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How to Write an Essay?

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(Please note that this is a basic Guide on how to write an essay. The features and requirements of essays can vary, and the number of paragraphs in it are dependent on the word count).

An essay consists of four basic parts:

1. **An Introduction (Usually 10% of the word count)**
2. **The Body of the essay (Usually 80% of the word count and divided into paragraphs)**
3. **A Conclusion (Usually 10% of the word count)**
4. **A Reference List**

The Introduction should provide some background information about the topic. It should explain the rationale behind the argument being put forward, and also what you are going to do at key points in the essay. So one can ask the questions What? How? And Why? What is the essay about, how you will tackle the question and cover the topic, and why you have approached it in a certain way – give brief reasons. 100 words for the Introduction are considered appropriate.

You need to summarise the main aim of the essay, as this tells the reader what to expect in terms of an answer to the essay question – for example – If the essay is on Climate Change you could state - **This essay outlines the most commonly proposed initiatives for addressing climate change, and argues that to address this issue, both practical and political solutions must be found.** Then you could go on to discuss the Carbon Tax which is levied on the carbon content of fuels. How when petroleum, coal or natural gas are burnt their carbon is converted to carbon dioxide (CO₂). You can then go on to say that the solution to this problem could be the levy of a Global Carbon Tax thus enforcing all countries to participate in averting the problem on a global scale. There will be a multitude of solutions that you could provide, talk about the carbon footprint, the burning of fossil fuels, it has been established that human activities are the primary driver and contribute towards global warming etc.

The essay should contain signposting such as what it is about and what it will do. In reflective essays one can use one's own data and experiences. You should find appropriate scholarly resources which are relevant to the essay topic. In an essay you need to exercise critical thinking and analysis, you need to define, analyse, compare and evaluate different points of view on the topic. You need to explain the meaning of the concept, the idea and the theory of the essay topic.

You can use sequencers such as “Firstly” “Secondly” “Thirdly” in your paragraphs if the word count is on the low side.

Essentially, you state that here is the argument, and I am going to present three or four threads of it by gathering information from the theorists who present the different components in a range of forms, opinions, ideas and then I will conclude with my thoughts on the topic, and try and help the reader to understand the phenomenon.

The Body of the essay should be organised into paragraphs. Each paragraph should deal with ***a different aspect of the topic, and yet, it should link with what has been written before and what follows a paragraph.***

In each paragraph, there should be ***a topic sentence which introduces the main theme of the paragraph***, followed by elaborating the point, presenting arguments and counterarguments, demonstrating differences, giving alternatives, analysis and comparing and contrasting. Present evidence, prove that what you claim is true, you have to explain the significance and importance of your essay, prove why what you are stating carries weight. It is important to consider a sequence for your essay – ***there should be continuity in terms of the linking of paragraphs and order at all stages of the essay.***

The Conclusion reminds the reader what the essay was meant to do, find solutions/answers to the topic and how you reached that answer. You can make recommendations. Try and take a position, predict what could happen in the future relating to the topic, propose some future action which would be constructive, it could be an experiment or a new question to be addressed. It is a summation of what went on before. Summarise the essay and the evidence used in it in a concise manner; you can use 'In a nutshell'..... You can write about what the essay set out to discover, what the evidence pointed out, what new research there is about the topic, and finally what has been proved as a result of the research that you conducted to write the essay.

Example of an Essay Question:

Describe the best way for a supermarket to become successful and to expand its business and be more profitable. You can use a store which you shop at or is known to you.

Paragraph 1

Introduction – you could indicate the importance of the topic and how you will highlight the different aspects such as supermarkets play a key role in our everyday lives, we need food to live and hunger is a basic instinct, the interest that people have in international cuisine, how good quality products and ingredients matter to most people, how the supermarket should be in close proximity to where we live, what it can do to be more successful.

Paragraph 2

In the main body of the essay you could cover the importance of good service – customer care which means not just pointing out which aisle certain products are located in but taking the customer to the shelves where the item is displayed. Also after-sales service is equally important. If a kettle or toaster purchased at the supermarket is not working properly but is still under guarantee, then the service that the customer gets should be top class to make them feel that they are cared for even when things go wrong. You could discuss the importance of merchandising display, signposting, shelving layout, special offers, lighting, cleanliness, pricing strategy etc.

Paragraph 3

In a separate paragraph, you could write about supermarkets can expand if they have good quality products. How pricing can influence purchasing power. How this aspect is important for customers, how products for which the sell by date has passed should have a price reduction or be removed from the shelves altogether. Pricing is a major consideration for a vast majority of customers. Also, a wide range of products is very appealing to most customers. The produce should be fresh and displayed attractively. You could mention that some people go shopping at the end of the day when the prices of certain products are reduced as their sell by date is coming to an end. This applies to families who are on tight budgets.

Paragraph 4

In this paragraph you could write about how the supermarket can improve its profitability. For example - it can send its staff to go to competitors and see how they display their products, check their pricing policy, it could improve its website, make it easy to navigate, make special offers for online shoppers, offer free delivery to its online shoppers – especially appealing to elderly customers who may be housebound, have free car parking, its location can also impact favourably on its revenue. Is it near a library for instance, near a park, near a cinema, in a shopping mall etc. These factors can be beneficial as people can combine their visit to the supermarket and also engage in some social activities.

Paragraph 5

The conclusion needs to be brief and there is no need to go over what has already been stated. You could list your recommendations, the limitations that existed when researching the topic, the future trends and developments in the field.