

Academic Style:

Academic style differs from other writing in that the language used is *formal, objective and cautious*.

Use the following academic conventions:

- use standard English and avoid slang terms, clichés and colloquial expressions. Also avoid non-conventional abbreviations
- write in the third person unless otherwise directed
- avoid emotive, abusive and culturally inappropriate language
- avoid direct quotes—paraphrase in your own words
- do not use point form
- be direct (use active rather than passive voice) and be concise.

The Academic Essay:

- addresses a question through **critical analysis**;
- is **persuasive**;
- is **evidence based**;
- contains a problem or **thesis statement**.



Steps in Essay Writing Process:

Understand the **topic** by carefully *analysing the question*. Identify **task words** (verbs that direct you), **content words** (define topic areas and focus research and reading) and **limiting words** (focus topic area further).

Create an **outline** (essay plan) to organize thoughts and identify connections and links between ideas.

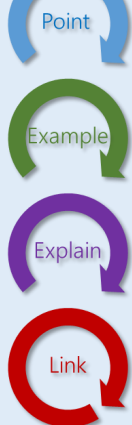
A **thesis statement** is essentially an answer to the question and it is this that will be argued throughout your essay based on *evidence* available through your **research**.

Write an initial draft to sort structure and framework, identify which evidence and examples you will use and how your argument will be logically structured.

Review and revise your drafts. Ensure sentence and paragraph structure are appropriate, the essay flows and that the paragraphs are in a logical order.

Your academic essay must be evidence-based, so ensure you have provided appropriate **references**. Ensure references are correctly cited in the text and in the reference list.

Writing paragraphs:



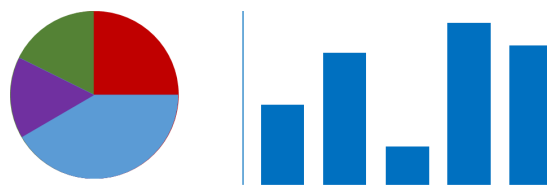
Paragraphs generally follow a common structure:

- Introduce and make the **point** (*topic sentence*)
- Support the point with evidence, research, references, or an **example**. *Developing sentences* extend on or amplify the topic sentence
- Analyse and comment on the reference/example. **Explain** why it works in the context of the essay question and the argument you are making (*thesis statement*)
- **Link** the point to the next point (next paragraph) and to the essay question (main topic) or make a conclusion about the point in question (in the context of your thesis statement)
- make only one point per paragraph.

Tables & Figures:

Only include tables and figures in an academic essay if:

- they add to the argument – any table/figure needs to illustrate a point being made and is not merely provided for aesthetics
- they are specifically referred to in the text of the essay
- they are of reasonable resolution that they can be read either on-screen or in printed version
- there is not an excessive use of tables/figures.



Formatting:

- follow any marking scheme/rubric provided
- word processed (A4 'portrait' page set up), 12 pt font (unless otherwise specified)
- minimum 2.5 cm margins and minimum 1.5 line spacing
- number all pages consecutively and observe any page/word limits
- use appropriate **Assignment Template/Cover Sheet** if provided.

Referencing:

- all ideas, statements or materials from other people's work must be appropriately attributed
- statements of fact or opinion that is not common knowledge must be supported by appropriate evidence (either your own or that of another person(s))
- references cited in the body of the essay must be correctly listed in the Reference section
- check that all reference details are correct and that references are formatted in the recommended style

Introduction ➔ Body ➔ Conclusions

Essay Structure:

- clearly set out the problem, provide a thesis statement and an overview in the **Introduction**. Ensure Introduction has correctly identified the topic, purpose and structure of the essay
- ensure important points in the **main body** are supported by evidence, argument or examples.
- ensure the **conclusion** is directly related to the original question/problem stated and summarize the main arguments.



Before you Submit!

- **Check your assignment requirements**, paying particular attention to any marking scheme/rubric.
- **Proofread your essay before submission** making sure all sentences make sense, paragraphs are well-structured and linked, and grammar and spelling are correct.