

GOOD WRITING: PLANNING & DRAFTING

Use this sheet to help you:

- understand the 5 main steps of writing
- preparing and planning to write an essay or report

5 minute self test

Consider the following questions before reading the helpsheet:

- What are the five typical stages involved in completing an assignment or report?
- What are directive words? Name three commonly used directive words used by lecturers in setting assignment questions?
- How is "brainstorming" used in assignment preparation?
- What's the difference between a mind map, concept map and spider diagram and how can they be used in assignment preparation?
- List some words and phrases commonly used in sequencing paragraphs in assignment writing?
- How does one write an argument in an assignment?
- What do you need to consider when editing an assignment?
- What's referencing?

Good writing is writing that effectively conveys to another person what is in a writer's mind. In any profession, writing is very important, even in the professions that are not traditionally associated with writing, you will have to communicate with colleagues and clients.

The value of writing is that putting something down on paper forces you to clarify your ideas and then allows you to evaluate them. Academic writing by students is written for a specific audience, usually your lecturers, to show that you understand the materials that have been presented to you. A piece of writing allows you to demonstrate what you have learnt. You have to show the person marking your work that:

- you understand the key concepts and theories
- you can apply them
- you understand the complexities of an issue
- you can research and discuss the literature in your field
- you can organise your ideas

The finished piece of writing is used to evaluate how well you have achieved these goals.

The Steps To Achieving Good Writing



Although writing is seen as a finished product, it is only achieved at the end of a process. The steps in this process are vital because they influence the quality of the piece of writing that is finally produced. Good writing is never achieved without planning, a process of revision and analysis and refining the written piece.

Types of undergraduate writing in the Business and Economics Faculty:

- Essays
- Reports
- Mini essays, discussions eg A Response in Introductory Macroeconomics
- Critical comment eg in CALM in Introductory Macroeconomics
- Case studies
- Project proposals
- Marketing/strategic plans
- Literature reviews

1. Pre-Planning

1.1 Purpose of the Task

Even if the task is not a formal essay, you will still be expected to organise your ideas, develop them, reference them and express yourself clearly. It is important that you know what the task requires of you.

Understanding the purpose of the task is essential to writing a relevant answer. Analyse the questions or topic carefully. This will direct all your thinking, reading and writing. To achieve clarity in your writing you must first analyse precisely what is required by the question.

Any question can be broken down into two parts:

- The terminology, which defines what the topic is about (the nouns);
- Instructions which indicate what you are being asked to do, (the verbs).

Once these parts have been identified the purpose of your writing should become clear. Look at the key words.

- What relationships are implied?
- What problems do they present?
- What theoretical framework can you draw on?

e.g: The following is a question presented by the Marketing & Management Department of the Faculty. Discuss the benefits that an organisation is likely to obtain from decentralisation?

- The directive word is discuss.
- The key words are **benefits, organisation** and **decentralisation**. You will probably need to also define the terms organisation and decentralisation.
- You will need to think about some of the following questions:-
 - What are the benefits of decentralisation ?
 - In what situations – generally, to the individual, to society, to an organisation?
 - What do the major theorists in this area say?

Commonly Used Question Types:

Question types can be broadly broken down into:

- definitions of concepts
- explanations of the relationships between ideas
- descriptions of processes or some form of argument
- analysis of scenarios in relation to theoretical models

What are you being asked to do:

The verbs in the question define the type of question being asked. Some commonly used verbs are:

Analyse: Break a concept or theory or other subject matter into its constituent parts to investigate their nature, relationships, function, organisation and the way they work.

Argue: Support or reject a position in a systematic manner, presenting reasons and evidence for your point of view. It is also important to demonstrate an understanding of other positions, their strengths and weaknesses.

Compare and contrast: Look at the similarities and differences between arguments, theories, problems or explanations.

Define: Provide a clear and concise meaning of a key concept or term. It may be another writer's definition, or one you are using for the purposes of this particular piece of writing.

Describe: Give a detailed account, without analysing, explaining or evaluating.

Discuss: Present a clear point of view, explaining and interpreting it carefully, analysing the elements. Demonstrate an understanding of other points of view and support your argument with evidence.

Evaluate: Consider the strengths and weaknesses in relation to the problem posed.

Explain: Analyse so as to interpret meanings. The important aspect here is to be able to focus on why and how. You need to be able to give reasons, causes, effects, or consider implications.

Outline: Describe in an organised manner, ordering the information in a systematic or classified way. Only include the key points.

See **Study and Research Helpsheet: Task Words** for more detail

Analysing the Topic

Look at what you are being asked to do, it may ask you to do two or more things.

