



Improving Academic Writing

Dear Student,

Academic writing is an essential skillset that you must develop. In order to succeed in the competitive world of academia, you must be able to communicate your ideas with grace, clarity and power. To help you out, we have developed this guide which will help you enhance and polish your academic writing, and better understand the criteria used in marking in terms of academic writing. Please refer to [Study Support](#) for further support.

- ✚ **Time management** is an important part of writing. Have a plan for how you are going to get it done, remembering that you may have other assignments in preparation at the same time. Thus, plan and organise your time effectively.
- ✚ **Understand the Assessment:** Understand what exactly your assignment is asking you to do.
 - **“Analyse”**: report on research in this topic, how does it fit in with research as a whole?
 - **“Compare”**: find differences and similarities
 - **“Evaluate”**: apply your judgement and opinion based on the literature you have discussed
 - **“Argue”**: will give you one side to take (still present both sides of the argument though)

Extra tip: Design your argument or approach and then check if you have answered the topic. Does your argument/approach meet the assessment criteria? Use your Module Study Guide (MSG) to find the details of your assessment. For coursework, this includes the assessment criteria, the marking criteria and the word count (or equivalent). This information is also available in Blackboard in Assessments.

- ✚ **Plan your Assessment:** Outline your assessment according to assessment instructions. A common example for an academic essay includes:
 - **Introduction:** the purpose or main argument of the paper, why it is important
 - **Body/Argument/Discussion:** a different paragraph for each argument or point, with justifications
 - **Conclusion:** summarise the main message and key points, tie it all together and provides an answer to the essay question

There are 3 key areas of focus in building an assessment:

1

Literature: Have you gathered and read all of the literature your essay will be based on? Have you made a note of the information needed for referencing?

2

Critical analysis: Critical analysis starts the minute you pick up a text. Don't be afraid to critique a published piece. For example: What is the viewpoint of the author? Have you submitted enough evidence to validate your ideas or arguments? Any unanswered questions?

3

Structure: What are the different sections of your argument going to be? Try to split the information you have gathered into topics and themes. Does your argument flow continuously?

- ✚ **Referencing:** Have you included every reference you have used in your text? *Remember:* you need to do this for every reference.
 - Have you listed all of these at the end of your text under “References” in the correct style?
 - Have you completed in-text citations in the correct style?
- ✚ **Formatting:** Have you checked your work against the formatting guidance for the assignment?
- ✚ **Proofreading:** Once you have finished writing, proofread the work.
- ✚ **Engage with feedback:** Make sure to review the feedback from the marker(s) and any academic support.

If you need any help, ask your Lecturer or Personal Tutor. If you have any questions or need study support, please email: Study.Support@uwl.ac.uk or visit our [Study Support hub](#)