Introduction

- Basic steps in the essay writing process
- Analysing the essay question
- Note-taking systems
- Essay plans
- The introduction
- The body
- An academic argument
- The conclusion
- The paragraph
- Structuring your essay
- Referencing
- Editing
- The cat sat on the mat
Basic steps in the essay writing process

- Analyse the essay question and define key terms
- Establish your argument/point of view
- Research the topic
- Take notes from your reading
- Write your plan; organise your ideas using the structure of introduction, body and conclusion
- Write your first draft to include your introduction, body and conclusion
- Set it aside for a time, read the hard copy and make corrections. Edit and redraft your essay
- Have a friend or colleague read it
- Complete your references
Analysing the essay question

- **Task words**
  - tell you what you have to do.

- **Content words**
  - tell you what the topic is.

- **Limiting words**
  - limit the topic so that it is workable.
Sample essay question

Discuss the changes computers have had on education.

- Task word: discuss
- Content words: changes, computers
- Limiting words: education
Note taking methods

The lazy method: underlining, with notes in the margins

Column method

Mind Maps
Note taking: Mind-Maps
# The column method

Include bibliographical information — author, year, title, volume/issue no.s, publisher, place published

| Direct quotes “......” p. 17 | How does this information relate to other texts I have read?  
What important links can be made to the topic/other research?  
How is the information relevant? (if not, should I pursue it at this time?)  
Does the author say anything new or interesting?  
Is there anything I don’t understand?  
Is the author saying anything I disagree with? Why do I disagree?  
Does the author contradict other authors on the same topic?  
What conclusions can be drawn from the text? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summaries (main ideas, no elaboration or examples)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrases (say it in your own words)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This article is about the latest developments in Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) for automobiles.

"Every minute at least one person dies in a car crash" p.40
"The ultimate solution ....is to keep cars from smashing into one another" p.40

The technology exists for sensors and processors that can respond instantly to the distance and movement of other vehicles- cars speed & distance from other objects can be very expensive –installed in luxury cars(p44)

Jones' main claim I agree as it would be a very smart car to do this.
Essay Plans

Linear plans
• a list of headings and subheadings

Diagrammatic plans
• diagrams to illustrate connections between your points

Mind-maps
• a more creative ‘birds-eye-view’ of your ideas
Writing your essay

- Start writing early — the earlier the better
- Don’t write the essay from beginning to end, start with the body
- Write the introduction and conclusion after the body is completed
- Keep the essay’s purpose in mind constantly
Introduction

**Orientate to the topic:**
gives a general background to your essay topic

**State thesis or argument:**
the essay’s main point which is usually the answer to the question

**State outline of the essay:**
the stages the essay will go through

**State scope:**
the limits of the essay
Can you identify which stages the writer has included?

Traditional Australian history was monolithic in its perception and neglected the multiplicity of Australian identity. This essay argues that in recognising and legitimising the multiplicity of Australian identity we gain a more complete understanding of the collective Australian achievement. Within the scope of Aboriginality and gender, this essay initially looks at the recognition of history. Secondly, the essay discusses the re-examination of history and its relation to uncovering multiple identities within Australia. Thirdly, the essay moves on to explore the reclamation and legitimisation of the diverse identities that arise from the re-examination of history. Finally, the essay will discuss how the reconstruction and legitimisation of identities is necessary to develop a more complete view of Australian achievement.
Traditional Australian history was monolithic in its perception and neglected the multiplicity of Australian identity. This essay argues that in recognising and legitimising the multiplicity of Australian identity we gain a more complete understanding of the collective Australian achievement. Within the scope of Aboriginality and gender, this essay initially looks at the recognition of history. Secondly, the essay discusses the re-examination of history and its relation to uncovering multiple identities within Australia. Thirdly, the essay moves on to explore the reclamation and legitimisation of the diverse identities that arise from the re-examination of history. Finally, the essay will discuss how the reconstruction and legitimisation of identities is necessary to develop a more complete view of Australian achievement.
In the body ...

Answer the essay question by developing your arguments sequentially.

Support your assertions with evidence.

Deal with only one main idea in each paragraph.

Have a logical progression towards your conclusion.
An academic argument

Should be developed in a systematic way that leads to a clear conclusion.

Must be supported by evidence which comes from your understanding of other authors.

Should answer a question, not tell a story.
An academic argument

Question

Thesis

Reason 1
- evidence
- evidence
- evidence

Reason 2
- evidence
- evidence
- evidence

Reason 3
- evidence
- evidence
- evidence
A conclusion...

- **Summarises outline**
  - State what stages the essay developed through

- **Confirms thesis**
  - Restate your main argument

- **Qualifies thesis**
  - Identify an important focus that the thesis refers to
A conclusion:

Should bring together the main points of your essay and reiterate your answer to the question.

Should add strength to your essay by clearly summing up your arguments and making a final comment.

Should not include any new information.
The paragraph

The topic sentence
- indicates the main idea of the paragraph. It also limits the topic to one or two areas that can be discussed completely in the space of a single paragraph.

