

ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION INFO SHEET

Academic Writing: Academic Essay (AW: AE)

An essay is a piece of writing that allows you to develop ideas and arguments using a logical sequence of interrelated paragraphs. Unlike reports, essays usually do not contain any headings, lists (bullet points) or diagrams. Rather they depend on direct links from one paragraph to the next in order to gradually build the argument and justify the point of view.

Learn about:

- introduction
- body
- conclusion
- reference list.

See other [Info Sheets](#) about essay planning, components of the paragraph, quoting, connecting words and ideas.

Academic writing requires you to develop your ideas with reference to evidence and the arguments of expert authors in the field. In an essay you need to support your opinion by discussing the opinions of experts. To find these expert opinions, you need to research.

Essay Structure

Each part of the essay plays an important role in its overall effect. Note however that although an essay must have these four parts, you should not put headings for any section except the Reference List. The first and last paragraphs should automatically serve as the introduction and conclusion and therefore everything in between constitutes the body.

Introduction

Introduce the topic in a very general way.

Outline the MAIN points/sections in your essay.

Include your thesis statement.

(This is your point of view/argument written into one sentence.)

What is your assignment about?

This essay will discuss....Secondly/Also..... In addition..... Finally

Do not use I, me, my, we, us, our. Academic writing tends to be written from third person perspective (they/them/their/nurses). Check your thesis statement. Does it answer the question and make your point of view absolutely clear? Your entire essay will be based on this one sentence.

HINT: Don't write your introduction until you have finished the rest of the essay but always write a draft thesis as a guide for your research and writing.

Body paragraphs

Say it (topic sentence)	The topic sentence is the first sentence of the paragraph. It should be short and general and not contain any details or explanation. It makes the main point of the paragraph in just one sentence.
Explain it (more detail)	Explain in more detail what you have just said in the topic sentence. This could be one sentence or a few.
Prove it (research and quotes)	Bring in some quotes (either direct or indirect) to support what you have just said. Remember to include the citation details in brackets (author/date). See the CQU referencing guides for details on how to include in-text references. You would usually be expected to include more than one in-text citation per paragraph
Discuss it (explain how it all relates)	So what? Now you must discuss the quotes. How do they relate to your topic sentence/overall argument? This means
Sum it up (final sentence)	Finish the paragraph with one general sentence that relates to the topic sentence or mentions something that will lead into the next paragraph

Conclusion

Re-state your thesis	In conclusion You may want to change the wording slightly, but keep the idea the same.
Sum up your main points	It is not usual to add any more quotes or new material in the conclusion. Re-read your topic sentences then summarise them.
Finish with a final thought	What are the implications?

Reference list

Follow the correct CQU referencing style advised by your lecturer.

Start on a new page.

Put references in alphabetical order

Check that you have formatting appropriate to the referencing style (e.g. indents/spacing, use minimal or maximal capitalisation, italics, commas and full stops))

Cross check – Have you included every text mentioned in your assignment in your reference list? Have you included some texts in your reference list but haven't referred to them in your assignment?

More Info

The Write Site, provided by the University of Sydney site offers more information on essay writing including concluding sentences <http://writesite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/>

Massey University provides further information on essay introductions, thesis statements and conclusions at its *Online Writing and Learning Link* <http://owll.massey.ac.nz/assignment-types/essay-introduction.php>

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