



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



Writing Essays

Student Learning Development

<https://www.tcd.ie/sld/>

Caitríona Ní Shé



Essay writing skills

Please answer this anonymous poll

- You can use the QR code

Or

- You can go to vevox.app and type in the code 107-185-5740

Join at:
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107-185-574



Aim of this session

- Explore what is involved in the writing process
- Consider how to plan an essay
- Analyse the title/topic of an essay
 - researching
- Outline an essay structure
- Start the essay writing process



Why and when do we write essays



Assignments

Exams



Reports (?)



Essay Writing Process

Planning

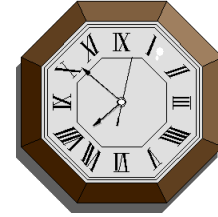


Planning the assignment

- Requirements
 - Length, Wording
 - Referencing
 - Due date
 - Use of GenAI
 - Marking Scheme
- Understand the question
 - What do you already know
- Other college work required



Planning your work- time frame



List tasks

- What is involved (Topic)?
- Gathering Information/researching
- Organising & Analysing Information
- Outline (rough)
- Draft 1
- Research?
- Draft 2
- References
- Editing & Proofreading

- Create deadlines

Today!

Submission date

Analysing the title

Understanding what is involved

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.

Key words?

Topic example

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.

The verbs

Examine = Present in depth & investigate implications

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

Analyse the essay/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?



Gathering information

- Your lecture slides/notes
- Required and suggested texts for your course
- Library
 - Don't forget the subject librarian



Reading & Researching

Digest and reflect on information

- Note taking
- Connect your findings
 - Mindmaps
 - Lists
 - Audio recordings

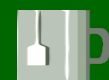
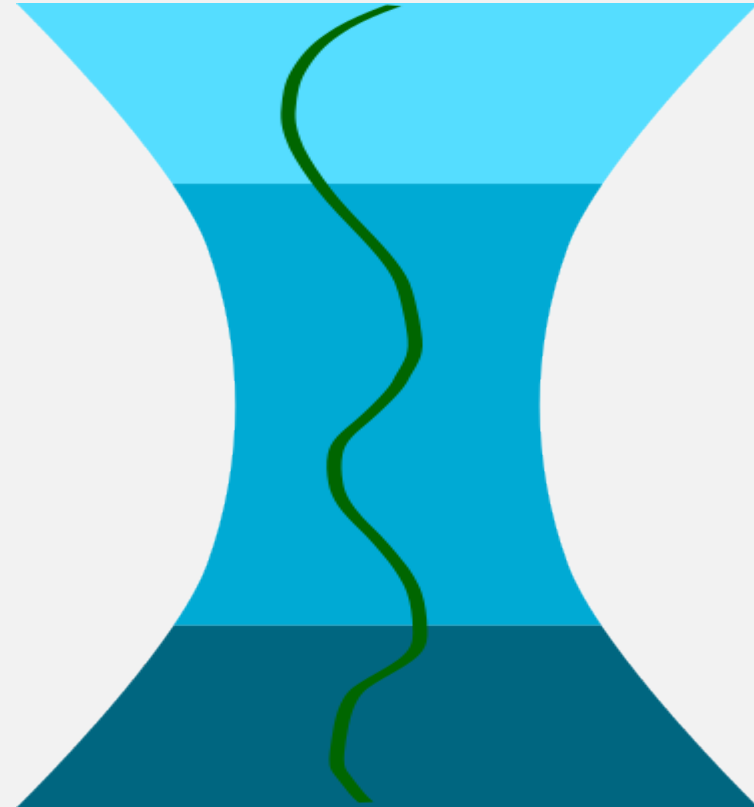
What are your thoughts/ideas/findings?

- Remember that **critical thinking** is required.



Structure – outline your essay

- Introduction
 - outline of essay
 - Your hypothesis
- Main section
 - Main point A
 - details, evidence
 - Main point B
- Conclusion
 - summary of main points
 - restate your position



Getting started

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What to include/exclude

- After reading and researching
 - What is your hypothesis
 - Types of evidence to support points?
 - Quotes
 - Tables
 - Paraphrasing
 - Facts, statistics
- Keep references!



