

## Coherence

After selecting your essay material you will need to see that the order, sequence and balance are correct.

Check your arguments and points are logically arranged.

You will need to look at where / how to make links between your paragraphs. Remember to try and create a flow to your argument rather than jerky, disjointed ideas.

The links are an important consideration. Use them to refer back to the original wording of the essay, reinforce your points and indicate what is going to be discussed next.

## Writing Your Essay

- Use your plan to write your first draft. Wait a day before you read it through and edit it.
- Write a second draft. Review the second draft – look at content, arguments, style, presentation and bibliography.
- Give in your third draft as the final version.
- Keep copies of all stages of planning and drafting. Give your essay in ahead of deadline.

**Lecturers like a well presented piece of work. Word processing your essay is a good idea. This allows you to edit your work to produce high standards.**

Learning Support  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, All Saints  
Building  
Oxford Road  
Manchester  
M15 6BH

Tel: 0161 247 3491  
Minicom: 0161 247 3374  
Fax: 0161 247 6852  
E-mail: [l.support@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:l.support@mmu.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.mmu.ac.uk/lisu](http://www.mmu.ac.uk/lisu)



# The Learning Support Guide to: Essay Writing

When you first start to write your essay, this is the moment of truth – when you actually have to put pen to paper!

Most of your essays will be between 1500 – 4000 words. It is essential for you to know the importance of the essay within your entire course. The essay may be the sole assignment for a particular unit, part of a continuous assessment or it may be an exam essay and count towards your final grade.

**Get the course handout on the breakdown of how the essay is to be marked, i.e. learn what the weighting for areas such as knowledge, evidence of reading, reasoned argument, original ideas, coherence, style, punctuation, etc. will be.**

It's not easy to write essays but a good way to start is to work backwards from your deadline. This should help you to work out exactly how much time you have to plan, read and research the essay subject.

## Planning

The most important point to remember when writing an essay is to see that your style is academic, i.e. it makes criticisms and arguments and is not a chatty, informal narrative. Lecturers look for a well structured, balanced essay which shows logical reasoning and coherence.

### To help your planning:

- Spend time examining the exact wording of the essay title. Every word is there for a purpose and matters.
- Highlight the specific subject words and concepts and then scrutinize directive words, e.g. discuss, compare.
- Even something as basic as writing in response to a question or a statement will influence your essay structure and style.

In order to write your essay you must plan, then read and research and, finally, write. Here's a useful guide on how to do this:

### 1. Note down initial ideas

Note down your first ideas and thoughts as a list. The sequence of ideas is not important at this stage. Try to do this as soon as you get the essay title. Number each idea.

### 2. Second thoughts

Wait a day or two and then look critically at your ideas. Add, omit or amalgamate your ideas. Throw out any weak points. Check that you have not repeated an identical point. Note the examples needed to support your ideas.

## 3. Research

At this point you should be able to see clearly:

- What you already know.
- What supporting examples you will need to find.
- What gaps you have – these should be the focus for your reading and research.

### The Basic Shape of Your Essay

#### Introduction – say what you're going to say.

Comment on the topic of the essay: what you understand by it, what are the main issues.

#### The Main Body – split into topic sections.

Each main point needs a separate paragraph. Note the examples or statistics needed in support. Remember a good essay should flow like a river. Make sure your sections are arranged in a logical order to guide the reader through the topic.

#### Conclusion- say what you've just said.

Summarise your main ideas. Offer a firm conclusion based upon the evidence / arguments provided. Point out wider implications, future trends and scope for further investigation. End positively.

#### You may find it easier to write the essay by planning the conclusion first and introduction last.

**It may help to mind map your ideas initially then translate this into an essay plan.**