

How to Write an Academic Essay

1. Analyse the Prompt

- Understand the essay prompt.
- Identify key words and instructions.
- Clarify any confusing terms or questions.

2. Identify the Topic

- Identify the topic that aligns with the prompt.
- Ensure it's both interesting and manageable.
- Brainstorm ideas and narrow down your focus.

3. Conduct Research

- Gather sources from academic journals, books, and reputable websites.
- Evaluate the credibility of each source.
- Organise your research notes for easy reference.

4. Create an Outline

- Create an outline to structure your essay.
- Include an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Use bullet points for main ideas and supporting details.

Essay Front Page

- Essay title
- Your name
- Student number
- Name of the recipients of the report (lecturer)
- Date of the report (submission date)
- Module code & module name

5. Write the Introduction

- Begin with a hook to engage the reader (quote, statistic, anecdote).
- Introduce your thesis statement clearly (Your main argument or claim).
- Provide context for your argument (Briefly introduce the background or relevance of your topic)

Example Introduction: "Despite advances in technology, printed books remain pivotal in fostering literacy. Studies show that reading physical books enhances comprehension and retention, highlighting the indispensable value of print in the digital age."

6. Develop Body Paragraphs

- Topic Sentence: Introduce the main idea of each paragraph.
- Evidence and Analysis: Provide support from scholarly sources, followed by your interpretation.
- Connection: Link the paragraph back to your thesis statement.

Example Body Paragraph: "A 2018 study by the National Literacy Trust indicates that children who read printed books daily are more likely to exhibit superior reading skills than their peers who read digitally. This evidence supports the thesis by demonstrating the unique benefits of physical books for young readers."

7. Write the Conclusion

- **Summary of Main Points:** Briefly reiterate the essay's key arguments.
- **Restated Thesis:** Present your thesis in light of the evidence discussed.
- **Closing Remark:** End with a call to action, question, or reflection on the significance of your findings.

Example Conclusion: "In conclusion, while digital innovations continue to transform how we read, the enduring benefits of printed books cannot be overlooked. Their contribution to literacy and learning affirms the necessity of maintaining access to physical books alongside digital formats."

8. Review for Structure

- Check for coherence and flow between paragraphs.
- Ensure your argument is clearly presented.
- Use transition words for smoother connections.

9. Edit for Language

- Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- Refine sentence structure for clarity.
- Replace overused words with synonyms.

10. Check Citations

- Ensure all sources are correctly cited.
- Use the required citation style (Harvard)
- Include a Reference list.

Reference List

- Alphabetical order
- List of authors/sources quoted in report
- Meet at least the minimum required
- Relevant and peer reviewed
- UWTSD Harvard referencing
- In-text citations: essential to avoid plagiarism
- At end for whole report

11. Final Review

- Read your essay aloud to catch errors.
- Get feedback from peers or instructors.
- Make final adjustments based on feedback.

12. Time Management Tips

- Plan your writing schedule to avoid rushing.
- Take breaks to maintain focus and creativity.
- Seek help from writing centers or online resources if stuck.

13. Post-Submission Reflection

- Understand the feedback for future improvement.
- Reflect on the writing process to develop skills.
- Celebrate your accomplishment and learn from the experience.

Recommended reading

Greetham, B. (2018) How to Write Better Essays, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London.

Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. Via UWTSO library