

Outline for Essay Assignment

6th April 2009

When writing an assignment it is important to answer the question that is asked. This is often the most difficult part of the task. To interpret what the question actually is asking of you and then to answer that question and not another is a definite challenge. There are many students who use any essay to express their feelings about their pet subject. This rehashing of old thoughts and ideas is not the function of academic essays. They are designed to introduce students to new material, ideas, thoughts or practice.

It is important to express your thoughts about the assignment subject in a logical and reasoned manner. Hence the usefulness of an essay plan.

Essay Plan

Introduction

This section consists of a short summary of the contents of the essay. It is like a preview and could be read without reading the assignment in order to find out what it's about. It tells the reader what to expect. The introduction is usually written last.

Body

What is the question?

This is the major section of the essay where the question is actually addressed.

It is vital to be clear just what the question is asking before going further.

Decide what you think about the question. How do you interpret it?

Write down the main points of your argument to support your view.

Headings

It is usual to divide the body of the essay into sections with an appropriate heading for each argument. It is often helpful to use the wording from the question for the headings.

Quotations

The answer which is expected in a Tertiary level assignment should include statements by the writer which are supported by reasoning and quotations from specialists in the subject. These quotations may support the writer's statement and the writer would then explain this. The quotations may also oppose the writer. In this case the writer would discuss why they don't agree with the quotation giving their reasons.

Conclusion

This part of the essay summarises the essay. It is a restatement of your topic sentences.

It can begin with "In this essay

There is never any new material in the conclusion.

The Lime Green Book "Introduction to Counselling Studies by Distance Education" has a 2 page section on writing assignments for assessment. This is followed by a list of definitions of common words, a section on how to reference within the essay and instructions on writing a Bibliography.

The UNE has instruction on essay writing on their main website www.une.edu.au