

The Department of Law and Criminology

## **How to Write an Essay**

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## ***How to Write an Essay***

This guide aims to help you through the essay-writing process from beginning to end. It is a basic guide and you may receive additional guidance from tutors or other sources. Members of staff, and in particular your seminar tutors, will be happy to help you at any stage. Please note, however, that staff are not allowed to read essay plans or draft essays.

To give you more help you might like to consult the Effective Study and Research Skills Collection in the Hugh Owen Library – see [http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/academicliaison/study/howto\\_study.asp](http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/academicliaison/study/howto_study.asp)

### **1. *Identify the Question***

First and foremost, it is important to identify an essay question. Some modules provide a choice of set essay questions. Naturally, your individual interests will play a part in determining which question you select.

If you are having difficulty selecting an essay question, you may find it helpful to write possible essay structures or outlines for those questions that interest you. This exercise may help you to decide by identifying gaps in your knowledge about the given subject areas. Brainstorming key words, scholars or debates may also help. Even where you know which question you will tackle it is sensible to write a possible essay structure or outline to identify gaps in your knowledge.

When selecting a question, ensure that you take the time to identify its analytical demands:

- What is the essay question *really* asking? In a problem question – which areas are essential to its resolution?
- What are the key concepts and theories associated with this question? What key areas of law are in dispute?
- Based on your knowledge of the relevant literature, what are the main arguments? What are the main debates about? For answering problem questions in law which what are the main cases and statutes and how have the main academics interpreted them?
- What are possible arguments or hypotheses? In what ways can they be supported or refuted? In questions with a legal aspect, what possible interpretations of the main statutes or cases are there or what are the possible outcomes?
- In what ways can I add my own original analysis?

Analysing the question carefully before proceeding is highly recommended as this will influence how you structure your essay and perform your research.

#### **Key Points**

- Select an essay question based on your individual interest but take the time to scrutinize its analytical demands.
- Work out exactly what the question is asking

## 2. **Planning your Essay Structure**

Essay structure is crucial. Many of you will find that feedback comments often centre on essay structure because of its importance in determining the strength of the overall argument.

Drafting a preliminary essay structure along with a word budget is highly recommended before proceeding to further stages. Remember that this is a preliminary draft and that you can modify the structure throughout the process. An example of a basic essay structure is shown in Figure 1.

The *Writing Stage* section below examines the essay structure in detail by explaining the purpose behind each of the essay components.

**Figure 1: A Basic Essay Structure**

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	<b>Word Budget</b>	
	(example 2000 word essay)	(example 1000 word essay)
Introduction and <b>Thesis Statement</b>	200	150
'Cognitive Map	150	100
Topic #1 Main/Body Paragraph #1	200	140
Topic #2 Main/Body Paragraph #2	200	130
Topic #3 Main/Body Paragraph #3	200	130
Topic #4 Main/Body Paragraph #4	200	
Topic #5 Main/Body Paragraph #5	200	
Counter-Arguments	350	150
Conclusion	300	200
Bibliography		

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Remember essays are not papers that contain everything that you know about a given subject area. The point of an essay is to present a clear and cogent argument. It should answer the question by combining original analysis with knowledge of the subject area. Similarly problem questions require you not to merely discuss areas of law or criminological debate but to apply them to a given scenario and illustrate the strength and depth of your knowledge and understanding through the way in which you carry out this exercise.

#### **Key Points**

- Tease out each aspect of the question
- Plan your essay so that it deals logically with all aspects of the question
- Plan to leave room for a conclusion to draw the analysis together

### **3. Research**

Your lectures and course readings from both the essential and recommended reading lists are excellent resources to begin your research. They will not only provide you with basic knowledge of the subject area but will also help you to identify further readings. Please note, however, that you should **not** generally cite from your lectures in essays (or in examinations). University-level research entails accessing and reading critically a wide variety of published sources. These include books as well as academic journals and newspapers. It also involves reading statutes and cases in their original, not just other people's interpretations of what they mean. It can also entail making use of credible internet sources, but you should take great care when using them. While the internet is an incredibly valuable tool, many web-based sources do not conform to academic standards because they are not peer-reviewed. They can be misleading or even wrong. You should also **NEVER** rely wholly on the internet for your research, though you might read academic journals on the net, especially those to which the University subscribes. Information Services holds many seminars throughout the year that can help you to use their software and search engines. Further information can be obtained from the Information Services website at <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/courses/>. Please take advantage of these services and feel free to approach library staff for further help. You will be given information on how to search legal and social science resources as part of some of your modules. Please listen carefully to these lectures they are an excellent resource. There is also a student representative of Lexis Nexis, you can ask in the General Office for the name of the student for this year, he or she will help you to use this extremely powerful resource. Please remember that Lexis Nexis is far more than just a legal resource!