For example you may be asked to:

- define something and then explain the role it plays;
- explain how some thing works or changes as a result of other factors;
- make a decision based on theories you have learnt and then justify your decision;
- to compare and contrast ideas or systems;
- look at two points of view and justify your argument.

For example:

What is economic profit and what role does it play in the competitive market?

There are three parts to this question.

- Explain the term Economic Profit
- Define what is meant by competitive markets
- Explain the functions and operations of economic profit in such a market

These factors would all need to be discussed to answer this question

1.2 Researching the Topic

When you begin reading always have the question in front of you. The following strategies are suggested:

- Begin with general, broader texts such as your lecture notes and text books. This helps you to understand the material and the issue you are writing about.
- Then move to other reference books on your reading list.
- Finally, if necessary go to Journal articles for specific aspects of the topic.

When you are looking for suitable material for your writing you will have to assess the value of the references you are using. The ability to assess materials will save a lot of time as you will be able to discard quickly any irrelevant or outdated material.

You do not have to necessarily read the whole reference to evaluate its usefulness. Consider the following features:

- Contents pages to see if the topics and chapters covered are relevant to your writing.
- Index as a guide to key words and topics.
- Introductory paragraphs or abstracts – these will give you a quick overview of what is covered in particular chapters or research papers.
- Bibliography - indicates authorities and range of works consulted by the author. Do they refer to recognised authorities mentioned in your text books or lecture notes.
- The date of publication. This is important to give an indication of how up to date the contents are.

For some writing, the reading you will be required to do is minimal, whereas for others you will have been expected to research and read widely. (See **Study and Research Helpsheet: How to Read**)

Photocopying

Photocopying articles and references is a useful tool but all the material collected will have to be evaluated in terms of the writing task. Photocopies can be marked or numbered to fit in your writing framework as ideas are developed but this is not a substitute for processing the material by taking notes and making summaries. Remember, reading is not writing.

Remember to note down the publication details of each reference you have copied.

Bibliography

It is a good idea to get into the habit of compiling a bibliography as soon as you start researching your topic. It is easier to note down complete details while you have the reference than to have to go back and find the information later. If you keep an accurate record it is easy to include quotes and acknowledge sources of information when you begin writing.

You need to include all the following information:

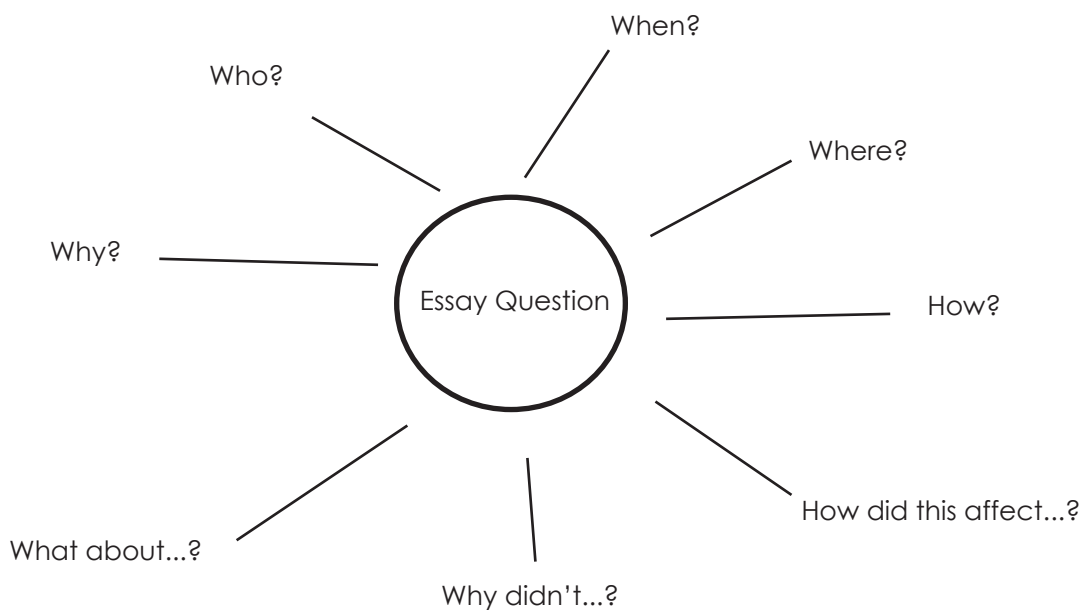
- Author – Surname and initials, include any other authors and editors.
- Date of publication
- Title
- Publisher
- Place of publication

(See **Study and Research Helpsheets: The APA System and The Harvard System**)

