Write a first draft

Your first draft will help you work out:

- the structure and framework of your essay
- how you will answer the question
- which evidence and examples you will use
- how your argument will be logically structured.

Your first draft will not be your final essay; think of it as raw material you will refine through editing and redrafting. Once you have a draft, you can work on writing well.

Structure

Structure your essay in the most effective way to communicate your ideas and answer the question.

All essays should include the following structure
Essay paragraphs

A paragraph is a related group of sentences that develops one main idea. Each paragraph in the body of the essay should contain:

- A topic sentence that states the main or controlling idea
- Supporting sentences to explain and develop the point you're making
- Evidence. Most of the time, your point should be supported by some form of evidence from your reading, or by an example drawn from the subject area.
• **Analysis.** Don’t just leave the evidence hanging there - analyse and interpret it! Comment on the implication/significance/impact and finish off the paragraph with a critical conclusion you have drawn from the evidence.

• a **concluding sentence** that restates your point, analyses the evidence or acts as a transition to the next paragraph.

See The Learning Centre guide [Paraphrasing, summarising and quoting](#)

**Tips for effective writing**

• **Start writing early - the earlier the better.** Starting cuts down on anxiety, beats procrastination, and gives you time to develop your ideas.

• **Keep the essay question in mind.** Don’t lose track of the question or task. Keep a copy in front of you as you draft and edit and work out your argument.

• **Don’t try to write an essay from beginning to end** (especially not in a single sitting). Begin with what you are ready to write - a plan, a few sentences or bullet points. Start with the body and work paragraph by paragraph.

• **Write the introduction and conclusion after the body.** Once you know what your essay is about, then write the introduction and conclusion.

• **Use 'signpost' words in your writing.** Transition signals can help the reader follow the order and flow of your ideas.

• **Integrate your evidence carefully.** Introduce quotations and paraphrases with introductory phrases.

• **Revise your first draft extensively.** Make sure the entire essay flows and that the paragraphs are in a logical order.

• **Put the essay aside for a few days.** This allows you to consider your essay and edit it with a fresh eye.

See The Learning Centre guides to [Introducing quotations and paraphrases](#) and [Transition signals](#)

See next: [Referencing your essay](#)