

Guideline for written assignments

When you are assigned to write an essay on a given topic, follow these steps:

1. Read the instructions very carefully and try to understand what is expected from you.
2. Do the necessary research and read the articles you are assigned carefully, take notes and look up the words in a dictionary.
3. Note down the main ideas in the articles. Brainstorm and make an outline of what you are going to write.
4. When you are writing an essay, you need to have an interesting opening to introduce the topic and to engage the reader.
5. In the Introductory paragraph you need to explain the rationale for writing. Why is it important to discuss this topic now? You may include terms/ concepts/ background information that the reader needs to know to understand the thesis.
6. Make sure all the parts of the Introduction are clearly relevant and organically connected to the topic and the thesis statement.
7. There has to be a thesis statement at the end of the introduction that clearly presents the stance you take and /or the main claims.
8. What you will argue and / or evaluate has to be clear in the thesis statement.
9. The thesis statement has to give a sense of the general plan for the essay. You have to preview the arguments in the same order as they will appear in the body paragraphs.
10. There has to be a clearly stated topic sentence - which expresses the main idea- at the beginning of each body paragraph.
11. The topic sentence of each body paragraph has to make a claim/give a reason/ clearly relate to and / or prove parts of the thesis and support it. It has to include your own voice by weighing arguments, evaluating evidence, and raising critical questions.
12. Avoid extremely brief responses. You should make a point, refer to the text where necessary and justify your point. Make sentences of your own.

13. You have to apply the four basic standards of effective writing (unity, support, coherence, and clear, error-free sentences).
14. Remember to support your ideas using clear and concise “transitional words and phrases”, and that merely inserting them would not necessarily enhance coherence. The ideas should flow smoothly from one sentence to the next and the parts of the text should logically relate to one another.
15. Do not show respect in some way for “the reader’s intelligence to make inferences”. (Do not assume that the reader will understand your intention, and do not expect the reader to make inferences on the basis of the slightest of cues.) Therefore be to the point and write clearly.
16. You have to adhere to an appropriate register for academic writing. You have to check your paper for the ideas jumping from one subtopic to another, as people’s conversation often does, failing to make transitions between ideas but assuming that hearers catch the relations and continue to follow.
17. Check your paper for the “voices in the mind” that come to you while you are writing. You have to organize your ideas so that there is the quality of a written work in your paper.
18. Your body paragraphs;
 - a. should be focused \Rightarrow They should address the writing task effectively. Do not include any irrelevant or unnecessary information. Be brief and to the point.
 - b. should be well-organized \Rightarrow should be coherent: The ideas should be presented in an orderly way.
 \Rightarrow should have cohesion: The ideas should be connected or related in a reasonable way. They should be closely united.

Use cohesive devices effectively. The ideas in your paragraph should display systematic or logical connection or consistency. Use dependent markers and/or sentence connectors where necessary.

(dependent markers: although - *even though* - *though* - as - because - after - before - if - unless - until - *despite* - what - when - where - which - who - whom - whose)

(sentence connectors / transitional words: nevertheless- however- yet - nonetheless - but - even so - similarly - likewise - therefore - thus - hence - accordingly - consequently - moreover - besides - also- furthermore - in addition - afterwards - in the meantime - meanwhile - for instance - *for example* - in other words - *in conclusion* - *in contrast* - that is - as a matter of fact - indeed - on the contrary - while - *after all* - *consequently* - *not only... but also* - *on the other hand*)

c. should be well-developed \Rightarrow Include clear, appropriate details to support the topic sentence and illustrate ideas.

\Rightarrow Refer to the text where necessary.

19. Your sentences should be grammatically accurate. Let your dictionaries be your guides and look up the words –the ones that you have used in your paragraphs - to check how they should be used grammatically.

Avoid contractions \Rightarrow Contractions are shortened versions of words that use apostrophes in place of letters, such as "can't," "isn't," "she's," and "wouldn't." The more formal, non-contracted versions are "cannot," "is not," "she is," and "would not."

Avoid colloquialism and slang expressions \Rightarrow Avoid words such as "stuff," "kind of," "okay," and "big deal." Both colloquialism and slang expressions convey an informal tone and should be avoided in formal writing.

wanna – incorrect

want to – correct

gonna – incorrect

going to - correct

20. You have to close the essay with a concluding paragraph which can be a restatement of what you said in your paper. You have to check the concluding paragraph for new information; make sure your conclusion does not include any new information.
21. Your paper should have appropriate margins all around. Leave a blank line after each line of words. It makes reading much easier.
22. Before you hand in your paper -that is the first draft- re-read what you have written and make the necessary corrections. Edit the paper carefully for errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation, word use, and spelling. Hand in your paper on time.
23. The problem is not making mistakes; that's part of learning. The problem is when you don't learn from the mistakes.