Planning your essay

Planning starts with understanding your task, how much time you have, the number of words you have to write and what direction you're going to take.

Before you start your research you can make a quick plan for length to give yourself a realistic goal for the amount of material you need. Once you’ve done some reading and thinking, you can begin planning the content of your essay.

You will probably want to change your plan as you think of new ideas, and you might want to move themes around, expand or remove a theme. If you do this, make sure you keep checking your line of argument and that you have sufficient relevant evidence.

Resources

For more help with essay writing, visit the Skills Hub website or come to a workshop.

www.sussex.ac.uk/skillshub/essayplan
**Title/question:**

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**Introduction:**

Explain how you will answer the question. Outline the themes you are going to explore in the right order and introduce your main argument.

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**Body**

80% of the total word count

Develop your argument by working through your themes. Make sure that your points follow on from one another in a logical and convincing order. Back up your points with evidence (quotations/facts/theories with a citation). Explain your points and how they are relevant to your argument and help to answer your essay question.

**Theme 1**

A) Point, evidence, explanation  
B) Point, evidence, explanation  
C) Point, evidence, explanation

**Theme 2**

A) Point, evidence, explanation  
B) Point, evidence, explanation  
C) Point, evidence, explanation

**Theme 3**

A) Point, evidence, explanation  
B) Point, evidence, explanation  
C) Point, evidence, explanation

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**Conclusion:**

10% of the total word count

Summarise your essay linking back to your title and pull together your conclusions. You could mention what you haven’t been able to cover or suggest further questions of your own. Do not introduce new material in the conclusion.