1.3 Developing an Outline

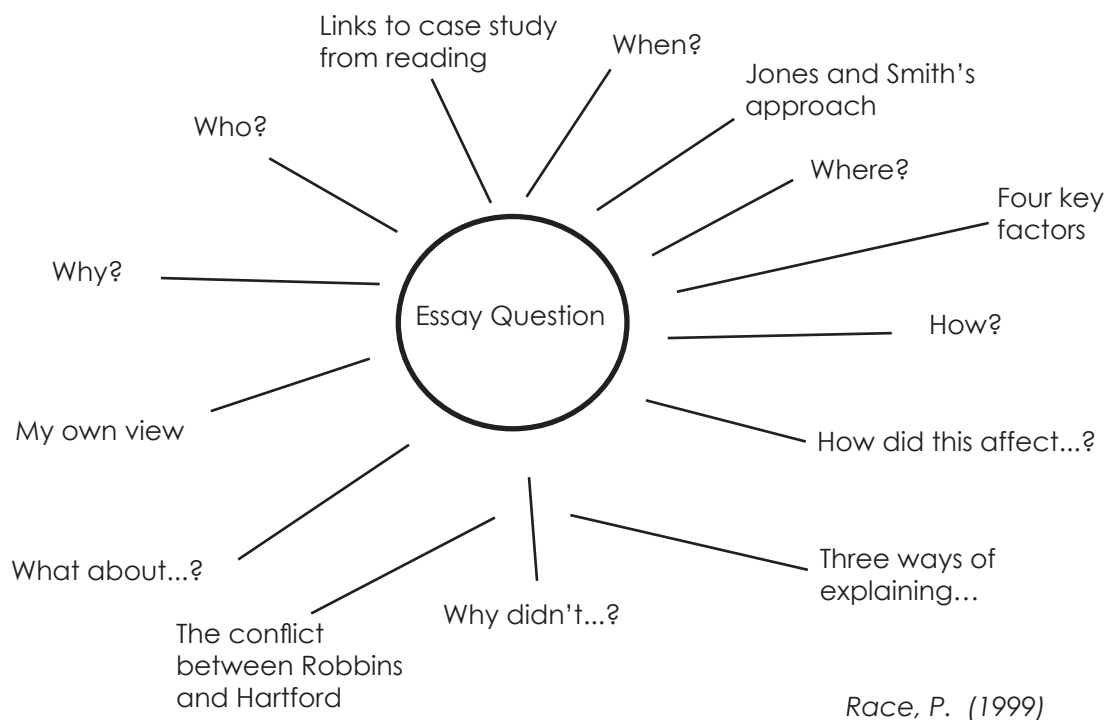
Creating a framework

Once the purpose of your writing is clear your next step should be to develop a framework or rough plan to help you formulate what questions need to be addressed in your reading.



Race, P. (1999)

Then take it one step further and develop some more complex ideas.



This plan is a very preliminary step in writing and will probably undergo modifications and changes as your ideas develop. Clarifying what you need to address helps to concentrate the focus of the reading you will now need to do to develop and extend your plan.

1.4 Formulating Questions

Reading and writing are interrelated activities. Formulating questions in response to a task before you write will mean that you read selectively and efficiently with the essay question clearly in your head.

Look at the following example.
In an essay from a previous Management, exam, students were asked to:

Critically appraise Mintzberg’s conclusion that managerial work is best understood as a series of managerial roles.

Critical Appraisal:
 This question is asking you to evaluate an author’s opinion and findings. To do this you must test the conclusions drawn by the researcher against the opinions and judgements of other writers and evaluate the validity of their work based on your research.

Before you begin your reading ask yourself

- What do you know about Mintzberg's ideas?
- Who else has written about Mintzberg's ideas?
- Are there other perspectives which are very different?
- What are 'Mintzberg's series of managerial roles'?
- Is this a good way of understanding managerial work?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of Mintzberg's argument?

You may not be able to answer any of these questions very fully before you begin reading, but thinking of the questions will mean that you read selectively and efficiently with the essay question clearly in your head. As you read you should try to answer these questions in your notes.

Pre-Planning – Summary

- Have the question and its constituent parts clear in your mind.
- Underline the key words in the question or topic and think carefully about what they mean.
- Look at the terminology used in the question.
- Look at the verbs used in the question.
- Look at each element of the topic– if there is more than one part put boxes around the different parts.
- Develop an outline plan and questions for reading and researching the topic.

2. Planning

2.1 Developing Ideas

After the preliminary stages of analysis and researching the topic you should now be able to make a more detailed plan for your ideas. This plan will provide the basis for your paragraphs and is a useful step in analysing the structure and cohesion of your writing.

If you look back at your initial plan, the research you have now done should help you to extend, develop or even modify your original ideas. All the information you have collected and the ideas you have developed through researching your topic now need to be structured and linked. There are various approaches that may help you with this process and you should choose the one that suits you.

