



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



Student Learning Development

Writing Essays

Student Learning Development
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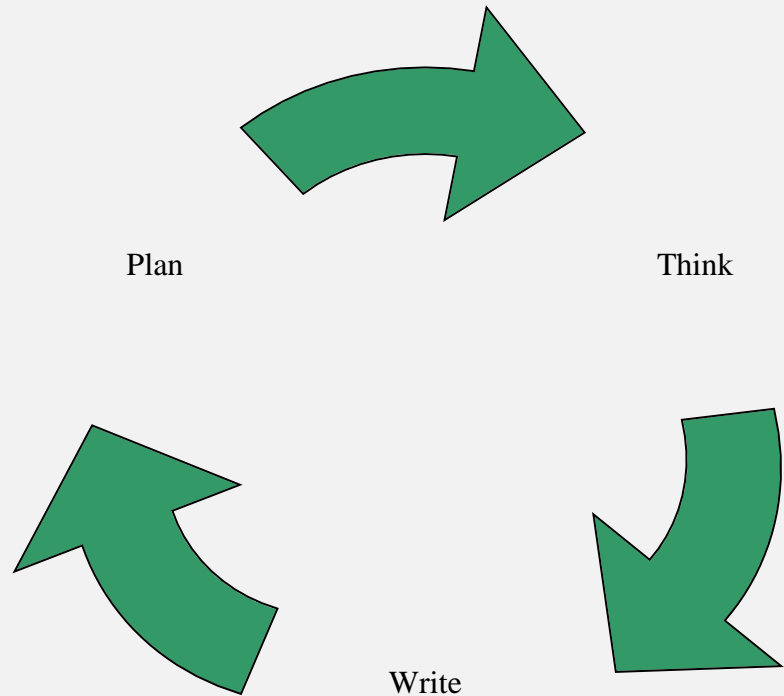
Session objectives

- 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

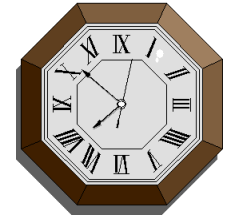


Essay Writing Phases

- Planning
- Thinking
- Researching
- Writing
- Editing



Planning time frame



- List tasks
 - Preliminaries
 - Gathering Information
 - Organising Information
 - Rough outline
 - Draft 1
 - Draft 2
 - References
 - Proofreading
- Create deadlines
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

<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



What do you
want to say?

Structure

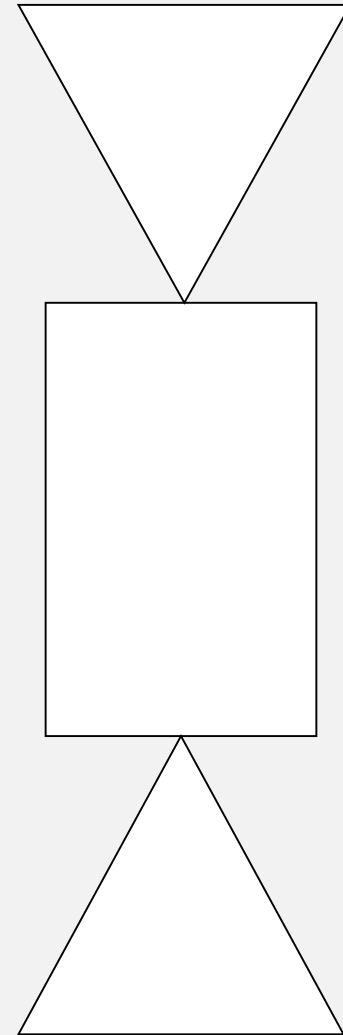
writing



Communicating
your ideas

Structure

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



I. Introduction

Definitions of Stress

Views of Stress

General Categories of Stressor

Consequences of Stress

II. Main Point (A) - Views of Stress

1. Physiological

2. Psychological

3. Job Stress

Summary and identification of categories

III. Main Point (B) - Categories

1. Organisational

2. Home-work, Interface, Life stress

3. Individual

Evaluation of categories and their impact

IV. Main Point (C) - Consequences

1. Physical

2. Behavioural

3. Psychological

Summary of impact

V. Conclusion

Summary of main points and personal conclusions

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



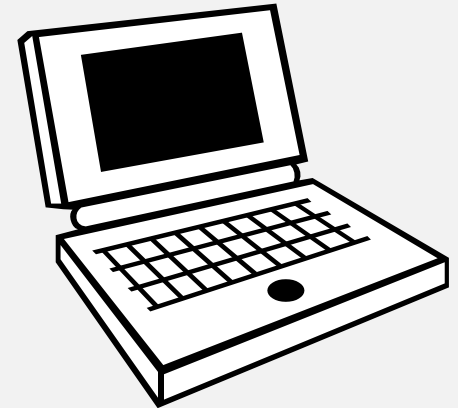
Reading & Researching

- 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?



Writing to prompts

- What writing have I done and what would I like to do?
- Where do my ideas come from?
- How does what I read compare with my own views?
- What I want to write about next is...
- What do I want to write about next?



