# Table of Contents

Table of Contents.................................................................................................................. 1  
Purpose ................................................................................................................................ 2  
Background.......................................................................................................................... 3  
Essay Structure..................................................................................................................... 4  
Exemplar: Sample Introduction ............................................................................................. 6  
Exemplar: Sample Paragraph ............................................................................................... 7  
Exemplar: Sample Conclusion .............................................................................................. 8  
1,500 Word Essay Plan: Introduction .................................................................................... 9  
1,500 Word Essay Plan: Paragraph 1 ................................................................................. 10  
1,500 Word Essay Plan: Paragraph 2 ................................................................................. 11  
1,500 Word Essay Plan: Paragraph 3 ................................................................................. 12  
1,500 Word Essay Plan: Conclusion ................................................................................... 13  
Final Essay in APA Style..................................................................................................... 14
Purpose

One of the problems faced by first timers to college or university is the requirement to write with academic style. New students struggle to research and author essays, often not knowing how to start or what to write. #essay is here to support and guide you toward success.

Students face familiar challenges when it comes to authoring essays, such as: 1) essay structure with a logical flow, 2) avoiding plagiarism, and 3) the correct use of vocabulary and words.

The purpose of the #essay project is to make the task of essay writing easier to approach and understand and demystify the conventions that academic writers traditionally follow.

If you struggle to author essays, not knowing how to start or what to write, then consider the following goals, specifically designed to improve your essay writing, quickly and easily.

   Goal 1: Create essay structure with a clear and logical flow.

   Goal 2: Avoid plagiarism and keep your academic integrity.

   Goal 3: Correctly use academic words and phrases.

You will learn these skills today, which you will master over time.
Background

The good news is that academic writing has evolved into structured formats. Once you understand the writing requirements for your field of study, including pre-defined guidelines and rules, then it is only a matter of combining your developing original writing and research with your knowledge of academic style to create well written essays.

The three major and most widespread writing styles are considered to be American Psychological Association (APA) used for Social Sciences, Education and Engineering, Modern Language Association (MLA) used for Humanities, and Chicago used for History, Physical, Natural or Social Sciences. Check with your teachers to determine the academic style required for your field of study, as this varies from one institution to the next.

Knowing which academic style is important; however, learning how to organise content in your essay is paramount. #essay shares with you a basic and widely accepted framework for organising content into structured sentences and paragraphs that form the introduction, body, and conclusion of your essay. In Series 1, we consider three essential elements of academic writing: structure, referencing, and vocabulary.

**Structure:** Academic writing must present a logical flow of ideas from introduction to conclusion. Achieve this through essay mapping, which requires clear signposting for the reader.

**Referencing:** Academic writing requires the answer to a question. You will argue an answer and make a claim, supporting your claim with evidence. The evidence requires citing and referencing.

**Vocabulary:** Academic writing has a style of its own. The style is formal and draws on the use of well-accepted and widely used phrases and words, common to specific fields of study.
Essay Structure

Introduction:

• Introduces the central topic.
• Mentions the sub-topics, which are your supporting points or ideas.
• Explains the context, background, and key terms; also known as the framework.
• States the main argument; also known as the **thesis statement**.

**Thesis Statement** (one or two sentences)

- Responds directly to the question with a specific answer.
- Makes a definable and arguable claim that creates reader expectation.
- Clarifies by using words that convey certainty and confidence.

Body Paragraphs: **Note SPEEL method*** (#essay, 2020)

- **Subject**: Introduces the subject matter of the paragraph.
- **Point**: Makes a claim that creates reader expectation.
- **Evidence**: Provides supporting details, citing examples from high quality sources.
- **Explanation**: Discusses the relevance of the evidence, making insightful connections to the thesis.
- **Link**: Creates a coherent transition to the next paragraph.

**Use the SPEEL structure for each body paragraph** (one SPEEL for each sub-topic)

- an essay may have any number of SPEEL body paragraphs
- the body paragraphs should have a coherent and logical flow
- substantiate one point (one claim) in each body paragraph
- use one or two sources of evidence to support your claim

Conclusion:

• Reiterates your overarching argument that is your thesis statement.
• Reminds the reader of your most noteworthy evidence or example.
• Reveals any insights, such as significant implications or limitations from your findings.
• Closes with a final statement, making any suggestions on where to from here.

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Essay Structure

Introduction

- Introduces central topic.
- Explains context and background.
- Mentions sub-topics.
- Concludes with thesis statement.

Body paragraphs

- Subject Point
- Evidence
- Explanation
- Link

- Subject Point
- Evidence
- Explanation
- Link

Conclusion

- Reiterates thesis statement.
- Reminds reader of key evidence.
- Reveals significant insights.
- Where to from here.
Exemplar: Sample Introduction

**Question:** Given the rush of reporting on COVID-19, do specific types of sources stand out as more credible when seeking information online about protecting yourself from the virus?