Look at the following examples:

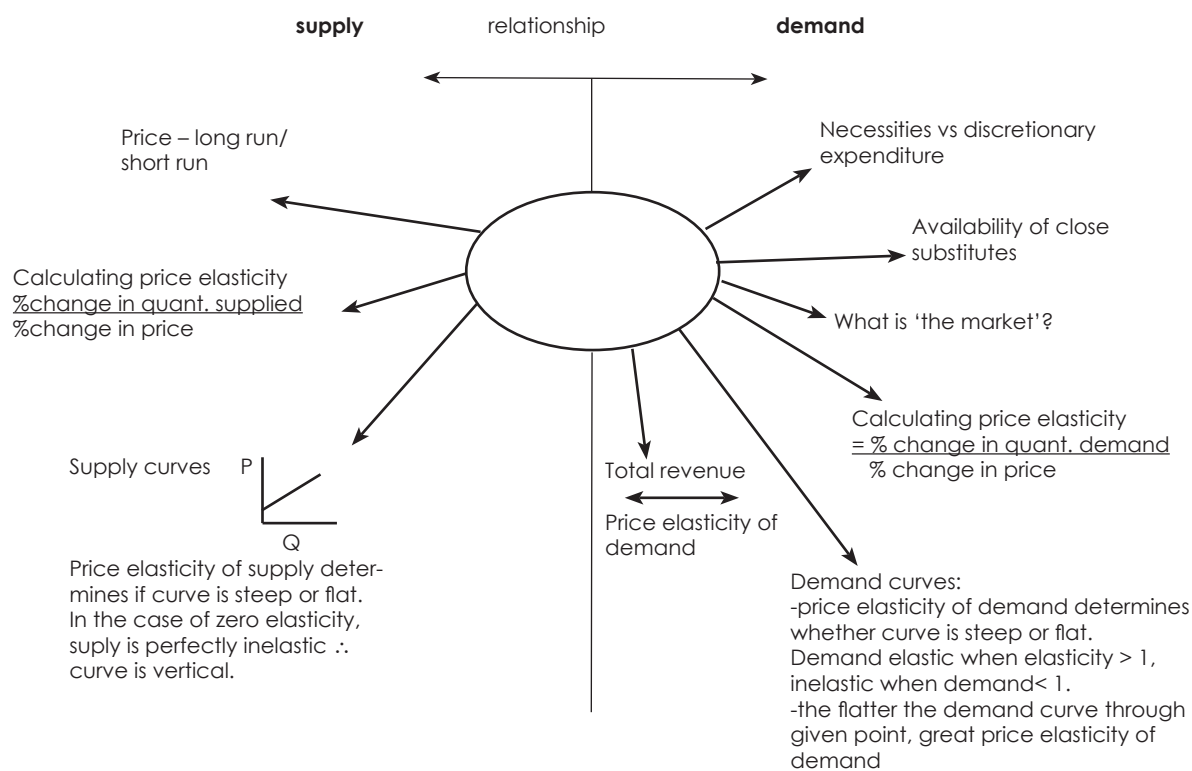
Brainstorming

- Write down the general topic.
- Make a list of everything that comes into your mind (about the topic!). Don't judge, sort or edit at this stage.
- Then organise your ideas, grouping them together into topics or themes.
- Omit the things which are not relevant to your topic.
- Talk to other students, your tutor or lecturer and then adjust your plan in the light of this discussion.