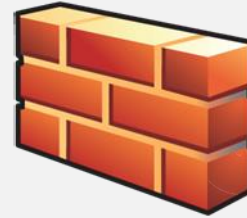
Freewriting

- Writing for 5 minutes
- Without stopping
- In sentences
- Private – no external reader
- No structure needed
- Topic related to your research or to a prompt
- Like brainstorming in sentences

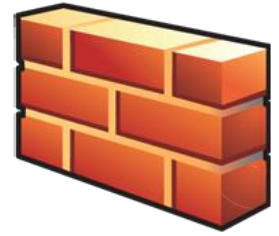


What is a paragraph?

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

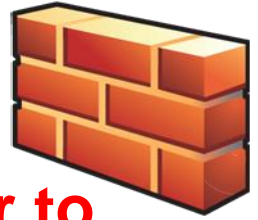


Paragraph structure



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).

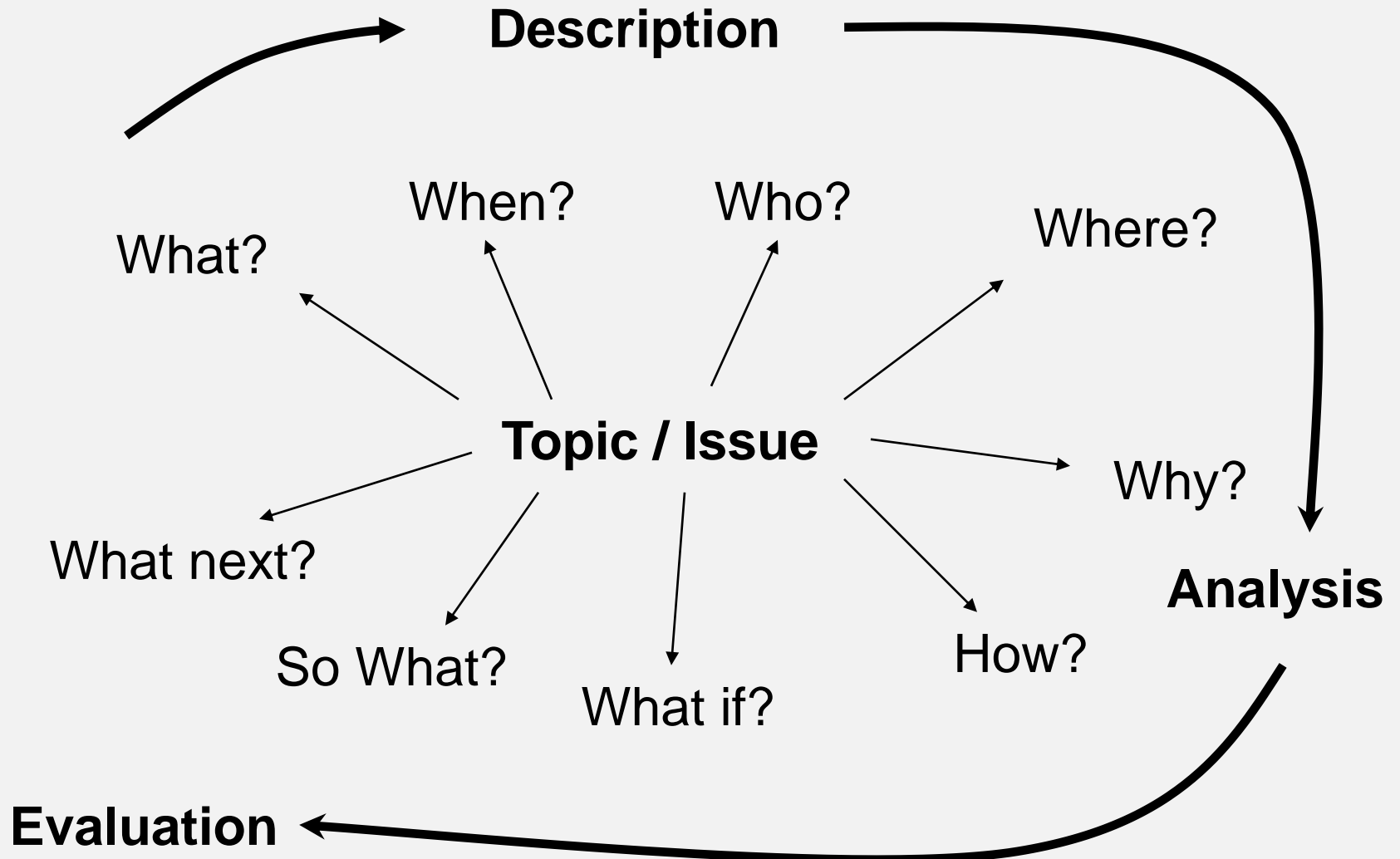
In fact, studies have shown that students who enjoy a recess of more than 45 minutes consistently score better on tests immediately following the recess period.
(SUPPORTING SENTENCE)

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)

Model to generate critical thinking



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



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

<http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism>



Sample marking criteria

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



Editing

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



Submit!

- Final deadline
- Checklist
- Feedback



Websites

- <http://wrasse.plymouth.ac.uk/> 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
- https://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/4_writingskills/writing_tuts/linking_LL/linking3.html
linking words & phrases



Examples of student essays

- <http://www.monash.edu.au/lis/lionline/writing/general/essay/sample-essay/index.xml>
- <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/index.php?id=135>
- <http://www.uow.edu.au/student/services/ld/students/resources/index.html>



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Blackboard

Academic Skills for Successful Learning