While conducting your research, it is essential to keep notes and to ensure that you record the essential publication information that you will need for your bibliography. It cannot be stressed enough that **PROPER CITATION AND THE USE OF A BIBLIOGRAPHIC FORMAT FOLLOWING AN OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED ACADEMIC STYLE IS A CORNERSTONE OF ALL ACADEMIC WRITING**. Further advice on this is given in the section on *How to Reference an Essay* below.

The Endnote software program that is available on all university workstations can be helpful in this regard. However, should you choose to use Endnote, please ensure that you take the time to familiarise yourself with it and to understand the stylistic rules for citations and bibliographic format before you begin.

**Key Point**

- Utilize all available sources including books, journals, newspapers, Lexis Nexis, cases, statutes, official government documents and credible internet sources (note that lectures are usually not acceptable citations)
- Make sure you note down the **FULL** publication details of any sources that you consult.
- Where you copy sections down to use as quotes make sure you note down the **FULL** publication details **AND page references**.
- Ensure that you use one of the two official academic citation and bibliographic styles.

#### **4. The Writing Stage**

Experienced writers will know that while the final product should look smooth and polished, it takes a lot of work to get it into this shape. The writing process is usually anything but smooth! Most students will find it useful to write an essay by sections, re-working and editing as they go along. The writing process is, however, a very personal matter that is dependent not only on the subject area but the preferences and character of the individual. What follows is a detailed breakdown of what each section of your final essay should contain, with reference to Figure 1 above. Please remember, however, that Figure 1 is only a rough guide: it is not a template that must be mechanically applied to every piece of written work. The structure of any given essay will vary depending upon the particular demands of the question and the response of an individual author to them.

- A) Introduction:** The introduction of the essay should begin generally and narrow towards the thesis statement. However, avoid beginning with a cliché. The opening sentence should give the reader a sense of your subject area without resorting to catch-all stock phrases. **AVOID JOURNALISTIC TYPE STATEMENTS.** The essay question should appear in some modified form early on in the introduction. As a whole, the introduction should grab the reader's attention and provide a contextualised overview of the research question by identifying key concepts, issues or the main debate.

**Key Points**

- Begin generally, avoiding clichés, and build towards the thesis statement
- Grab the reader's attention
- Contextualise the research question or debate

**B) Thesis Statement:** Often forgotten, this sentence is perhaps the single most important sentence of the essay. This statement is essentially the central argument of your essay. More than just an answer to the essay question, the thesis statement provides the reader with the backbone of the entire essay. The remainder of the essay should therefore be related directly to and provide evidence for the thesis statement. Ideally, the thesis statement should stand solidly on its own. Thus, avoid using unnecessary transition phrases such as “In this essay, I will argue”. Although your thesis argument may alter slightly throughout the writing phase, it is nonetheless important to have a clear thesis statement from the outset in order to develop a strong essay structure.

#### Key Points

- The thesis statement is the most important sentence of your essay so take the time to craft it precisely
- It should stand solidly on its own
- Avoid phrases such as “In this essay, I will argue...”

**C) ‘Cognitive Map’ Paragraph:** The paragraph is especially useful for longer essays. As its name implies, the ‘road map’ paragraph provides the reader with insight into how the rest of the essay is structured. Most commonly, this paragraph lists in order the sections that follow. It demonstrates to the reader your methodology for substantiating your central argument. It ensures a logical structure to your essay.

#### Key Points

- A cognitive map paragraph is a useful device that tells the reader how your argument will unfold

**D) Main or Body Paragraphs:** While the content of every body paragraph will vary according to the essay topic, they should all contain evidence in support of the central argument. Topic sentences help with transition in packaging all of the evidence that supports the thesis. They provide structure to the essay by ordering the evidence into discrete areas or issues, which is obviously preferable to presenting that evidence in a random or haphazard manner. You may wish to divide your essay, for instance, into sections that deal with theory, policy and application. A problem question might break down into a series of legal issues that need to be discussed or to various possible interpretations on one central legal issue. A theory question might be divided into differing theoretical debates or a core theory to be questioned from other theoretical standpoints. A policy or practical essay might be divided into areas with case studies to illustrate points. Whatever the section types, the topic sentences introduce the section and state how its issue area relates directly to the central argument. With longer essays, is often useful to separate sections with subheadings. With shorter pieces,

however, subheadings can often detract from the overall flow of the essay. The body paragraph should relate only to the topic sentence which, given the evidence, will then lend credence to the thesis. Exclude superfluous information by sticking to the subject area and the central argument. Each section should conclude with sufficient signposts that link back to the thesis. Signposts summarise how a particular section provides evidence for the thesis and help with the transition to the succeeding section.