Spider diagrams

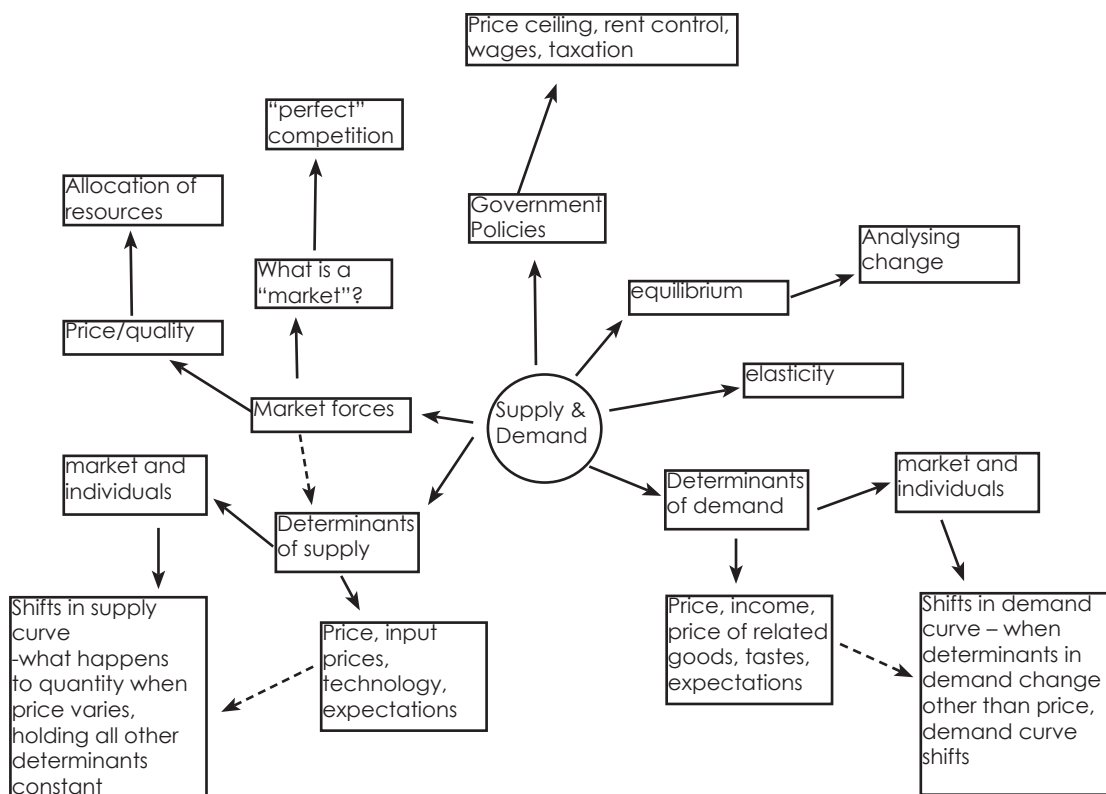
See Figure 1

- Write the topic in the centre of the page.
- Note down all the concepts that stem from this idea.
- Think about the ways in which the concepts are connected to each other.



Mind Maps

This is a more complex version of a Spider diagram focussing on the more complex links between main ideas.



Concept maps

These are very useful techniques that help you to understand the relationships between ideas by creating a visual map of the connections. (See **Study and Research Helpsheet: Concept Mapping**)

Peer Review

While you are reading, planning and writing, talk to as many people as you can about your writing. Peer review is a very valuable process. Even if the people you talk to do not know as much about the topic as you do, talking about it helps you to sort out your own ideas. Share your ideas with others and listen carefully. You are not in competition with your fellow students and can benefit greatly from learning collaboratively.

Planning Summary

A well structured plan helps you to decide if

- Your ideas are logical
- You are addressing the question you are being asked to write about
- You need to get more information to clarify or develop your concepts.

It also provides

- the framework for the order of your paragraphs

3. Writing

3.1 Structure

This should be considered across two levels:

- the essay as a whole
- each paragraph within the piece of writing

The reader should be able to understand the concepts being discussed both at the overall and specific level if the writing is to achieve its purpose of clearly conveying the writer's ideas.

It is vital that you remember the reader as you write. They cannot get inside your head and cannot know exactly what you are trying to tell them unless you make it absolutely clear. Think of writing like guiding someone through a new city. You cannot just point them vaguely in the right direction and hope they make it to their destination. You need to give them signposts that tell them where they are going and what the destination looks like when they get there.

The writing as a whole

Most pieces of formal writing are organised with:

- an introduction to state the purpose and outline, assumptions that are used.
- paragraphs developing the main ideas or arguments
- a conclusion that brings these ideas together, reaches a solution, suggests an outline, and shows the way forward.

Introductions and conclusions:

The Introduction:

Often starts as a broad statement of the topic and then narrows down to the specific aspects that the writer will concentrate on. This "Funnel" analogy is used to illustrate the function of the introduction – to indicate the structure and direction of the writing.

Its size and complexity depends on the writing it supports. It may be one or more paragraphs. It may perform some but not all of the following functions depending on the purpose of the writing:

- Give an overview
- Present the central idea

- Put forward reasons for writing this piece
- Define terms
- Explain reasons for answering the question in a particular way
- Introduce the questions the essay will be discussing
- Give a background or context
- Relate the writing to other work in the field
- Provide an indication of the structure of the essay or assignment. See **Study and Research Helpsheet: Introductions**

It is essential that the introduction makes the central theme or point of view of the writing clear at the onset. The main body of the writing will support the points made in the introduction.

Therefore it is acceptable to use signposts to show the direction the writing will take:
A useful phrase to show the organisation of your writing is: *'this paper will begin by discussing....., it will then..... and finally consider.....'*

Because of its function it is often easier to write the Introduction last after you have developed your ideas in the body of your writing.

The Conclusion:

- Rounds up the writing by bringing together all the main points.
- Summarises but does not repeat the arguments developed in the writing.
- Should not include any new material.
- May point to areas of further research if this is relevant to the writing task.

