

Mistakes to avoid when writing an essay

It is the time of the year where deadlines are looming and many students do not get the grades that they seek, due to not presenting their essays within the formal structure. This is a quick checklist for students to follow for a better essay grade.

Using colloquial, informal/slang, for example, can't, won't...

Make sure that you use correct English and proof-read your essay through before submission (using a spell-check facility if necessary). Always proof read your essay at least one day after finish writing it, as mistakes or sentence confusion will emerge.

Not reading academic sources widely enough to form your essay and support your points, or using websites too often at the expense of more academic material.

Using academic journal articles is a must as it provides a greater in depth discussion to your essay. Furthermore, make sure that all of the sources you use are referenced in the text and at the end using the requested referencing style and ordered alphabetically.

Not addressing the essay question directly or only partially answering it.

Each paragraph of the essay should contribute towards answering the essay question and as you are writing your essay you should always refer back to the essay question in order to keep the essay flowing.

Using subheadings and bullet points and diagrams that disrupt the flow of the essay.

Using subheadings and bullet points is what ought to be seen in a business report, whereas an essay should flow and each paragraph must link together continuously.

Making general and unsupported statements, such as 'Many believe'.

Even listing three or four authors that agrees to a specific statement, you should not generalise. *Instead you should use research or literature sources to support your statements and give specific, detailed examples, such as Adam (2016) outlined...*

Not correctly referencing inside the essay.

There are instances where more than one point is made within a paragraph that contradict each other but the paragraph is referenced to one source. Each point made ought to be sourced in order to give credibility to your writing.

Using very long quotations or using them inappropriately.

Quotations should be used as a starting point for discussion, or as an illustration, because they encapsulate the points you are making well. The quote should be concise and to the point with the page numbers of sources when using quotations.

Not having a clear structure or development of thought, with no explanation of any structure to the reader in the introduction.

You should outline the structure of what will be discussed in the essay in the introduction.

Starting each paragraph with very repetitive phrases, e.g., 'The next point is ...'

Try to vary the language you use and reduce the use of moreover, therefore, however and other words that you think by placing them at the start of the paragraph will allow the essay to flow.

The use of first person, I and we.

Referring to yourself should not be used inside an essay, only if writing a reflective essay.

Not including the full title and page numbers on your essay.

Not having enough resources

The main aspects of writing an essay is to do through research and planning.



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