Back to our example

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.

I. Introduction

Definitions of Stress

Views of Stress/stressors

General Categories of Stressor

Consequences of Stress

II. Main Point (A) - Views of Stress

1. Physiological

2. Psychological

3. Job Stress

Summary

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 conclusions



Freewriting

FREEWRITING

*Allow thoughts and inspiration
without premeditation...*



Write for 5 minutes,
without stopping



Use full sentences,
don't worry about
grammar



No external reader,
just for yourself



No structure needed



Write on a topic
related to your
research



Brainstorm in
sentences



Resources on
Freewriting:



[Freewriting |
University of
Lynchburg](#)

Write in full
sentences for five
minutes



Getting started with writing

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



Critical Writing

- Explain why the evidence matters
- Evaluate how convincing it is
- Compare it to alternative views or contrasting evidence
- Connect it to the argument

<https://blog.lboro.ac.uk/london/alss/from-descriptive-writing-to-critical-writing>



Describe/evaluate/compare

Several studies indicate that assessment feedback improves student performance in subsequent assessments (Smith, 2020; Brown, 2026).

The consistency of findings across both studies strengthens this claim; however, the sample size of these studies may not be large enough to generalise the results.

However, Jones (2023) and Lee (2024) argue that feedback has limited impact unless students are trained in feedback literacy, suggesting that feedback alone may not automatically lead to improved performance.



Connecting to the argument

Several studies indicate that assessment feedback improves student performance in subsequent assessments (Smith, 2020; Brown, 2026). This pattern suggests that feedback not only justifies a grade but also actively guides students to recognise gaps in their understanding and adjust their learning strategies. Therefore, feedback functions as a key mechanism for enhancing learning because it enables students to make targeted improvements over time.

<https://blog.lboro.ac.uk/london/alss/from-descriptive-writing-to-critical-writing>



Referencing

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Referencing

Why reference?

Referencing supports the achievement of academic integrity in that it enables you to:

- credit your sources of information or ideas, and thus avoid plagiarism
- provides evidence to back up your arguments
- demonstrates your breadth of knowledge
- allows the reader locate the sources for further reading

From the library Academic Integrity: [Referencing Practices](#)



Referencing How to?

Citations

In text, refer to author and date, and perhaps page number

Reference list

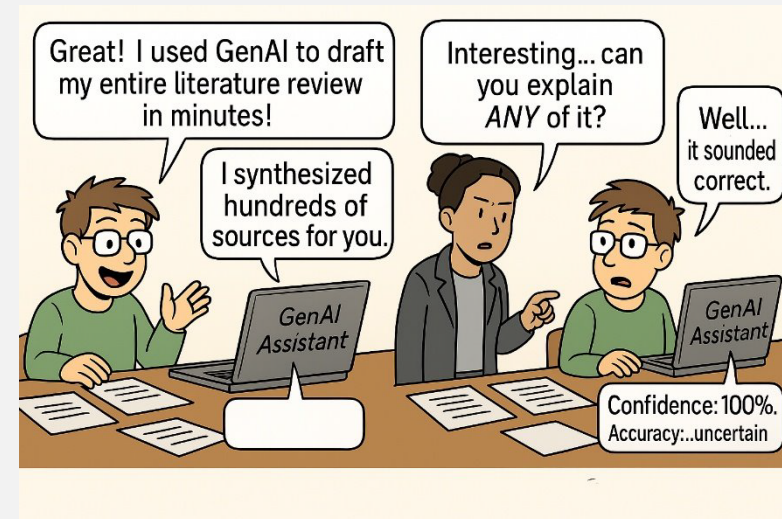
At the end of the essay – full details of how to access the article/book/URL

Reference management - ENDNOTE



Using GenAI

- College Policy
- School Policy
- Data privacy
- Ethical concerns
- Frameworks for use



