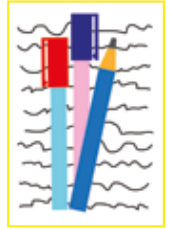




TOP TIPS TO IMPROVE ESSAY WRITING

1. WRITING UP



What is driving your writing?

Don't forget the title of your essay. Everything you write should be there to justify the stance you are taking. Watch out for rabbit holes or dead ends that you might get stuck down. Is what you have written earning its keep, or it is just filling up space?

Using evidence

When you write, make sure that quotes are there to add weight to what you are saying, not to take the place of your voice. Avoid putting in a large chunk of a quote; try and paraphrase it or just use a small section which you then explain.

Write for your reader

When you write, remember that someone will read it, so make it as clear as possible. Avoid big words or academic sounding sentences that you are using to try to sound clever. Make sure you understand what a word means - use it because it fits your sentence rather than because it sounds academic. Try and write without waffle and stay on point.

Get the tone right

Academic writing tends to be cautious in the claims it makes - could, may, might, possibly, probably, suggests and tends are all useful words. You should always back up any claims you make with relevant texts. Make sure you balance your argument - try not to just use examples that agree with you, try to see the argument from other viewpoints.

Are your sources reliable?

The sources you use to back up your claims need to be from reliable sources. Look for academic text books and peer-reviewed journal articles rather than websites and videos. Make sure you reference them correctly - check out the referencing guidelines for your university.

Use a clear structure

Ensure you follow a logical structure to your essay. Can you read it aloud and it makes sense? Also check that each sentence and paragraph makes sense within its self and in the overall context. Imagine you are telling a story and try not to jump your ideas around.

Follow academic conventions

Clichés, such as 'in this day and age' are overused phrases and are padding. Always write in full sentences, but avoid making them overly long. Lists should only be used to explain something that has many parts. Do not contract words - use full words, for example, use do not rather than don't. Make sure that tables, etc. are clearly labelled and signposted in the text. Supplementary information and tables should be put in the appendix (only embed things which are key points).

Draft, edit and proofread

Do not submit your first draft. Take the time to edit, redraft and proofread. Try reading it aloud or changing the font to help you notice errors you might otherwise miss.



TOP TIPS TO IMPROVE ESSAY WRITING

2. PUNCTUATION



’ Apostrophe

These are used to show ownership; e.g. *This is Sam’s car* (This doesn’t apply to *its*, *his hers* or *theirs*). Apostrophes are also used to contract words; e.g. *do not* becomes *don’t*. Contracted words are not common usage in academic writing. **Apostrophes are not used to form plurals**

() Brackets

Also known as parentheses; these are used to add extra information at the end of a sentence; e.g. *This is a sentence (which can also contain parentheses)*.

● Colon

Colons are used before the start of a list or a lengthy quotation: “James went to university”. The things he took with him included shoes, chocolate and a guitar.

’ Comma

These are used to give a slight pause in a sentence, to help with its meaning. They help to make more sense when reading, give clarity and break up lists.

— Dash

(See also Hyphen) This can be used in two ways—a long dash with no spaces is used the same way a colon is. A short dash with a space either side is used in the same way as brackets - it allows for extra information.

●●● Ellipsis

Three dots signify the trailing off of or pause in a sentence; e.g. I don’t know... It may be I need help.

! Exclamation Mark

These are used to show a strong emotion. They are not appropriate for academic writing, although you may use them if you are quoting someone who was speaking in an excited way.

● Full Stop

These indicate the end of a sentence. They also show a word that has been shortened; e.g. My address is 16 Green Cl., Brighton.

— Hyphen

(See also Dash) A hyphen is used to join two words to make meaning clear; e.g. I go to a Metal-friendly pub. If it was written: ‘I go to a Metal friendly pub’, it could mean a friendly pub made of metal.

You also use a hyphen to break up words when they carry onto a new line.

? Question Mark

Use this at the end of a sentence, which is a question (it replaces the full stop).

“ ” Quotation marks

These show when speech is being written or another text is being quoted; e.g. Sharon said “I love your blue hair”. 2019’s highest-paid Hip-Hop artist has been announced: “Kanye Tops Jay-Z To Claim Crown” (Forbes, 2020).

● Semi colon

These are used to link two related sentences together; e.g. We have paid our student fees on time each year; we expect to have certain conditions met by the university. They are also used before a joining word such as but, however plus and - but only when it links two separate issues; e.g. I went to the shop to buy some fruit and cakes. I went to the shop to buy some cakes; and on the way home I ate them all.

LINKING WORDS IN ESSAYS

Make sure you know what they mean before you use them!
That's what Google is for...

and

along with
also
as a consequence
as well as
furthermore
in addition
including
moreover
together with

because

as a result of
consequently
therefore
thus
owing to
due to
considering
now that
since
thanks to

before, now and next

after
behind
consequently
earlier
finally
first
first of all
firstly
former
in the end
later
latterly
meanwhile
next
now
previously
prior
subsequently
succeeding
then
thereafter
overall
to recap

summary

generally
in brief
in other words
in short
on the whole
overall
to recap
in conclusion

emphasis

above all
especially
in particular
indeed
mainly
notable
primarily
significantly
specifically

for example

as shown by
demonstrated by
e.g.
for instance
illustrated by
one example
in the case of
such as

so

accordingly
consequently
for this reason
therefore
hence
in this way
that is why

like

as with
Comparing
equally
in common with
in the same way
likewise
similarly

but

although
apart from
as if
as long as
conversely
except
in contrast
instead
however
nevertheless
on the other hand
still
though
unless
yet

therefore

as a consequence
as a result
consequently
equally
ergo
hence
in consequence
in that event
properly
respectively
so
subsequently
suitably
then
therefore
thus
under the circumstances

unlike

alternatively
conversely
having said that
however
in contrast
nevertheless
nonetheless
notwithstanding
whereas



SENTENCE STARTERS FOR CRITICAL WRITING

Some sentences are in the first person/reflective (written as if I am speaking about myself - I can relate to this because...) and some are third person (The reader can infer from this text that...).

Which style will you be writing in? Which can be used in either context?

A possible solution for this would be

Another thing to consider is

Because of this

Demonstrating that

I can relate to this because

I discovered

I found myself wondering

I was reminded that

I wonder why

If ___ could be applied to ___ then

If this were applied to

In this context however

It is clear therefore, that

Leading to the supposition that

My first impression of this was

The implication being

The inference to be drawn from this is

The reader can infer from this text that

The reader supposes

The significance/implications of

The suggestion here is that

The supposition drawn from this being that

The use of the word ____ conveys

The writing made me form an opinion about

Therefore

This argument is convincing as

This compares/contrast with

This could be transferable/applicable to

This demonstrates

This describes how

This emphasises the fact that

This explains how

This implies

This indicates

This is important because

This justifies

This made me think about

This makes me think of

This persuades us to

This proves

This shows that

This suggests

This text reveals

This would suggest

ADD SOME OF YOU OWN:

