# WRITING ESSAYS (1)

1. **THE TITLE**  The injunction tells you what you must do. The title also tells you what content is needed.

2. **BRAINSTORM**  Everything you can think of that may be useful.

3. **REJECT**  any of 2. that is not directly useful for THIS question.

4. **ORGANISE**  what's left into a logical order—it should FLOW.

5. **REVIEW**  this plan looking back at the title---will THIS plan answer THIS essay question?

## INTRODUCTION
This signposts what is coming. It indicates:

a] you know the definitions of key terms in the title.
b] how you will set out your answer.

## MAIN BODY
a] Link paragraph to paragraph so that it tumbles like a cascade. [see examples at ** **]
b] I, the reader, am intelligent, but a specialist in the topic. Write your answer for an intelligent non-specialist.
c] Refer back to the question very occasionally. This will focus your writing and the examiner will know that you are still targeting your answer to this question. [it also helps with the flow]

## CONCLUSION
a] Should refer back to the title.
b] Summarises the main arguments of the essay.
c] Evaluates the debate based on the “weight of evidence ” and not on your personal opinion.

## PLAN OF ACTION
1. Read and carefully decode the title.
2. Locate and gather together information: your notes from lectures, relevant books, journals and page numbers, also articles you wish to use. You need time to do this part.
3. From all your sources make notes that are appropriate for THIS essay. List names and studies you want to use.
4. Make the plan. INTRODUCTION Signposts / definitions.
   MAIN BODY Flow and logical progression. [see examples at ** **]
   CONCLUSION Summarising referring back to the title and the argument on the weight of evidence.
5. First draft. You can make short quotes but quotation marks are necessary ” ” and you must reference any quotes. Don't quote whole paragraphs.
6. Write it. If it is written in a non exam environment, you should reference all your citations.

## LENGTH?
If you do it at home about 1500 words—or the specified number from your tutor [but not too many more or less]. You don't count your references in this number.
If it is in an exam environment, then write as much as you can. A well planned shorter essay that answers THIS question, is better than a rambling, long, vague wander through a series of flabby words! [ It will probably be 4 sides upwards ]
WRITING ESSAYS (1 cont.)

Some useful phrases

**As can be seen then..... / The above findings suggest that .... / While this may be acceptable..../
Supporting Bloggs' (84) claims...../Similar results were found by ...../ A contrasting interpretation was
suggested by...../ Bloggs (84) varied the above study by.... / The above claims did not go
unchallenged...../ These findings were criticised [supported ] by.... / Further criticism [support] for this
viewpoint came from.....**

**While this may be acceptable..../
Supporting Bloggs' (1999) claims...../
A contrasting interpretation was suggested by.... /
The above claims did not go unchallenged.... /
These findings were criticised [supported ] by.... /
Further criticism [support] for this viewpoint came from.... /
A contrasting view is that of .......
An alternative to this criticism [support] comes from......
But this Approach does not take into account the problem of....... 
Another issue relevant to this debate is that of....... 
This claim is difficult to justify, according to.........
Obvious differences arise between the 2 approaches over the issue of...../
A quite different assumption is made by......./**

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WRITING ESSAYS (2)

ESSAY QUESTIONS  
Some help with titles and translation of the ESSAY TERMS  
(these are the instructions that tell you what to do with your knowledge)

Essays usually require **knowledge** and **use of that knowledge**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>of theories/models/people/concepts/evidence/applications to real life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptions</strong></td>
<td>in clear, understandable English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness</strong></td>
<td>of methodologies used to collect primary data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIP 1.** It's factual. You don’t usually get a facts only essay—its likely to need some evaluation.

**TIP 2.** The marker *never* wants to know everything there is to know about a topic. Give what’s **relevant** and be **selective**.

**USE OF KNOWLEDGE**

**Analysis**  
Breaking a subject down into its parts to investigate their nature and how they interrelate.

**Evaluation**  
What is the value of one set of evidence for a theory/concept/model when weighed against the value of another set of evidence.  
How does the argument stack up on each side.  
How good is the evidence at explaining a phenomenon you are discussing.

**TIP 1.** Bring in **lots of different opinions** from a **variety of viewpoints**.

**TIP 2.** You can use criticisms of methodological practice used as a valid “weighing up” tactic.

So, **THE ESSAY TERMS**.

These are **instructions** within the essay title. This is what you must do for *THIS* essay.

