

How to write a good essay?

1. Read the question carefully.
2. Plan your answer.

It is said a bewitching question and it is the one I am going to answer in approximately two minutes and then we'll go to something else which is dependent on that which is how to use a good quotation.

And essay is about a presentation ... well, not only your ideas but also the ideas that you have acquired, which prove that you understand the subject. When we are thinking about the essay with a particular thing, about these brief essays which we write in examinations, which are going to last for three quarters of an hour. But the same principles will also work by extension, simply by extending (uhm) what here we are going to refer to as paragraphs.

So, an essay is made up of a series of units, let's say five units ... We are going to write them down: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and we might call these paragraphs: unit 1 would be the introduction and unit 5 would be the conclusion. ... and units 2 and 3, paragraphs 2 and 3, are those paragraphs where you were going to demonstrate to the reader that you know what you are talking about. These paragraphs (ehr) need to establish that everything is balanced.

So, for example in an argumentative essay may be paragraph 2, ... paragraph 2 would be the reasons for proposition, in paragraph 3 would be the reasons against the proposition. (uhm) ... but the certain (uhm) leeway here, may be in paragraph 2, would be your main reasons, a new main reason against paragraph 3 would be your subsidiary reasons 'for' and 'against'.

Now, there is only one (ehhh) one way to write an essay and that is to plan it. And the plan, be it important to the plan, (ehhh) ... is not necessarily about everything that is in the essay. I have seen some plans where people have written so much, so much as well in their written essay, anyway. The plan is about what you don't say about, what you are not going to say at the beginning. The plan is like getting your main idea, your best ideas on paper and in saving them, ... saving them for the crunch paragraph 4.


Paragraph 4 is where you establish very clearly that maybe some other points in paragraph 2 or 3 are not points you agree with. You also, maybe, add your own special bit of information and that bit of information which is so important, which is so vital to your essay, which is vital to your getting the good mark at the end. Paragraph 4, the crunch, is probably going to be your longest paragraph, gotta be a paragraph where you back up your facts with good quotations, that is going to be the paragraph where you present your argument in a clever, logical, ordered way.

Now, a point about (ehr-r-r), about length, just very quickly, paragraph 1 and paragraph 5 are probably going to be quite brief paragraphs to establish how you intend to answer the question. Paragraph 5 follows naturally from the crunch. Paragraph 5 is exactly what it says on the bottle. It is the conclusion of all this discussion. If you want to start in paragraph 5 making a new discussion, if you want to start a new idea, if you want to write a new essay ... it is a waste of your time. Add anything new to the paragraph 5, to paragraph 5. Paragraph 5 concludes what you have been writing. It follows naturally.

Paragraph 4 is your argumentative paragraph. Paragraph 4 is what you have been waiting for. Now, look, it is exactly like the situation when you get into an argument with one of your friends or, indeed, it may be not of your friends, you want to say there is no point in going ... into going onto defensive, right to the beginning and battering something ... blah-blah-blah-blah ... it would be ridiculous, childish, silly ... You listen very politely to what somebody else is going to

say. ‘Oh, yes, I understand’. And you reason with them how clever your point sounds, how wise is your position. But! Paragraph 4, ... 1, 2, 3 reasons why opposition is wrong and bang!!! ... You have floored them, you have destroyed them, you have established your own point of view very calmly, and very brilliantly by conceding ... they also had a point of view, too, but it was wrong.

READ AND ANALYSE THE QUESTION CAREFULLY

BALANCE 	1. unit 1 would be the introduction.
	2. reasons ‘for’.
	3. reasons ‘against’.
	4. crunch.
	5. and unit 5 would be the conclusion.

PLAN → YOUR MAIN ARGUMENT

**EACH PARAGRAPH MUST BE RELEVANT TO THE QUESTION
DO NOT GET SIDE-TRACKED BY IRRELEVANT DETAIL
THE PLAN HELPS TO GET YOU FOCUSED
YOUR ESSAY IS LIKE A COURT-ROOM**

TRY TO WRITE A SIMPLE CONCLUSION → K.I.S.S. (KEEP IT SIMPLE, STUPID)

Now as (uhm) an addition to this talk a here we have got (uhm) a five paragraph system for the essay. We have also got to consider how we defend and how we back up points and we do this with the quotation. Now, the quotation is something which has been routinely misused in the past. Today we are told that we must not plagiarize. This would have been a nonsensical concept to a first century Greek or a first century Roman. They routinely adopted somebody else’s name to give (uhm) ... to give credibility to their ... to their writings. (uhm) This is something that we are not allowed to do whilst this is supposed to attribute quotations with a poster ‘Tell people where we got them from’.

Now that’s the ... that legal business is out of way. What you got to do is to use a quotation to cover (ehr) Now, imagine you got six brilliant quotations. You have got 35-40 minutes in which you write your essay. You are probably not going to have time to use all six of those quotations. You have to choose very carefully, because a quotation by definition requires three sentences: a sentence to establish the quotation; to use the quotation, to quote; and then to explain the quotation.

QUOTATION → THREE SENTENCES

- **ESTABLISH**
- **USE**
- **EXPLAIN → Apply the quotation**

It is like taking a jewel from a ring, looking at a ring and you ... looking at a ring you think ‘Oh, gosh! What a wonderful ring! How ... how brightly glistening it is, how ... how sparkling it is!’ And then you take the jewel out of the ring if you are a jeweler and you look at it again, you can ... you could turn it round, you could see the many different facets. Well, and in your essay you are only interested in one or two facets. You are not interested in the whole thing. So, you have to apply your quotation, you have to apply that jewel, put it back into its setting in the ring.

(uhm) Now, (ehr) if you got your quotation right you (ehr) ya yo-yo-yo ... you are going ... you are going to win with your essay. You can’t ... you can’t use every quotation that you have got in your head. Now, not only can you use quotation, of course, you might (uhm) be over to (ehr) ... (uhm) refer to characters or events (uhm) without necessarily explicitly quoting. This is useful

too. But the order of quotation requires these three points, these three sentences: establishing; using the quotation; explaining the quotation.

- 1. SUMMARISE**
- 2. PARAPHRASE**
- 3. ALLUDE**

There is no point in making your quotation longer than the things that you are writing. I have seen essays where the quotation is twice the length of (ehr) ... (uhm) ... of the original work written by the student. This is absurd. Your quotation should be brief and add a ram to the point.

If you follow these steps you will, you will write a brilliant essay. There is no question.