

WRITING A CRITICAL ESSAY

Purpose

A critical essay involves evaluating information, theories or situations and is an important way of analysing information, posing questions and challenging information. The critical essay is an important academic tool that allows your knowledge to develop, because rather than being a personal opinion, the critical essay requires an in-depth analysis of a topic

Structure

Introduction	Body	Conclusion
Introduce topic & provide a context for the essay	Answer the question by developing a discussion	Restate the Main Point
<p>Introductions have two parts:</p> <p>1. General statements about your topic. These sentences need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract reader's attention Introduce the topic in a general way to orientate your reader to the subject and to provide background information. <p>This provides the context. Keep statements brief.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide background information <p>2. The thesis statement. It is often the last sentence of the introduction and gives the reader the following information: State specific topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies your position on the topic or question List the subtopics that will be discussed Limits the scope of what will be discussed Indicates the pattern of organisation of the essay and gives a clear outline of what will follow Indicates your argument or contention when you are asked to 'draw conclusions' about a subject. 	<p>Here, show your knowledge and understanding of material that has been read.</p> <p>If the question / answer has more than one part, the body of the text should be structured into separate sections and addressed individually.</p> <p>Your argument should be presented logically and cohesively by following the general paragraph structure of:</p> <p>Topic sentence States the topic and central idea of the paragraph. (The point the paragraph makes)</p> <p>Supporting sentences These sentences support, expand, explain, examine and justify the points made in the topic sentence. (Evidence, examples and quotes that support your position.</p> <p>Concluding Sentence Relate the example and evidence back to your thesis</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Relate the essay back to the essay question Reiterate the thesis point Reiterate most important evidence supporting the position taken May also contain a reflection on the evidence presented. Questions such as these may be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is the significance of your findings? -What are the implications of your conclusions for this topic and for the broader field? -Are there any limitations to your approach? -Are there any other factors of relevance that impact upon the topic but fell outside the scope of the essay? -Are there any suggestions you can make in terms of future research? The conclusion should match the introduction in terms of the ideas presented and the argument put forward.

Academic Language

Academic words for reporting and connecting ideas

To introduce an additional idea

In addition, another reason/ aspect/example, furthermore, moreover, besides, also

To introduce an opposite idea or contrast

On the other hand, in contrast, in spite of, Although, still, nonetheless, instead, compare this with, alternatively, otherwise, on the contrary, rather

To give an example

For example, for instance, an example of this is, a further instance of this is,

To list ideas in order of time

First, first of all, first and foremost, second, more important, most important, more significantly, above all, most of all, concurrently, an additional

To introduce an explanation or make a stronger statement

In fact, indeed

To introduce a result

Accordingly, as a result, as a consequence, consequently, for these reasons, hence, therefore, thus

To point to evidence

It can be seen that, the evidence is that, in support of this

To make a tentative statement

Studies suggest that, perhaps, it would seem that, it tends to be the case that, studies indicate

Hedging Expressions

It should be the case that..... Viewed in this way.....

It might be suggested that.... There is every hope that...

It may be possible to obtain.... It is important to develop....

It is useful to study..... It is not known whether

One cannot exclude from..... It is/it is not difficult to conclude from...

References

Morley-Warner, T. (2009). Academic writing is...: A guide to writing in a university context. Sydney, Australia: CREA publications.

Redman, P. (2006). Good essay writing (3rd ed.) London, England: Open University Press.

Oshima, A. & Hogue, A. (1981) Writing Academic English (2nd ed.) United States of America: Addison-Wesley Publishing.

Discipline Examples

Psychology

https://www.jcu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/122777/jcuprd1_073117.pdf

Sociology

https://www.jcu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/122893/jcuprd1_073128.pdf

BA1002

<http://libguides.jcu.edu.au/c.php?g=162355&p=1065360>

Useful Links

Understanding the Assignment Question

<https://libguides.jcu.edu.au/writing/writing1>

Planning the assignment

<https://libguides.jcu.edu.au/writing/writing3>

Paragraph writing

<https://libguides.jcu.edu.au/writing/writing4a#s-lg-box-21116603>

Integrating evidence

<https://libguides.jcu.edu.au/writing/writing4b#s-lg-box-21039759>

Editing

<http://libguides.jcu.edu.au/c.php?g=162354&p=1064659>

Manchester Phrasebank

<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>

Critical reading and note-taking

<https://libguides.jcu.edu.au/writing/writing2>