule is the final paragraph of a conclusion, which may be used to describe any future work that may arise out of the ideas you have presented.

In a piece of persuasive writing, the conclusion is often used to drive the main point of an argument home to the reader. However, in this essay, the purpose is to be descriptive and explanatory. Therefore, the conclusion should present an overview of where you see technology going in the years to come.

Referencing

Your essay must be based on a range of source documentation, and all sources must be properly referenced. For the purposes of this course, we shall use the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing standard. All referencing standards are precise, and the APA standard is no exception. While there is an APA publication manual, which would be cited as follows: (American Psychological Association, 2001), there are other on-line resources that explain in detail how to reference printed material and electronic resources (Lesley University, 2005). You are strongly advised to use these sources. Please pay special attention in laying out your references and citations, as the correct use of indents, commas, semi-colons, ampersands, etc, must be strictly respected in academic writing.

In particular, you must use in text citations to show the sources of your work, for example (Smith, 2005) after you have written about what Smith has said. You must include the source, (in this example Smith) in your list of references. However, this is only the first part of referencing. Every time you rely on information from one of your references in your essay you also have to provide an in text citation. For example, Gottfried Leibniz is famous for inventing the stepped drum mechanism (Thornton, 2007). In the previous sentence, the in text citation links back to the referenced book or article. If you use an in text citation there must be a corresponding reference in your reference list and the name that starts the reference must also be the name you use in the in text citation. Conversely, every reference in your reference list must be cited in the essay at least once (otherwise it is a bibliography).

An in text citation simply contains the name of the author followed by a comma and the date of publication all contained in brackets. You can also include the page number in a citation. This is optional if you have paraphrased a source (i.e. expressed it in your own words), but if you quote something then you must include the page number.

If you quote more than 40 words then you should indent the whole quotation. In text citations where there are two authors are handled as follows: Heisenberg's proposal of the uncertainty principle (Wheeler & Zurek, 1983) caused the whole notion of determinism in science to be questioned. Citations with more than two authors just contain the first author's name followed by et al. (Brooks et al., 1995).

Plagiarism

Do not just copy and paste text from on-line sources into your essay without referencing them. In other words do not pass off someone else's writing as your own. This is academic misconduct. The online plagiarism checker will detect this and report it to the course convenor, and this could get you a zero for that assessment item. You can use other people's ideas, expressing them in your own words, that is fine. You should also mention whose ideas they were, for example "Marshall McLuhan observed that consumers in the 20th Century ..." and have a reference in APA style at the (i.e. McLuhan, Marshal, 1976, *The Medium is the Message*, Viking Press, New York).