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO; 2020), Chinese authorities identified a new type of coronavirus on 7 January 2020. By April 4, 2020, there were 1,007,977 cases and 52,771 deaths confirmed globally (Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering, 2020). Questions about COVID-19 on Google return about 9,250,000,000 search results from diverse types of sources, including: peer reviewed publications, health agency reports, Government documents, news media stories, and social media content. One of the search results examined in this paper is from the World Health Organisation, who aim to broadcast information of the highest quality about COVID-19. Google search results also include publications of deliberately misleading information that incorporate dangerous myths and rumours. Three types of sources examined here are peer reviewed publications, news outlet reporting, and social media content. The outcome is an assessment of types of online sources based upon specific criteria that evaluates credibility and reliability. This essay argues that evaluating types of sources of information on COVID-19 for credibility is not only the responsibility of publishers, but also, the onus of consumers. When seeking information online about the risk level and protection required for COVID-19, we individuals must take responsibility for evaluating which types of sources are better.
Exemplar: Sample Paragraph

In academia, works authored by experts in their field and reviewed by other field experts are the most credible and reliable type of source. We must also take responsibility for evaluating sources by applying criteria (Metzger, 2007) to determine the credibility and reliability of publications. For example, checking if the author is a field expert, if the information is up-to-date, and for facts rather than opinions. Nature (2020) is a scientific journal, which recently published one of the first peer reviewed articles on COVID-19. The article (Zhou, et al. 2020) concludes, “Most importantly, strict regulations against the wildlife domestication and consuming should be implemented”. This is good advice; however, a watermark on each page of the article clearly shows the paper is an Accelerated Article Preview, without subediting of text, figures, or tables. A casual observer commented on the publication, questioning the quality of the article (madmaxNY 2020). This Accelerated Article Preview (AAP) demonstrates that there is an urgent need to quickly share information about the spread of the virus within the scientific community, which accounts for this fast-tracked publication. Nature offers Advance Online Publication and these AAP papers are clearly identified by a watermark on each page of the PDF. Nevertheless, read them with caution, even though experts credit the data as meeting standard requirements. When it comes to communicating high quality, trusted health information to the public the World Health Organisation (WHO) is the peak body. WHO not only publishes peer reviewed scientific articles, but also, a range of data for the media and public that includes fact sheets and situation reports. The WHO ‘Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report’ (WHO, 2020), published daily by experts, checks out as a credible source. The report includes total and new cases in the last twenty-four hours, strategic objectives, and recommendations and advice for the public. In addition, surveillance is clear and concise, presented in tables with a summary of ‘strategic objectives’. The frequency of publication can be both beneficial and problematic as new information is quickly disseminated; however, quality assurance may be affected. While individuals from a non-academic background may stumble upon peer-reviewed publications like these, it is far more likely the public will glean their information from news outlets and social media content.


<table>
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<tr>
<th>SPEEL method*</th>
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<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Explanation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Link</strong></td>
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Exemplar: Sample Conclusion

Public information about the risk level and protection required for COVID-19 is widely available; however, this paper examined three distinct types of sources for their credibility. The findings support the contention that individual consumers must also accept responsibility for evaluating sources. Peer reviewed sources are the most dependable, trustworthy, and authoritative, as experts review the research prior to publication. The examples of the Nature article (2020) and the WHO situation report (2020) support this claim. Nevertheless, peer reviewed sources also have their limitations, such as, the speed of publication. The two sources cited here were both published in haste, so consider the reported data in this light. Another limitation is access, as experts and professionals read peer reviewed sources through paid subscriptions; although, the WHO offers publications free of charge. The most important point here is that there are better types of sources than social media content for health information on COVID-19; however, individuals must be active researchers, applying rigorous criteria to check their sources for credibility and reliability before acting.
# 1,500 Word Essay Plan: Introduction

## Essay Question
Now it is your turn. Write out your essay question here and fill in the blank sections.

## Draft Content
Now it is your turn to define your response to the question. (180 words)

### Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-topics</th>
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<td>2)</td>
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<td>3)</td>
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</table>

### Thesis Statement
Make a claim.
1,500 Word Essay Plan: Paragraph 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph 1</th>
<th>Draft Content: Continue to look back the question and the claim you made in your thesis statement to ensure you stay focused and on track. (380 words)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
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<td>Point</td>
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<td>Evidence</td>
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<td>Explanation</td>
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### 1,500 Word Essay Plan: Paragraph 2

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<tr>
<th>Paragraph 2</th>
<th>Draft Content: Continue to look back the question and the claim you made in your thesis statement to ensure you stay focused and on track. (380 words)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Point</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Evidence</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Explanation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Link</strong></td>
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1,500 Word Essay Plan: Paragraph 3

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<tr>
<th>Paragraph 3</th>
<th>Draft Content: Continue to look back the question and the claim you made in your thesis statement to ensure you stay focused and on track. (380 words)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
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<td>Point</td>
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<td>Evidence</td>
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<td>Explanation</td>
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1,500 Word Essay Plan: Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft Content: Define how you will respond to the question. (180 words)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reiterate thesis</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Remind key evidence</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reveal insights</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The future</strong></td>
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Final Essay in APA Style

Your Notes

The Sample Essay

Please note that the sample essay uses ‘lorem ipsum’ dummy text in body paragraphs two and three.

Assignment 4 – COVID-19: WHO SAID THAT?

Graeme Baker

Your University or Affiliation

MEDIACOM 101: Media & Communication A

Dr. Ima Knowit

April 4, 2020
According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Chinese authorities identified a new type of coronavirus on 7 January 2020 (WHO, 2020). By April 4 2020, there were 1,007,977 cases and 52,771 deaths confirmed globally (Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering, 2020). Questions about COVID-19 on Google return about 9,250,000,000 search results from diverse types of sources, including: peer reviewed publications, health agency reports, Government documents, news media stories, and social media content. One of the search results examined in this paper is from the World Health Organisation, who aim to broadcast information of the highest quality about COVID-19. Google search results also include publications of deliberately misleading information that incorporate dangerous myths and rumours. Three types of sources examined here are peer reviewed publications, news outlet reporting, and social media content. The outcome is an assessment of types of online sources based upon specific criteria that evaluates credibility and reliability. This essay argues that evaluating types of sources of information on COVID-19 for credibility is not only the responsibility of publishers, but also, the onus of consumers. When seeking information online about the risk level and protection required for COVID-19, we individuals must take responsibility for evaluating which types of sources are better.

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References


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Subject: Better Essays