

Academic Writing: Essay Structure – Arts Subjects

Each subject and/or discipline has its own conventions and format. These are **general** guidelines only. It is your responsibility to check with your course guide, course coordinator or teachers to find out the preferred format.

Introduction (Introductory Paragraph)

In the introduction, you should show:

- What you think the question is asking
- How you will answer the question

You do this by:

- Explaining how you interpret the question
- Identifying the issues that you will address
- Giving a brief outline of how you will approach each issue

Main Body

In the main body, you should show:

- That you have a series of points that will support your overall argument
- That each point is supported with evidence
- How each point relates to the question

You do this in paragraphs:

- First sentence: Introduces the subject/main idea of the paragraph
- Subsequent sentences: Develop the theme, include relevant examples, details, evidence, quotations, references
- Last sentence: Summarises the paragraph or leads into the next paragraph

Remember, you **must show** that you are aware of:

- The weaknesses, as well as strengths, in your argument
- Contradictory points of view

Conclusion (Concluding Paragraph)

In the conclusion, you should show:

- That you have identified the main arguments/points throughout your essay
- That what you have written is relevant to the original question
- That you have presented a coherent argument

You do this by:

- Summarising the argument/main points
- Stating general conclusions i.e. make clear why these are important/significant
- Linking to the title/question

The conclusion should not introduce new points in the argument. These belong in the main body.

Bibliography

You may need to append a Bibliography – check course guidelines.

If you are using the Harvard system citation format, you will need a Works Cited list.

Library guide on *Referencing and Citing*:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/guides/gen/uggen007.pdf>