#### **Key Points**

- Main or body paragraphs provide structure to the essay by packaging evidence for the thesis thematically
- Use subheadings to separate topic paragraphs whenever useful but avoid detracting from the overall flow of the essay
- The evidence contained within each body paragraph should pertain only to its respective topic sentence
- Conclude the section with the use of signposts that link back to the thesis

**E) *Counter-Arguments:*** With longer essays and where appropriate, it is often useful to include a counter-argument paragraph that precedes the conclusion. This paragraph considers any final counter-arguments to which your argument may be susceptible and states why these critiques are not relevant, are beyond the scope of the given limitations, or do not hold for any other grounds. Thus, while the preceding body paragraph allow you to provide consistent evidence in support of your thesis, this section can lend sophistication to your analysis by demonstrating that you acknowledge contending hypotheses but maintain your position for reasonable grounds.

#### **Key Points**

- Often useful for longer or upper-year work, this section allows you to acknowledge contending hypotheses and to reinforce your thesis by arguing against them.

**F) *Conclusion:*** Unfortunately, the conclusion is often the most poorly written section of an essay. As its name implies, the conclusion draws the essay to a close. While it is common to begin with a summary of the preceding arguments, avoid being redundant or overly repetitious. Moreover, as with the introduction, avoid ending with a cliché. It is often useful to return to broader issues and situate the findings of the essay within the broader legal or criminological disciplinary context. Link the findings of your essay back to the original question and to the 'big picture'. So, for example: an essay on a specific topic such as offer and acceptance in contract might conclude on what the application of this rule might mean for contracts as a whole; an essay concerning the control of policing might conclude on what this might mean for the balance of rights or

justice as a whole. These implications may be theoretical, practical or policy oriented. Furthermore, it is often useful to conclude by acknowledging the limitations of your research and suggesting avenues for further study.

#### **Key Points**

- Avoid redundancy or excess repetition
- Avoid clichés by turning to broader context of International Politics
- It is often useful to suggest avenues for further study

**G) Bibliography and Citations: THIS SECTION IS ESSENTIAL** You must adhere to the rules for proper citation and bibliographic format. You may use embedded citations or footnotes or endnotes according to your preference – as long as you use only one style consistently. Your essay must include a full bibliography of all sources consulted in the researching and writing process.

## **5. A Note on Plagiarism**

To plagiarise is to take and use another person's thoughts, writings or ideas as one's own, without proper attribution. Plagiarism in a piece of academic work submitted during study for a degree is a very serious offence. On the other hand, the use of proper citation and bibliographic format is the cornerstone of good scholarly practice. Plagiarism is not only intellectually dishonest, it is tantamount to fraud. For these reasons, **the Department and the University regard plagiarism as absolutely unacceptable and heavy penalties may be imposed including, ultimately, exclusion from the University.**

Plagiarism can take many forms but they all boil down to passing off someone else's work as your own. Cheating in exams can also constitute plagiarism. It is helpful to distinguish between **bad practice** and **unfair practice**. The former occurs where illicit use is made of another's work through intellectual weakness or ignorance of proper academic practice. The latter occurs where there is a **conscious intention to deceive**, and to benefit unfairly; unfair practice is a far more serious offence.

