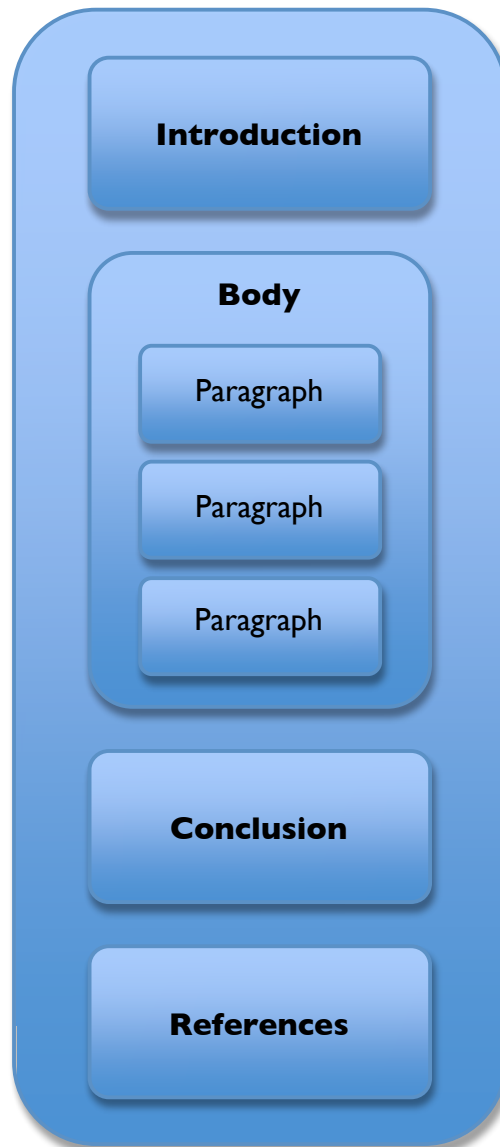


Essay writing: structure



I. Introduction:

- An introduction is a preview of the assignment.
- It makes a general statement about the issue, topic or area under discussion.
- It sets out the main structure of the assignment.
- It sets out your thesis (i.e. point of view).

- Be brief but include all your main ideas.

2. Body:

- This is where you assemble the evidence of your research and thinking.
- It is here that the bulk of the marks lies.
- You will be assessed on the development and relevance of your information, and any discussion based on that information.
- Your research should be carefully acknowledged with in-text referencing.
- If the assignment question has more than one part, structure your body into sections that deal with each part of the assignment question.

3. Conclusion:

- A conclusion is a review of the assignment.
- It sums up the arguments of the whole text.
- It makes reference to the key terms of the assignment question.
- It reiterates and confirms your thesis.
- It may suggest recommendations, or indicate the significance or implications that follow from the conclusion.
- There should be no new information in the conclusion.
- If you have added something not mentioned in the body, check that it is relevant; if so, include it as a paragraph in the body.

4. Reference list:

- Demonstrates that you have researched the area.
- Demonstrates that you are enlisting the support of someone's research to support your own ideas
- Demonstrates what ideas or information you have referred to from someone's research as distinct from your own.
- Demonstrates that you acknowledge and give credit to the work of someone else.
- Make sure that you are familiar with the referencing style as prescribed by your faculty.

- Only include those references that you have used in your assignment (i.e. those that you have cited in your assignment).

Adapted from the following source:

Morley-Warner, T. 2000, *Academic writing is... A guide to writing in a university context*, Centre for Research and Education in the Arts, Sydney.



CHECKLIST FOR WRITING & EDITING ASSIGNMENTS

Understanding the question

- ☐ What kind of assignment is it? (e.g. essay, research report, case study, reflective journal, law case notes)
- ☐ What is the topic? Can I explain the topic in one statement?
- ☐ What do I have to do? (e.g. discuss, summarise, critically analyse, compare)
- ☐ Do I understand the assessment marking criteria?

Structure

- ☐ Does my faculty recommend a particular structure for my assignment?
- ☐ Does the introduction provide my thesis statement (main argument) and a summary of what I will discuss?
- ☐ Does the body of my assignment:
 - ☐ link together well between sentences and paragraphs?
 - ☐ provide clear headings? (Headings are generally used in reports, not in essays)
 - ☐ provide clearly structured paragraphs?
 - One main idea for each paragraph
 - Clear topic sentences (usually the first sentence)
 - Other sentences that support the topic sentence (elaborate, explain, give examples)
- ☐ Does the conclusion of my assignment link back to the topic area/question?
- ☐ Does it summarise what I have said and re-state my thesis statement?

Content

- ☐ Are there enough ideas to answer the question fully? Could anything be added?
- ☐ Are all the ideas relevant to the assignment question?
- ☐ Have I taken a position? Can I justify it with examples and evidence from my reading?
- ☐ Have I demonstrated a critical approach in my writing? (Is this relevant? Is this important? Is this valid?)

Reading/Referencing

- ☐ Are the sources that support my ideas current, relevant and reliable? Are they academic?
- ☐ Am I able to use more than one source to support some of my ideas?
- ☐ Are in-text references correctly provided using appropriate referencing style? (e.g. Harvard UTS, APA, Footnote)
- ☐ Is a complete reference list or bibliography provided?
- ☐ Are all the in-text citations included in the reference list?

For referencing conventions and use of EndNote/Refworks go to:

<http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/help/referencing>

Academic style

- ☐ Have I chosen formal vocabulary? (e.g. *lots of* = *a considerable amount*; *bad* = *unfavourable*; *stay the same* = *stabilize*)
- ☐ Have I used an appropriate academic style?
 - Avoid the use of contractions (e.g. *don't/do not*)
 - Avoid over-use of 'etc.'
 - How certain do I want to be? (e.g. *It is certain that...* / *It appears certain that...* / *It is possible that...*)
 - Avoid the use of personal language (e.g. *Everybody knows...* = *It is generally accepted...* / *I think that...* = *It is likely that...*)

Grammar & vocabulary

- ☐ Does my writing make sense when I read it aloud (to someone else)?
- ☐ Have I used any incomplete sentences? (e.g. *Because the study is limited.*)
- ☐ Have I used correct and consistent verb tenses?
- ☐ Is there subject-verb agreement? (e.g. *the studies show/the study shows*)
- ☐ Have I used singular/plural forms correctly? (e.g. *study/studies*)
- ☐ Have I checked word forms? (e.g. *study* (noun); *studied* (verb); *studying* (noun or verb))
- ☐ Have I varied my vocabulary to avoid being repetitive? (e.g. *The research shows that...* / *It also shows...* / *It reveals...*)

Proofreading

- ☐ Have I checked for typing, spelling and punctuation errors?
 - See the punctuation guide at <http://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/support/helps/self-help-resources/grammar/punctuation>
- ☐ Have I used the correct spacing, margin, font size and other presentation requirements?
- ☐ Has the word limit matched the assignment requirements?

Writing guides and online self-help assistance

Some faculties have guides to help you with your writing, including:

- Arts and Social Sciences <https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/fass-presentation-essays.pdf>
- Business <http://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/business/study-and-assessment-resources/developing-your-academic-writing>
- Law <http://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/law-guide-to-written-communication.pdf>
- Health <https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/uts-health-student-guide.pdf>

For more online assistance with your writing, go to HELPS:

<http://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/support/helps/self-help-resources/academic-writing>

For more online assistance with Study Skills, go to the UTS Library:

<http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/help/study-skills/writing-reading-speaking>