<https://libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity>

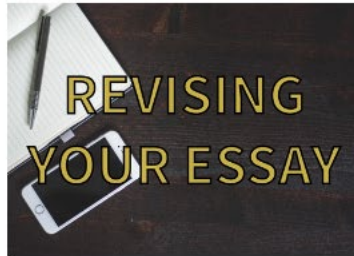


Video tutorials on academic skills

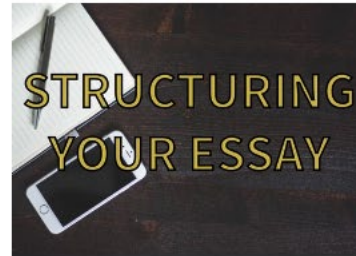
Want a quick summary of the key academic skills we offer? Watch these 5-10 minute videos on key academic skills such as essay writing, time management, exam skills, and more. This section is being updated, so check back in the future to find more videos!



Analysing titles >



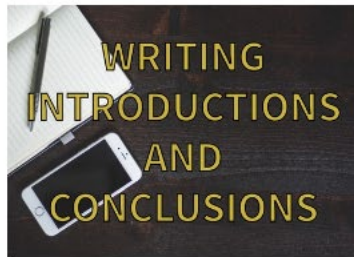
Revising your essay >



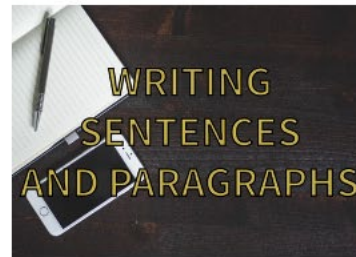
Structuring your
essay >



Starting your essay
research >



Writing
introductions and
conclusions >



Writing sentences
and paragraphs >

Writing skills videos

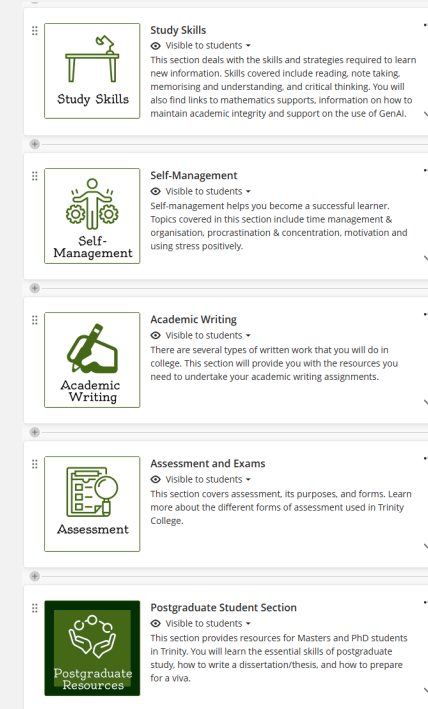
<https://www.tcd.ie/sld/learning-resources/video-tutorials/>



Further Resources

Find us on Blackboard

1. Log into Blackboard.
2. Click **Modules** in the left menu.
3. Click **Module Catalogue** in the top right corner.
4. Search for '*Academic*'.
5. Find the '**ASSL-SLD**' module. Click on and 'Enrol'.



Choose from our individual services

			
Writing Centre >	Academic Skills >	Postgraduate Clinic >	Presentation Skills >
Appointment	Appointment	Appointment	Appointment
Get support & develop your academic writing skills, in areas such as essays, theses, dissertations, reflective writing, structuring, critical thinking & referencing.	Consult with our advisors and learn strategies to help you reach your own academic potential, in areas such as study skills, self-management, and assessment including academic writing.	Appointments for students to receive advice on academic skills strategies and skills at postgraduate level.	Practice delivery and receive feedback on your upcoming presentation or Viva.

Individual Services - Student Learning Development | Trinity College Dublin

No slots available? Email

us at

student.learning@tcd.ie



Thank you. Feedback,
please!



<https://eu.surveymonkey.com/r/SLDWorkshop>