**TRANSLATION OF SOME ESSAY TERMS**

**TERMS** requiring **knowledge** :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Define</strong></th>
<th>Explain what a particular term means. Keep it short. If asked to do this, reckon on the term being tricky or specialised. Drop in definitions if <em>you</em> think it will improve your work, especially in an introductory paragraph. It’s factual.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe</strong></td>
<td>Evidence that shows you know about a subject. It’s factual.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Explain** | Show a detailed *understanding* of a subject. Be clear, consistent and logical.  
It’s factual. |
| **Outline** | A *brief* description that summarises just the main features. No minor details.  
It’s factual. |
WRITING ESSAYS (3)

INJUNCTIONS requiring use of knowledge:

- **Analyse/Critically analyse**: Break the topics into its parts. Show you know the whole topic by dissecting it.
- **Assess/Critically assess**: Judge how good/effective some factors are by writing about their strengths and weaknesses. These should be balanced.
- **Criticise**: This doesn’t mean that you find fault with a topic/idea/concept because you don’t like it. Instead judge it on the evidence you’ve found. Does the weight of evidence fall to one side or the other? Or is it balanced/indecisive?
- **Evaluate/Critically evaluate**: Weigh up the evidence and judge the merits of a topic. For or against? Remember, arguments are seldom all one sided.
- **Justify**: Give grounds for the claims made by e.g. a theory, a model, by examining the supporting evidence.

COMBINED INJUNCTIONS requiring knowledge and its use:

- **Compare and Contrast**: Analyse the similarities and differences between the essay’s topic areas. Strengths and weaknesses of evidence/how substantial it is, will help.
- **Critically consider**: Consider (knowledge) and criticise (use of knowledge).
- **Distinguish between**: Look for differences between two items by a) describing their differences and criticising the importance of these differences.
- **Discuss**: Describe and evaluate using different, but not always contrasting points of view.
- **In terms of**: Asks you to use evidence you’ve got from a particular area of the topic.

Don’t slip up on these BANANA SKINS!:

- **Discuss one or more**
- **Using two** theories/concepts/models…..
- **Either….or……**
- **This and that**

AND FINALLY

A few words that often crop up in essay questions.

- **Applications**: Practical uses in the real world, for your theoretical knowledge.
- **Concepts**: An idea/group of ideas. Often go together to become a theory.
- **Evidence**: Findings from research or theories to support/contradict.
- **Findings**: What the researcher has found from their investigation.
- **Insights**: Thoughts bubbling up that help our understanding and judgements.
- **Methods**: The different ways (methodologies) used to do investigation.
- **Model**: Like a theory but less complicated. Often has a single idea.
- **Research**: The process of gaining knowledge by a) looking at the building blocks or segments of a theory or b) Scientific investigation.
- **Studies**: Investigations naming researchers and findings.
WRITING ESSAYS (4)

Tackling a COMPARE AND CONTRAST essay.

Write a starter sentence. Then 6 paragraphs
Start each paragraph with either a compare [similarity] statement or a contrast [difference] statement from below. [this shows the examiner you've still got your eye on the essay title]
A and B are the 2 areas within the essay title to be compared and contrasted. They might be
theories
models
approaches / perspectives
therapeutic techniques,
explanations of causes of a phenomenon,
or 2 any thing else.
The “using your intelligence” aspect is finding the similarities and differences on the specified aspects of the main topics in the title.

STARTER SENTENCES

This essay will attempt to demonstrate the main similarities and differences between A and B
When considering A and B, obvious differences arise over the issues of .......... and ..................
Where similarities between A and B do exist they are in the areas of .......................

COMPARE statements:

This support has been challenged by........ , who considers that..............................Support for A's claims comes from Z and Y. Z suggests that.............................Y also confirms that...............
A similar view is held by .....Further support for this assertion can be found in X's study of .......
Another issue relevant to this argument is...............
Similar findings from B's study on .... suggest..........................
Comparisons between A and B can be observed in their treatment of..........
Methodological similarities between A and B occur. They both..........................Also..........

DIFFERENCE statements

This was not found acceptable to  W who.........................A contrasting interpretation, suggested by  R, states...............
The above did not go unchallenged.
These findings were criticised by.......Further criticism from..................
A contrasting view is that............By contrast, B .........................
An alternative to this criticism from..M.......... is that of N who........
However this[claim, view etc.] does not take into account the problem of..................
This claim is difficult to justify, according to Q, because.............
Obvious differences arise between the 2 ......over the issue of..................
A quite different assumption is made by..................
Quite different methodologies were used by A and B. Whereas A........ ,  B........