



Writing essays

Analysing essay topics

Note any words of direction

- These might include: *discuss, discuss critically, discuss the importance of, assess, justify, evaluate, analyse.*

Understand the essay question

- Make sure you know the precise meaning of every word in the essay question. Use
 - a) your general dictionary for unfamiliar words such as *intrinsic, core values*
 - b) and a subject-specific dictionary, for example the APA Dictionary of Psychology, for words such as *proof, random sample, significance level.*

Think about the different parts of the question

- Decide how many parts the question has.
- List the areas you will probably have to research. It may help to write yourself a brief task description: "First find out what a market niche is, then see what significance this has for marketing. Next..."

Freethinking

- On some topics you already have some general knowledge. To develop your own viewpoint, try to step outside your familiar cultural assumptions and values by asking questions like:

What is the 'western family'?

Is there a typical 'western family' now?

What is the function of a family, anyway?

Is it necessary? For whom?

What kind of family is/was found in non-industrial societies?

- If you are having difficulty getting started, **brainstorm** the topic by thinking about it as broadly as you can and jot down what comes to mind.
- Make a **mind-map** (or some rough notes) of your ideas. Add to this map as you research the essay. Try not to be overwhelmed by other writers' views. (see QuickRef 25 for more information on brainstorming and mind-mapping)

Other useful references

Anderson J & Poole M 2001, *Assignment and thesis writing, 4th edn*, John Wiley & Sons Australia, Milton, Qld.

Arnaudet ML & Barrett ME 1984, *Approaches to academic reading and writing*, Prentice Hall Regents, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Deakin University website: Academic skills <http://www.deakin.edu.au/studentlife/academic-skills/handouts/essay.php>

Language and Learning Online: <http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/index.xml>

Oshima A & Hogue A 2006, *Writing academic English, 4th edn*, Pearson Longman, White Plains, NY.

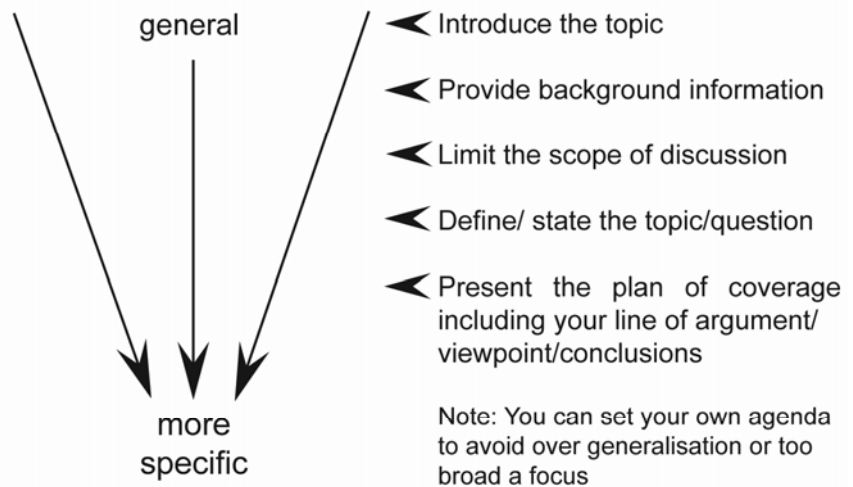
Swales J & Feak C 2004, *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

University of Woollongong website: <http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/main.html>

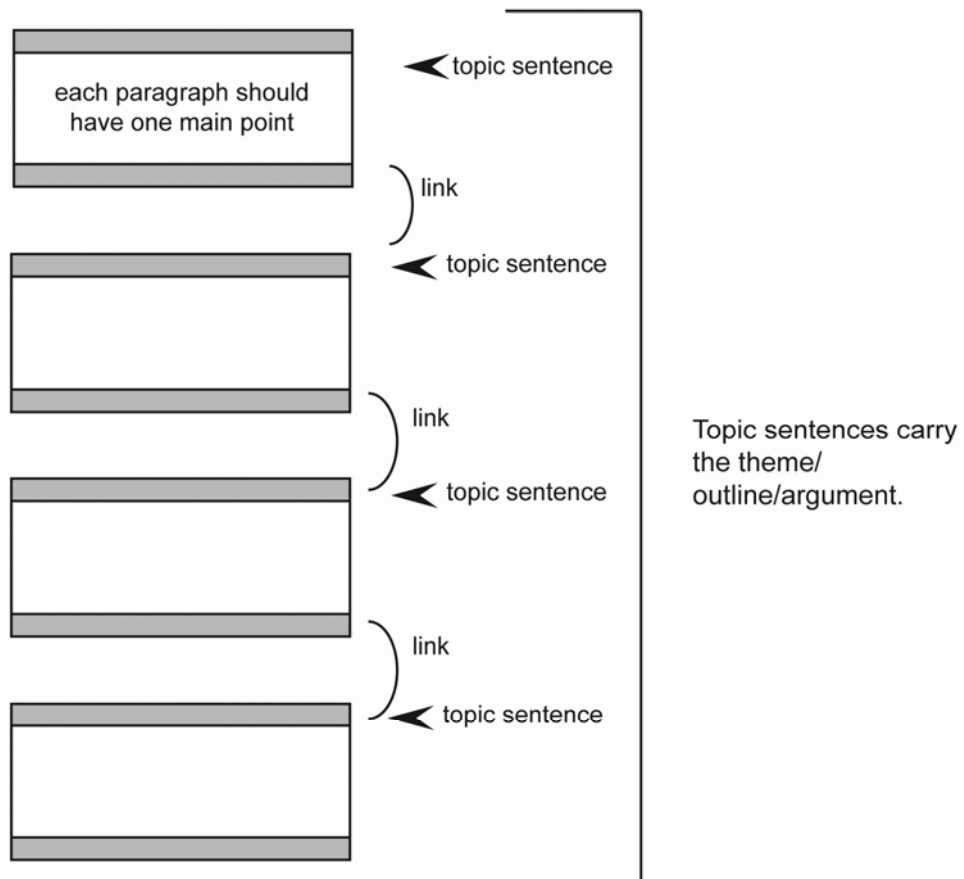
The Structure of an Essay

Introduction

(Approximately 10% of the total length. May be one paragraph or several, depending on essay length)



Body



Conclusion

