

Writing an Essay

- Have a clear thesis/argument – a point that you prove throughout the essay
- Link paragraphs both to each other and back to your argument
- Use specific examples and quotes that specifically support your point – don't use quotes just for the sake of it – they must be targeted!
- To ensure that you respond to the question make sure you plan carefully and are sure what relevant point each paragraph is making – you should “tie up” each point by explicitly coming back to the question at the end of each paragraph
- Basic Essay structure:
 - Intro – state your argument, outline the points to be addressed and perhaps a brief definition
 - Body – clear and coherent structure to paragraphs:
 - Topic sentence (main idea and its link to the previous paragraph/argument)
 - Explanation/discussion of the point including links between texts if applicable
 - Analysis/detailed evidence (close textual reference – quotes, incidents and technique discussion)
 - Link/'tie up' – restating the point's relevance to the argument/question
- Must focus on:
 - Audience – use formal language unless specifically advised otherwise; avoid slang words, colloquialisms and contractions
 - Purpose – your purpose is to answer the question fully and in details; the examiner evaluates how well you can make an argument and understand the issues and texts that you have studied
 - Communication – take a few minutes to plan your essay! Only write about what is relevant to the question. Avoid story-telling, lists, numbered points, vagueness, etc.
- Break the question into its parts and underline key words – decide exactly what you are being asked; your aim is to answer this!
- Select evidence relevant to the question and your argument
- Be creative and original – your own argument!
- Sequence your body paragraphs logically
- Vary sentence structures – complex sentences to analyse in detail, simple sentences to emphasise a point or to summarise, etc.
- Spell correctly – proofread!