

Tasks for writing an essay

Clarify:

- Check the title and the instructions
 - see Process Words for Essays and Exams
- Write a one sentence outline of your argument or main point to guide you
 - keep it visible where you work
- Mind-Map your ideas in response to the question
- Ask: what do I already know? What do I need to do next?

Draft a plan:

- What are the main themes: can you think of any sub-sections?
- How long is the overall word limit (e.g. 3,000 words)
- How long might each section be in terms of words (e.g. approx 400 words)

Collect information:

- Be selective – how many examples do I need give (remember approximately how long the section will be – word limits)
- Be focused – is this the best example?
- Choose material relevant to your overall argument
- Ask: how is this useful to my argument?
- Remember: word limits (overall / each section)

Remember the full range of sources available: books, articles, reports, notes from class, interviews, television, visual materials, and reputable internet sites such as professional bodies or institutions (e.g. NHS)

Recording: keep clear and thorough bibliographic information (and location of sources so you can re-locate material again!)

Reflect:

- What have you discovered?
- Has your argument changed?
- Have you too few / enough / too many examples?

Outline

Refine your plan – add in your findings – add your summaries of sources/references

First draft – Second draft – Proof reading