Writing in the Humanities
Today’s Workshop

- Unpacking the topic/question
- Planning your essay – Part 1
- Structure
  - Introduction
  - Body
  - Conclusion
- Planning your essay – Part 2
- Academic language
- Additional resources
Unpacking the topic/question

• Task words
  – usually verbs that tell you what to do to complete your assignment

• Content words
  – the "meat" of the question - these are things you can research

• Limiting words
  – keep you focused on a particular area, and stop you from trying to research everything
Effective communication is considered a core skill in higher education and is usually conveyed through the medium of academic papers and essays. Discuss the process of writing academic essays and critically examine the importance of structure and content.

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Unpacking the topic/question

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Limiting words
Planning your essay – Part 1

Brainstorming

- What do you already know about the topic?
- What do you want to know?
- What ideas do you have already?

Activity

- Choose one of your own essay topics
- Create a mind map
Structure

I. INTRODUCTION
- General Statements
- Thesis Statement

II. BODY
A. Topic Sentence
   1. Support
   2. Support
   3. Support
   (Concluding Sentence)
B. Topic Sentence
   1. Support
   2. Support
   3. Support
   (Concluding Sentence)
C. Topic Sentence
   1. Support
   2. Support
   3. Support
   (Concluding Sentence)

III. CONCLUSION
- Restatement or summary of the main points; final comment

Note: The body is the longest part of the essay and can contain as many paragraphs as necessary to support the controlling ideas of your thesis statement.
I. INTRODUCTION

General Statements

Thesis Statement

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Structure: Introduction

- Get the reader interested
- Introduce topic
- Provide a context for the essay
- 1 paragraph

General statements

- Attract reader’s attention
- Introduce the topic in a general way to orientate your reader to the subject. This provides the context. Keep statements brief.
- Provide background information

Thesis statement

- States specific topic
- Identifies your position on the topic or question
- Lists the subtopics that will be discussed
- Limits the scope of what will be discussed
- Indicates the pattern of organisation of the essay
- Gives a clear outline of what will follow (how will you answer the question?)
Structure: Body

II. BODY

A. Topic Sentence
   1. Support
   2. Support
   3. Support
   (Concluding Sentence)

B. Topic Sentence
   1. Support
   2. Support
   3. Support
   (Concluding Sentence)

C. Topic Sentence
   1. Support
   2. Support
   3. Support
   (Concluding Sentence)
Structure: Body

• Body consists of multiple paragraphs

• Paragraph
  – A paragraph is a group of connected sentences that develop a single point, argument or idea.
  – Paragraphs hold the main ideas of an essay and connect the essay together
Structure: Body (Paragraph)

II. BODY
A. Topic Sentence
1. Support
2. Support
3. Support
(Concluding Sentence)

B. Topic Sentence
1. Support
2. Support
3. Support
(Concluding Sentence)

C. Topic Sentence
1. Support
2. Support
3. Support
(Concluding Sentence)

Note: The body is the longest
Structure: Body (Paragraph)

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Structure: Body (Paragraph)

**Topic Sentence**
States the topic and central idea of the paragraph (the point the paragraph makes)

Signals to the reader what the rest of the paragraph is about

Without topic sentences, paragraphs can be difficult to read

**Supporting Sentences**
5 – 6 sentences

Develop the main idea by providing evidence, explanation and examples

Expand on the main point

**Closing Sentence**

Relates the example and evidence back to your thesis

Leads the reader into the next paragraph by linking ideas

Next Paragraph
Structure: Conclusion

Paragraph
- Topic Sentence
  - A. Support
  - B. Support
  - C. Support
- Concluding Sentence

Note: The body is the longest part of the essay and can contain as many paragraphs as necessary to support the controlling ideas of your thesis statement.

Essay

I. Introduction
- General Statements
- Thesis Statement

II. Body
- A. Topic Sentence
  1. Support
  2. Support
  3. Support (Concluding Sentence)
- B. Topic Sentence
  1. Support
  2. Support
  3. Support (Concluding Sentence)
- C. Topic Sentence
  1. Support
  2. Support
  3. Support (Concluding Sentence)

III. Conclusion
- Restatement or summary of the main points; final comment
Structure: Conclusion

III. CONCLUSION

Restatement or summary of the main points; final comment
Conclusion

• Sum up your argument/information with reference to the essay question
• Summarise the key points
• Reinforce the key message
• Perhaps mention wider implications/future directions
Planning your essay – Part 2

Brainstorming

• What do you already know about the topic?
• What do you want to know?
• What ideas do you have already?

Outlining

• Write down the main ideas you need to include
• Make a rough plan of how you think your essay will be structured
Planning your essay – Part 2

Activity

• Rearrange the mind map
• Make a rough plan of how you think your essay will be structured
Academic Language

• Formal
• Concise
• Objective
• Explicit
• Accurate
• Careful
• Credible
Academic Language

- **Formal** (no slang, idioms or colloquialisms)
- **Concise** (choose words wisely, avoid repetition)
- **Objective** (no opinionated statements)
- **Explicit** (say what you mean, don’t leave the reader trying to double guess your meaning)
- **Accurate** (use exact figures, dates, names, places etc.)
- **Careful** (check the figures, dates names places etc.)
- **Credible** (use your literature and sources and research to back up what you’re saying, as evidence for your ideas)
Additional Resources

- Learning Centre
- Writing Libguide
- IRWC (Interactive Rubric for Written Communication)
- Peer Advisors