For further discussion of what constitutes plagiarism, please see the **University Statement on Plagiarism** in the Students' Examination Handbook at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/handbook/section-13/>

Every piece of written work submitted must be accompanied by an **essay submission form**, signed by the student, which contains the following statement:

This essay is my own, original work undertaken in partial fulfilment of my degree. I have made no use of sources, materials or personal advice apart from those which have been openly and fully acknowledged in the bibliography and body of the essay. If any part of another person's work has been copied, it has been placed in inverted commas and a full reference, with page numbers, has been included. I have read

the information concerning plagiarism and unfair practice and I understand that any breach of the fair practice regulations may result in a mark of zero for this assessment and that it could involve other repercussions. I understand that too great a reliance on the work of others may lead to a low mark.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have complied with these terms before signing the statement and submitting your essay.**

For full details of the University procedures to be followed in relation to cases of suspected plagiarism, please see the University's Academic Regulation on Unfair Practice at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/handbook/section-13/> and the guidance in the Student's Examination Handbook at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/handbook/section-12/>

We recognise that it can sometimes be difficult for students to understand how to apply proper citation and bibliographic practices, and when and how material taken from another source should be referenced. As a general rule, while commonly known facts need be referenced, all borrowed ideas or figures must be followed by proper academic citations. Example 1 below illustrates that close paraphrasing without references to the source is considered to be plagiarism.

#### **Example 1 – Paraphrasing without References to the Source**

When working with young people the skills and qualities of the staff involved and their leadership makes a real difference to what can be achieved in helping them to turn their lives around.

#### **Plagiarism**

When working with young people the skills and qualities of the staff involved and their leadership makes a real difference to what can be achieved in helping them to turn their lives around (Gray *et. al.*, 2005: 125).

#### **OR**

Gray *et.al.* (2005:125) note that when working with young people the skills and qualities of the staff involved and their leadership makes a real difference to what can be achieved in helping them to turn their lives around.

#### **OK – Not Plagiarism**

As previously mentioned, commonly known facts need not be referenced. Facts such as there are twenty seven member-states of the European Union (EU) need not be accompanied by citations. Statistical facts, however, should almost always be accompanied by a citation. When in doubt as to whether or not a fact or statistic requires a reference, it is always better to include a reference.

### **Example 2 – Facts or Figures without References to the Source**

Nearly a third of children in the UK have been affected by gun and knife crime.

#### **Plagiarism**

Nearly a third of children in the UK have been affected by gun and knife crime (NCH/Action for Children 2008).

#### **OR**

NCH/Action for Children 2008 state that nearly a third of children in the UK have been affected by gun and knife crime..

#### **OK – Not Plagiarism**

All direct quotations in your essay **MUST** be indicated using quotation marks and **MUST** be attributed to a source, with exact reference to the publication and page number etc.). You should, however, use quotations sparingly and make sure that the bulk of your essay is in your own words.

At times students may plagiarise inadvertently. Poor note-taking or time management problems may be the fundamental cause of such unintentional plagiarism, but these cannot serve as legitimate excuses. Plagiarism is plagiarism, and will be dealt with accordingly. If you are ever in any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask for advice from your seminar tutor, module convenor or personal tutor. **IF A SECTION OF YOUR NOTES APPEARS TO PUT SOMETHING VERY CLEVERLY ENSURE THAT IT IS YOUR OWN WORDS AND THAT YOU HAVE NOT INADVERTENTLY COPIED SOMEONE ELSE'S WORK.**

#### **Key Points**

- Always use your own words.
- Always attribute ideas or information – if in doubt include a reference

## **6. Essay Length**

It is vital that you adhere to the word length of essays. This discipline helps to foster the ability to decide whether material is crucial or peripheral to the topic under discussion. Developing such judgement is an important part of the learning process. Equally, succinctness – the ability to convey ideas clearly and concisely – is an important transferable skill.

For every essay we stipulate a word limit (which is given in the module handbook). This word limit includes references (in the text or as footnotes) and appendices, but excludes the bibliography. When an essay is submitted which is more than the word limit we reserve the

right to deduct marks. Individual members of staff will use their discretion to impose a suitable penalty.

#### **Key Points**

- Do not exceed the word limit
- Do not write much less than the word limit as it indicates the length necessary to answer the question and if your essay falls short you may have missed something

## **7. Editing**

Editing is often a frustrating stage of the essay-writing process. After spending hours, days or weeks on your essay, it may be difficult to see errors or flaws with your writing or in the development of the overall argument.

For starters, always perform a spell-check.

Second, attempt to read your draft from the anonymous reader's point of view. This might be a difficult task. However, it is the writer's duty to ensure that the language of the essay is as clear and concise as possible. Avoid overly complex sentences or long quotations that may detract from the readability of your essay. Long quotations can often be summarised and referenced. Moreover, ensure that each paragraph contains only a single thread of thought or a single conjoining point or idea. If paragraphs become too long, simply divide them into discrete ideas while ensuring that the paragraphs flow smoothly from one to the next. This task is much easier if you have left the work to one side for a week and come back to it, at that point you have some distance between you and the piece and errors are easier to spot. Therefore start work on your essays as early as possible!