It may also do some of the following:

- Summarise the ideas presented in the essay.
- Refer back to the question to demonstrate how it has been answered.
- Show what the writing has answered and what it has not addressed.
- Show that the writer did what he or she set out to do in the introduction.
- Put forward a point of view supported by the evidence presented.
- Provide a solution to the problem.

This structure throughout a piece of writing is essential for clarity and cohesion of ideas. (See **Study and Research Helpsheets: Essay Writing-The Basics and Essay Writing Attitude**)

Construction of paragraphs:

Each paragraph should have an internal coherence similar to the whole piece of writing. This is provided by:

- the topic sentence. All paragraphs contain a topic sentence which explains the central idea of the paragraph. It is usually at the beginning of the paragraph and links the idea to the previous paragraph.
- supporting sentences: These are the body of the paragraph and explain and expand the idea presented in the paragraph. They may also be used to give examples and supporting evidence for ideas stated. Sentences within the paragraph should make a clear statement. The idea contained within the paragraph should be fully developed before moving on.
- a conclusion: Most paragraphs end with a sentence, which brings the main ideas together and leads into the next paragraph. Alternatively the final sentence may simply provide a lead into the key idea in the subsequent paragraph. (See **Study and Research Helpsheet: Paragraphs**)

Example:

Look at the following paragraph:

Transfer payments are payments made to individuals without requiring the provision of any service in return. Examples are social security, retirement pensions and unemployment benefits. Government expenditure, whether on the provision of goods and services (defence, police) or on transfer payments, is chiefly financed by imposing taxes, although some residual component may be financed by government borrowing.

- The first sentence makes the topic of the paragraph clear and defines the term transfer payments.
- The second sentence gives examples.
- The third sentence develops the idea and leads on to the next paragraph, which is about the role of government in different countries.

Sequencing of Paragraphs

The order in which the paragraphs are written should show a logical development of ideas. Each paragraph should lead on from the one before using appropriate linking words. These connecting words show the logical flow of the piece of writing.

An additional idea	in addition, furthermore, moreover, besides, also, too, and, and then, as well, beyond that, for one thing, in fact, next, what is more
An opposite idea	on the other hand, in contrast, however, nevertheless, instead, still, but, yet, although, even though, whereas, in spite of, despite, on the contrary,
Compare	as will, both/neither, in the same way, likewise, similarly
Concede a point	certainly, no doubt, granted that, of course
Restate or explain	ie, that is
An example or illustration	for example, for instance, in particular, on such, yet another
A conclusion or summary	in conclusion, in summary, to conclude, to summarise, finally, in brief, in other words, lastly, to sum up, on the whole
A result	therefore, consequently, hence, thus, as a result, and so, because of this, as a consequence, for this reason, so
Confirmation	in fact, indeed
Sequence	firstly, subsequently, finally
Qualify	perhaps, possibly
Emphasise	above all, especially, in fact, in particular, indeed, most importantly, surely

The following phrases can be used to connect the writing with the topic or show the development of ideas:

- 'Thus it can be seen that
- 'Hence it is clear that
- 'From this it can be argued that
- 'The evidence suggests that
- 'When using this assumption we can conclude that.....'

See **CELT Helpsheet: Language for Citing**

3.2 Writing an Argument

One of the common forms of academic writing is expository writing. This is the development of an argument in support of a particular stance. This kind of writing deals with ideas and evidence, which is usually derived from theory and research.

To write an argument is not to develop a negative or emotional stance, it is:

- the presentation of a case
- the reasons for a position and an examination of others' arguments
- the acceptance or rejection of them
- a number of statements which, taken together, provide reasons to support a conclusion.

Ways of writing arguments are to:

- let the reader know where you stand in relation to a topic
- give a list of sound reasons
- give examples
- use authorities, cite writers in the field
- explain your point of view in relation to other writers i.e. how do you agree or disagree, how does what they say support your argument
- discuss consequences or problems
- deal with the other side of the argument
- be prepared to defend your point of view

In an argument or discussion the following words are useful to indicate a statement that is being made in a conclusion:

so therefore, thus, hence, consequently, it can be concluded that.

To indicate a reason for a particular stance or statement you can use the following words:

because, since, as shown by, as indicated by

(See **Study and Research Helpsheets: Critical Thinking, 1, 2, and 3**)

3.3 Overcoming Writer's Block:

If you get stuck try random writing.

- Just write anything but keep writing until some sensible ideas start coming.
- If you are prone to getting stuck don't worry too much about the choice of words, grammar, spelling as they can be fixed in the editing phase.
- You might want to leave the details until later. Put in ?? or *** or notes to yourself in italics like *CHECK*. If you choose to write like this you will have to edit carefully.
- Another good way to overcome writer's block is to show your work to someone or talk it over with someone.