Supporting sentences
- develop the topic. They explain the topic sentence by giving reasons, interpretations, examples, facts, statistics and quotations.

The concluding sentence
- signals the end of the paragraph.
A saucepan is a useful utensil. You can use it to boil water, or to carry water. Some home hairdressers use it to guide their scissors. You could make a stew in it, or mix paint in it. At a pinch, it could double as a hat.

A saucepan is a useful utensil.
Squiggles
Squiggles continued

a

b

a

b
Structuring your essay

- Primarily, we respond to an ordered design rather than a chaotic one.

- This means that the design of your paragraphs should be consistent.
  - That is, if you are discussing the pros and cons of each point you make, don’t, mid chapter or section have a paragraph that reverses the structure; that discusses the cons and pros.
An example – Lindy Chamberlain

- Read the text and work out the pattern of each paragraph.

- You can represent this verbally or mathematically.
In 1982 Lindy Chamberlain was convicted of murdering her baby Azaria while camping at Uluru. In this essay I will argue that Chamberlain cannot be convicted of Azaria’s death as there was too much conflicting evidence.

First, there is the question of the blood found in the car. It was claimed that it was baby’s blood. However, the tests used to identify the blood were later found to be unreliable and the blood could have come from an adult.

Another piece of conflicting evidence concerns the dingo. Lindy claims that Azaria was taken by a stray dingo. Some of the other campers say they saw no dingo, but there were several who confirm Lindy’s story, and who state that they heard a dingo’s cry just before Azaria went missing.

And finally, there is the case of the baby’s jumpsuit which was later found with holes in it. The prosecution claimed that the holes could only have been made by a pair of nail scissors – the ones they say Lindy used to kill her baby. The defence, on the other hand, has demonstrated that the holes could have just as easily been made by a dingo’s teeth.

In the light of the conflicting evidence above, I believe that it was wrong to convict Lindy Chamberlain without finding more conclusive proof of her guilt.
Further exercise

- Because this is a very brief text, the introduction and conclusion are not complete. What is missing?

- Write a brief introduction and conclusion for this text.
Why Do We Reference?

- A way of showing **how** you know something. (This requires sources being mentioned in the body of the text and at the end of the text.)

- Gives credit where it is due.

- Avoids plagiarism (i.e., presenting other peoples’ ideas and information as your own).

- Shows the depth and relevance of your research.

- If you use your sources well, you can show that you understand the information.
How Do We Reference?

1. **In-text** referencing Harvard Style

Surname and year of publication
(Smith 1998)
Smith (1998)

- INCLUDE PAGE NUMBER IF INFORMATION IS ON A SPECIFIC PAGE
Quotations

- Introduce quotation smoothly and appropriately.
- The grammar linking all parts of the sentence must be correct.
- Inverted commas around the exact words.
- Author Year Page.
- Check punctuation and spelling.

Smith (1999 p. 271) defines the global market as “blah, blah, blah”.

- Use quotations sparingly
Examples of quotations

Author focus

Gardener (1980) describes it as "above all, an architectural experience" (p. 23).

Idea focus

The Pantheon has been described as "above all, an architectural experience" (Gardener 1980, p. 23).
References


Editing

- Researching well, and answering the question as fully as possible.

Structure
- Giving equal weight to all sections of the essay and ensuring paragraphs flow

Referencing
- Checking in text citations and reference list for accuracy

Grammar
- Proofreading your essay or getting a friend to read it
The cat sat on the mat

Fail

- The cat sat on the ground.

Fail/Pass

- The cat sat on the mat.

Pass/Credit

- The cat sat on the mat. The outcome of this was that the mat became flat and this indicates that cats should be kept off mats.
The cat sat on the mat. The outcome of this was that the mat became flat, and this indicates that cats should be kept off mats. Studies by Smith (1996, p. 7) show that cats sitting on mats have a positive effect on mat compressibility.
The cat sat on the mat. The outcome of this was that the mat became flat, and this indicates that cats should be kept off mats. Studies by Smith (1996, p. 7) show that cats sitting on mats have a positive effect on mat compressibility. In contrast, Brown (1997, p. 34) claims that cats do not make mats flat. However, his observation was based on a study of newborn kittens so cannot be judged as reliable. Therefore, if mats are to be kept in an uncompressed condition, it is preferable that cats not be allowed to sit on them.
For a copy of the slides:

- Please go to:
  
  gettingstarted.unsw.edu.au/orientation
The Learning Centre offers free academic skills support to all students enrolled at UNSW, Australia. We assist students adjusting to academic culture and to new approaches to learning and teaching.

Learning Centre Office Locations

For Students-

- During Session- Workshops and short courses on different academic genres, oral presentations, study/learning strategies, thesis writing, and conversation classes. Book Online
  http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/workshop.html

- During Session- Consultations with a peer writing assistant. Book Online
  http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/consult.html

For everyone/anyone

- Extensive range of free online academic skills resources in various formats- static web-pages, interactive tutorials, pdf downloads. Developed by Learning Centre and Faculty staff for UNSW students.
  http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/olib.html

- Follow us on..