If time permits, it is often very useful to have friends, or colleagues edit your work for either grammatical or stylistic errors as well as larger conceptual problems or problems with the development of the argument.

#### **Key Points**

- Spell-check
- Read or edit your work from an anonymous reader's point of view, ensuring that your prose is as clear and concise as possible
- Get a friend or colleague to proof read

## **8. Making Use of Feedback**

Your tutors, markers and examiners spend a lot of time going over your work. Reflecting carefully on their comments is an integral part of the learning process. **Look at their comments as a form of constructive criticism for how you can improve in the future.** Every piece of work can be improved in some way or another. **Ensure that you collect and keep all of your feedback sheets for future reference.**

## 13. How to Reference an Essay

You will come to observe in your reading that there are many different referencing systems employed in academic literature. However, the Department has formally adopted two systems – the **in-text (Harvard) system** and the **footnote/endnote system** – for students to use in assessed work.

**You must choose one of these systems for a piece of assessed work and follow it consistently. DO NOT attempt to combine the two; use EITHER the Harvard system OR the footnote/endnote system.**

Each system has **two components**: a way of citing the references in the text and a way of listing references in the bibliography. **MAKE SURE you use both components from the same system.**

### **Reference System 1: In-Text (Harvard) System – used more by Criminologists.**

#### **First component**

The first component of the in-text (Harvard) system is that the author's last name and date of publication are given at the reference point in the main text, enclosed in brackets:

- (a) If the author is named in the text, cite by year of publication:  
... Durkheim (1966) has suggested...
- (b) If the author is not named in the text, cite by last name, comma, and year of publication:  
... it has been noted (Zinnes, 1979) that...
- (c) If necessary, page numbers should follow the year of publication, separated by a colon:  
... it is argued (Modelski, 1983: 22) that by...
- (d) Dual authors should be joined by 'and':  
... other approaches (Snyder and Diesing, 1977: 392)...
- (e) Where there are more than two authors, use only the first author's name followed by et al:  
... may assume (Best et al., 2003: 217-221)...
- (f) If an author has more than once cited publication for this year, add a, b, c etc. to the date:  
... on the other hand (Lacan, 1947a: 45; Derrida, 1977b: 22)...

- (g) Series of references should be enclosed within parentheses and separated by semi-colons; items should be ordered chronologically by year of publication, and alphabetically within any year:  
... proponents of the position (Russett, 1981; George, 1982; Holsti, 1983; Starr, 1983) argue...

### **Second component**

The second component of the in-text (Harvard) system is a complete list of references given at the end of the essay, arranged in alphabetical order of the author's last name. You should provide reference for all sources consulted during the researching and writing of the essay. The references should conform to the following format:

**Books** should be listed by author(s), year, title, place of publication, and publisher:

Zimbardo, Philip G. (2007). *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*. New York: Random House.

**Chapters in edited volumes** should be listed by author(s), year, title of chapter, volume title, volume editor(s), place of publications, and publisher:

Stanley, Elizabeth (2008) 'Torture and Terror'. Found in T. Anthony and C. Cunneen (eds.) *The Critical Criminology Companion* Sydney: Federation Press.

**Journal articles** should be listed by author(s), year, title of article, journal name, volume and inclusive pages:

Cox, J. and Mulholland, H. (1993) 'An instrument for assessment of videotapes of general practitioners' performance', *British Medical Journal*, 306: 1043-1046.

**For a government document:**

U.S. Senate (1984) Committee on Foreign Relations. *Chemical Warfare: Arms Control and Non-proliferation: Joint Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Subcommittee on Energy, Nuclear Proliferation and Government Processes*. 98<sup>th</sup> Cong, 2d sess., 28 June.

**For a newspaper or magazine article:**

Usborne, D. (2003) 'New York Stops to Pay Tribute to Its Dead'. *The Independent (London)*, 12 March, p.5.

**For a publication distributed electronically** you should not only give full information concerning the precise material used, but also the web address and the date that the information was accessed:

Aziz, K. (2008) 'eBay Liable for Counterfeits' *Intellectual Property Newsletter* 31(7):3 . See also <http://www.reuters.com/article/marketsNews/idINL2910194320080630?rpc=44> (last accessed 20 February 2009).