4. Editing and Revision

(See **Study and Research Helpsheet: Editing and Proofreading**)

When the first draft of a piece of writing is completed it can then be refined and developed through revision and editing.

When editing the following aspects should be considered:

Language:

- Formality: Academic writing is formal in style and the choice of vocabulary and phrases should reflect this. Avoid slang and cliches or colloquial language
- Objectivity
 - (a) The use of the first (I) or second person (you/yours etc) should be avoided where ever possible. Examples should always be referred to in the third person.
 - (b) Objectivity can also be expressed by using more nouns than verbs.

For example:

The following sentence:

I think that the most important factor in the expansion of the global economy is the rapid development of telecommunications.

Is better written as

- It can be argued that the most important factor in the expansion of the global economy is the rapid development of telecommunications.

Or:

- It can be concluded that the most important factor influencing the expansion of the global economy is the rapid development of telecommunications.

Or:

- One of the factors influencing the expansion of the global economy is the rapid development of telecommunications.

For example:

The government's introduction of a GST was the cause of an increase in the price of some goods.

Is used rather than

The government introduced a GST. This caused prices to increase.

Notice in the first example the verbs (used in the second example) have been changed into nouns.

- (c) When something is being reported it is often recommended to use the passive voice to avoid giving unnecessary information.

The tutor helped the students to achieve good marks by interactive teaching methods.
Can be written using the passive to be more concise.
Students achieved good marks though interactive teaching methods.

- Or as the passive often uses more nouns than verbs, it is sometimes used in academic writing to give a more formal, detached and objective flavour.

The government introduced price fixing after the election.
Written in the passive rather than the active form becomes
Price fixing was introduced after the election.

- (d) Opinions should be stated through examples or references. This gives strength to an opinion and shows it is based on fact. Rather than writing "I think", it is preferable to write "it appears that.....", "it is clear that.....", "it can be concluded that....."

For Example:

Before discussing elasticity, a brief account of the principles of supply and demand will be given.

Is better than

Before I discuss elasticity, I will talk about supply and demand.

In order to understand opportunity costs, it is necessary to define what is meant by the term.

Is better than

I will say a bit about the meaning of opportunity cost before I start.

- (e) Gender: Include both genders to show neutrality (he/she, he or she, his or her) or use a collective (them, they, their)

- (f) Contractions: For a more formal style avoid over use of contractions (don't, It'll etc).

Vocabulary

- English has a very large vocabulary and many words have similar meanings. It is better to choose the word that has the clearest meaning for what you want to say rather than one which looks more impressive.
- The function of the word in the sentence (noun or verb or adjective) must be analysed to use the word in its correct form.

Sentences

Sentences should be clear and not too long. If sentences are too long the writer may lose control of the structure. Never begin a sentence with "And" or "But".

Organisation of the writing

Ensure that

- sentences in a paragraph do develop the topic of the paragraph sufficiently and that each idea is adequately covered in each paragraph.
- paragraphs flow in a sequential and logical development. You may need to move the paragraphs around (and change the connecting words and sentences) to develop cohesion in your writing.
- expression, grammar and sentence structure is accurate and clear.

Once you have done a first draft, it is a good idea to either leave it for a few days (if you have time) and ask someone else to look at it. Then, you may need to move paragraphs, delete sentences or paragraphs, connect ideas and add sentences to make your argument clear. You may need to rewrite whole sections.

Don't be afraid to show your writing to someone else. It is a very good way to learn and to get some feedback so that you can improve your writing. Sometimes after you have been writing for a while, it is difficult to distance yourself enough to look at your own work critically. Even academics, who may have been writing for much of their adult lives, give their writing to colleagues for comment and suggestions.

Editing Checklist

The Introduction

Does the introduction:

- state purpose, problem or question to be answered?
- convince the reader that your essay is worth reading?
- present a preview of how the essay will be handled?
- put the issue in context?

The body of the writing

- is there evidence to back up the statements made?
- has the literature been referred to?
- are the assumptions logical?

Presentation of evidence

- is contradictory evidence dealt with adequately?
- are multiple sources of data considered?
- is the evidence discussed relevant to the question?
- is the argument consistent and does one point follow on from the other?

Answering the question

- has the question been answered?
- have alternative viewpoints been considered?
- have you explained why something is important?
- is enough (but not too much) background given?
- are the ideas organised and clear in their development?
- have you analysed or just described?
- have you applied a theoretical framework to the question?

