

# Writing Essays

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## Session objectives

- Focus on writing process instead of product
- Look at the phases of writing
- Explore strategies for starting writing earlier
- Understand the importance of structure to an academic essay
- Review examples
- Learn about some useful writing resources

## Essay Writing Phases

- Planning
- Thinking
- Researching
- Writing
- Editing

## Planning time frame

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ List tasks</li> <li>- Preliminaries</li> <li>- Gathering Information</li> <li>- Organising Information</li> <li>- Rough outline</li> <li>- Draft 1</li> <li>- Draft 2</li> <li>- References</li> <li>- Proofreading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Create deadlines</li> <li>- _____</li> <li>- _____</li> <li>- _____</li> <li>- _____</li> <li>- _____</li> <li>- _____</li> <li>- _____</li> <li>- _____</li> </ul>
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<http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/ai/ask/index.php>

## Planning the assignment

- Requirements
  - Length, Wording
  - Referencing
- Understand the question
  - Breakdown
  - Verbs



## Example of Topic

**Examine** the general categories of stressors that can be experienced by an individual at work and **describe** the likely consequences of prolonged stress levels for that individual.

Examine = Present in depth & investigate implications

Describe = set out main aspects of topic or sequence of things

## Analyse the assignment



- Write down in your own words what you think the assignment is asking you to do
- What do you already know about the subject matter?
- What background info do you need to help you complete the assignment?
- How are you going to choose your reading material?

## Thinking

- Initial ideas
- Brainstorm
  - Mind maps
  - Lists
  - Drawings
  - Discussion/Audio
  - Post-it notes
- Initial plan!
- Preliminary reading




## Outlines are your recipe

planning		<p>What do you want to say?</p> <p>Structure</p>
writing		<p>Communicating your ideas</p>

## Structure

- Introduction
  - outline of essay
- Main section
  - Main point A
    - details, evidence
  - Main point B
- Conclusion
  - summary of main points
  - personal conclusions



<p><b>I. Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitions of Stress</li> <li>Views of Stress</li> <li>General Categories of Stressor</li> <li>Consequences of Stress</li> </ul> <p><b>II. Main Point (A) - Views of Stress</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Physiological</li> <li>2. Psychological</li> <li>3. Job Stress</li> </ol> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Summary and identification of categories</p> <p><b>III. Main Point (B) - Categories</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organisational</li> <li>2. Home-work, Interface, Life stress</li> <li>3. Individual</li> </ol> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Evaluation of categories and their impact</p> <p><b>IV. Main Point (C) - Consequences</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Physical</li> <li>2. Behavioural</li> <li>3. Psychological</li> </ol> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Summary of impact</p> <p><b>V. Conclusion</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Summary of main points and personal conclusions</p>
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## Reading & Researching

- Use rough **outline** as guide
- Gather information relevant to topic
- Keep good notes
  - Organise content according to outline
  - **Choose** what to include
- Types of **evidence** to support points?
  - Quotes
  - Tables
  - Paraphrasing

## Reading & Researching

- Keep references!
- Digest and reflect on information  
Continue your **thinking!**



## Writing

- Start writing early
  - extend outline
  - one idea or section at a time
  - get something down!
- Write first, rough draft
- Revise & improve draft
- How many drafts?



## What is a paragraph?

- A group of sentences
- What groups them?
- One idea



## Paragraph structure



Students require more recreational time in order to better focus on lessons in class. In fact, studies have shown that students who enjoy a recess of more than 45 minutes consistently score better on tests immediately following the recess period. Clinical analysis further suggests that physical exercise greatly improves the ability to focus on academic materials. Longer periods of recess are clearly required to allow students the best possible chances of success in their studies. Clearly, physical exercise is just one of the necessary ingredients for improving student scores on standardized tests.

## Paragraph structure



Students require more recreational time in order to better focus on lessons in class. (TOPIC SENTENCE).

In fact, studies have shown that students who enjoy a recess of more than 45 minutes consistently score better on tests immediately following the recess period. (SUPPORTING SENTENCE)

Clinical analysis further suggests that physical exercise greatly improves the ability to focus on academic materials. (SUPPORTING SENTENCE)

Longer periods of recess are clearly required to allow students the best possible chances of success in their studies. (CONCLUDING SENTENCE)

Clearly, physical exercise is just one of the necessary ingredients for improving student scores on standardized tests. (Transitional sentence)

## Develop your argument

- Use source material
- Compare and contrast
- Show awareness of complexities
- Show line of reasoning
  - link points
  - central guiding line
- Your conclusions - based on evidence

## Structure your argument

- Reasons for and evidence/Reasons against and evidence
- Compare & contrast
- Outline of points, charts, diagrams

Introduction:		
Main themes:		
Areas to be compare and contrast	A	B
Similarities		
1		
2		
3		
4		
Differences		
1		
2		
3		
4		
Significance of these		
Conclusion:		

## References

Why?

- Credit sources of information & ideas
- Reader can locate for further information if required
- Demonstrate breadth of reading & knowledge



## References

### When?

- Direct quotes
- Paraphrases
- Statistics/Studies
- Theories
- Interpretations
- Facts

## Plagiarism

- Using someone's words or ideas and presenting them as your own (Marshall & Rowland, 1998)
- Inappropriate use of ideas from books, articles, internet, or other students' work

???

## References

### □ How?

- Reference system e.g. Harvard
- Record sources
- Take careful notes
- Reference list
- In-text citing or referencing

## Sample marking criteria


- |                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| □ Focusing on a topic   | □ Presentation                |
| □ Structuring an essay  | □ Referencing                 |
| □ Content               | □ Evidence of language skills |
| □ Formulating arguments | □ Use of learning resources   |

## Editing

- Proof read
  - out loud
  - time out
  - peer
- Write up references
- Final draft
  - presentation

## Submit!

- Final deadline
- Checklist
- Feedback

SLD 

Websites 

- <http://www.learningdevelopment.plymouth.ac.uk/wrasse/> sample essays
- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/679/01/> general advice & grammar
- <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk> academic phrases
- <http://vimeo.com/44666462> paragraphs
- [http://flower987.wikispaces.com/file/view/LC\\_worksheet\\_linking%2520words.pdf](http://flower987.wikispaces.com/file/view/LC_worksheet_linking%2520words.pdf) linking words & phrases

web: <http://student-learning.tcd.ie> | email: [student.learning@tcd.ie](mailto:student.learning@tcd.ie)

## Student Learning Development

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Blackboard

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