

Academic Writing: Essay Structure – Social Sciences

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

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

**** Check course guidelines for structure and format****

The main body **may** need a structure that looks something like this:

Review of Literature
Methodology
Analysis of Data
Conclusions
Recommendations

Each of these sections should be organised into paragraphs which show:

- That you have a series of points which relate to the question
- That each point is supported with evidence
- How each point relates to the question

Each paragraph should have:

- 1st 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

You may also need to show that you are aware of:

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

Conclusion

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 / List of Works Cited

You may need to append a Bibliography, List of Works Cited, or List of Works Consulted – check course guidelines

Library guide on *Referencing and Citing*:

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