Your Findings

- have you summarised your findings?
- do you relate your findings back to the question?
- do you suggest areas for further research? (this may not be necessary in all essays)

Finally

- have you checked your spelling and grammar?
- have you referenced ideas that come from other people?
- are your references well organised (see referencing booklet)

Re-Check

- there is only one main idea per paragraph
- you have a topic sentence in each paragraph
- your supporting sentences are in order in each paragraph
- each main point is supported by an example or some evidence
- your sentences are complete
- your expression is clear
- your spelling is accurate
- your punctuation is clear

5. References and Quotations

You need to refer to the writing of other people to learn, to demonstrate you have learned, to provide evidence for an argument or discussion and to provide examples.

Plagiarism

When you are using other people's ideas, it is important that you acknowledge that the ideas or words are not your own. It is also important that you make it clear when you paraphrase or summarise and when you use a direct quotation.

- Plagiarism of ideas is paraphrasing facts or arguments without acknowledging or citing the source. When you write an idea you have obtained from any material, even if you write it in your own words, you must say where it came from.
- Plagiarism also occurs when you copy words exactly from another writer without using quotation marks. Sources of quotations should be given exactly, with all reference information, including page numbers.

Using References

It is important to think critically about what others have said.

- Why is what they say important?
- Why did you quote their idea?
- Who else has had similar ideas on the topic?
- How do these ideas connect to other ideas that you have come across in your subject or course?
- What do you think about these ideas? (You may not be asked for your opinion but it is always a good idea to think about it).

If you use a direct quote, you must use quotation marks. If the quote is more than about 40 words long, it is a good idea to indent the quote and single space it. Include the reference after the quote.

When using direct quotations, you can use phrases such as:

- According to Smith (1996), "....."
- Smith (1996) points out that, "....."
- Smith (1996) refers to "....."
- In a study by Smith (1996), she identified "....."

When using a summary or paraphrase of an author's ideas use phrases such as:

- Patel (1998) comments /argues/claims that.....
- Williams (2000) asserts that
- Lee (1989) maintains that.....
- Chen (1999) has investigated
- Nguyen (1994) discusses.....

(See **CELT Helpsheet: Language for Citing**)

There are several systems that are used for referencing. Among the most commonly used are the Oxford/Cambridge, the Harvard and the American Psychological Association (APA) systems.

The CELT recommends the APA author-date reference and citation system, in which the surname of the author, and the date of publication are put in brackets (refer to the **Study and Research Helpsheet: Basic Referencing Using the APA System and The Harvard System**).

For example, you may write:

It is claimed that in the twentieth century, universities have become important institutions in society (Wallace, Schirato & Bright, 1999).

If you use a direct quote you will need to include the page numbers in the following way:

Wallace Schirato and Bright, in their discussion of learning at university level, make the point that many students are "satisfied to survive each assessment obstacle and it does not occur to them that there might be better ways of doing what they do" (1999, p. 25).

Then in your list of references at the end of the assignment, you will list them alphabetically by author's family name. You should either italicise or underline the title of the book or journal consistently throughout the reference list.

For example:

Wallace, A. G., Schirato D. A., & Bright, P. P. (1999). *Beginning University: Thinking, researching and writing for success*. Harlow, U. K: Allen and Unwin.

If you use a journal article you will need to include the name of the article, journal, volume and page numbers.

For Example

Stout, D.E., & Ruble, T.L. (1991). *A re-examination of accounting student learning styles*. Journal of Accounting Education. 9(1), 341-354.

If you are using the internet, you will need the author, date, name of article, date of retrieval and web address.

For Example

Jones, A. L. (1999). Getting the most out of lectures in the Faculty. Retrieved April 27, 2000, from <http://www.fbe.unimelb.edu.au/celt>

When referencing, the important thing is that you are consistent. Do not change part way through your writing.

When doing your initial reading and notetaking, make sure that you have noted all the relevant details so that you can accurately cite this material later on. The reader of your work must be able to find the references that you have used and will only be able to do this if you have cited the material appropriately.

A good essay

- defines key terms
- covers all parts of the question
- answers the question clearly
- is relevant
- demonstrates wide and critical reading – the textbook alone is not usually enough
- questions and evaluates
- has a clear and reasoned argument, develops a systematic point of view supported by evidence.
- is clearly presented with accurate spelling, grammar and references
- aims for clarity and simplicity

When you get a piece of writing back from the lecturer or tutor, read the comments carefully so that you can improve next time. Refer back to these comments before starting the next assignment.

Good luck with your writing! Even the most experienced writers find it a difficult and sometimes frustrating process. However, the more you write the more confident you will become. You will develop techniques in planning and writing that will work for you. If you need help, come to the Teaching and Learning Unit at the Faculty of Business and Economics.

References

Race, P. (1999). *How to get a good degree: Making the most of your time at university*,
Buckingham: Open University Press.