**For published or broadcast interviews:**

Murphy, J. (1993) Interview by Robert MacNeil. MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour, Public Broadcasting System, 23 February.

**Reference System 2: Footnote/Endnote System – used more by lawyers**

**First component**

In the footnote/endnote system, the references are marked by a superscript number in the text and placed either at the bottom of the page (footnotes) or at the end of the essay (endnotes).

For example, in the text of your essay a reference number, normally superscripted, should be added:

...in such a system war is said to be inevitable.<sup>1</sup>

At <sup>2</sup>the bottom of the page or the end of the essay should appear a list corresponding to the reference numbers in the text. References should be in full the first time they are mentioned.

Thereafter the author's name and an abbreviated title should be used (do not op. cit. or ibid. as this can cause confusion if the text is revised later). For example:

Hence it is the system structure which is claimed to be the crucial variable.

**Second component**

The second component of the footnote/endnote system is a complete list of reference given at the end of the essay, arranged in alphabetical order of the author's last name. You should provide a reference for all sources consulted during the researching and writing of the essay. The references should conform to the following format:

**Books** should be listed by author(s), year, title, place of publication, and publisher:

Zimbardo, Philip G. (2007). *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*. New York: Random House.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin, G. (2006), *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives and Issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications p. 46

<sup>2</sup> Martin, *Understanding Terrorism*, p.121.

**Chapters in edited volumes** should be listed by author(s), year, title of chapter, volume title, volume editor(s), place of publications, and publisher:

Stanley, Elizabeth (2008) 'Torture and Terror'. Found in T. Anthony and C. Cunneen (eds.) *The Critical Criminology Companion* Sydney: Federation Press.

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U.S. Senate (1984) Committee on Foreign Relations. Chemical Warfare: Arms Control and Non-proliferation: Joint Hearings before the *Committee on Foreign Relations and the Subcommittee on Energy, Nuclear Proliferation and Government Processes*. 98<sup>th</sup> Cong, 2d sess., 28 June.

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# Quick Guide

## Identify the Question

Page 3

### Key Points

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- Work out exactly what the question is asking

## Planning your Essay Structure

Page 4

### Key Points

- Tease out each aspect of the question
- Plan your essay so that it deals logically with all aspects of the question
- Plan to leave room for a conclusion to draw the analysis together

## Research

Page 5

### Key Point

- Utilize all available sources including books, journals, newspapers, Lexis Nexis, cases, statutes, official government documents and credible internet sources (note that lectures are usually not acceptable citations)
- Make sure you note down the **FULL** publication details of any sources that you consult.
- Where you copy sections down to use as quotes make sure you note down the **FULL** publication details **AND page references.**
- Ensure that you use one of the two official academic citation and bibliographic styles.

## The Writing Stage

Page 6

### Key Points

#### Introduction

- Begin generally, avoiding clichés, and build towards the thesis statement
- Grab the reader's attention

- Contextualise the research question or debate

### **Thesis Statement**

- The thesis statement is the most important sentence of your essay so take the time to craft it precisely
- It should stand solidly on its own

Avoid phrases such as “In this essay, I will argue...”

### **Cognitive Map**

- A cognitive map paragraph is a useful device that tells the reader how your argument will unfold

### **Main or Body Paragraphs**

- Main or body paragraphs provide structure to the essay by packaging evidence for the thesis thematically
- Use subheadings to separate topic paragraphs whenever useful but avoid detracting from the overall flow of the essay
- The evidence contained within each body paragraph should pertain only to its respective topic sentence
- Conclude the section with the use of signposts that link back to the thesis

### **Counter Arguments**

- Often useful for longer or upper-year work, this section allows you to acknowledge contending hypotheses and to reinforce your thesis by arguing against them.

### **Conclusion**

- Avoid redundancy or excess repetition
- Avoid clichés by turning to broader context of International Politics
- It is often useful to suggest avenues for further study

## **DO NOT COPY OTHER PEOPLE’S WORK**

### **Key Points**

- Always use your own words.
- Always attribute ideas or information – if in doubt include a reference

## **Essay Length**

**Page 11**

### **Key Points**

- Do not exceed the word limit
- Do not write much less than the word limit as it indicates the length necessary to answer the question and if your essay falls short you may have missed something

## **Editing**

**Page 12**

### **Key Points**

- Spell-check
- Read or edit your work from an anonymous reader's point of view, ensuring that your prose is as clear and concise as possible
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## **Making use of Feedback**

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## **How to Reference an Essay**

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