7 Step Plan for Writing
Having to write an assignment is a stressful process for many people. Here is a seven step guide to help you through it.
Early in semester

Note the due date in your diary

Organise your assignment files

Set a start date 3 weeks before the due date

and get going!
1. Collect task information
2. Analyse the task
3. Collect and organise information
4. Plan the overall structure
5. Draft effective paragraphs
6. Integrate the evidence
7. Edit and proofread
Collect all the relevant materials

Task Sheet

Criteria Sheet

Unit BlackBoard site

Additional tips sheets

Notes on what was said in lectures

Write a checklist of *everything* that is specified about what you have to include or do in the assignment.
Read your task sheet and look for certain key words

- **Topic words** – these are the words and concepts you have to research

- **Task words** – these words tell you how to structure the information you find in your research (e.g. discuss, outline, analyse)
  
  *(see a list of task words in cite|write)*

- **Limiting words** – these words limit the scope of the subject to be research and written about

For more details see Studywell > Researching > *Working Out How to Start*
Analyse the geographical factors that both contribute to and hinder the success of tourism in Australia.

Task word - analyse is to address each factor separately.

Topic words – the topic you need to research – tourism in Australia.

Limiting words – geographic factors only in relation to tourism in Australia.

Further Examples:

Discuss the public health strategies that you are proposing that will effectively address the problem.

Describe the process you use to choose the IT applications.

Apply the key concepts addressed in the lectures to your research about this practitioner.
Start thinking

Brainstorm what you already know

Think about what you need to read and/or research

Consider other similar terms that you could research

Thesaurus

geography (n.)
- topography
- natural features
- landforms
Stop and think about your material at different points of researching and writing:

Is this relevant? Does it specifically help to answer the question / complete the task?

How does it connect to other evidence?

How can I put this evidence together to create a single argument?

What are my main points? How do they fit together?
Collect and organise information

3

Start with QUT Library to find resources

Start with the unit resources from the Black Board site and QUT Readings

Use Quick Find on the Library website to look for resources in the library

Consider a variety of resources including books, journal articles, websites

Sources must be current, authoritative and relevant to your topic
When taking notes:

Just read at first to get a idea of the topic and work out a general thesis. Then take notes on information that is specifically relevant to the task.

Start with the more general sources – encyclopaedias (if necessary), then general books, specialised books, websites and finally journal articles

Make sure you write down all the bibliographical details of all the resources you use
Look for patterns and themes in your notes. Think about how these themes relate to each other.

Essay Question:. Analyse the geographical factors that both contribute to and hinder the success of tourism in Australia.


p. 34 Long way from tourist feeder countries in Northern hemisphere

p. 36 competition - wildlife in Tanzania and Kenya, volcanoes & biodiversity in Costa Rica


Survey - Natural attractions most like to go to: Uluru, Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu Great Ocean Road, Tasmanian Wilderness.

30,000kms of coastline in Australia, much of it beach. Over 10,000 miles of white beaches, GBR - 1,500 unique species of tropical fish, 400 species of coral and species of whales, birds, sharks, and invertebrates

Colour code key themes: Distance, Landforms, Animals,
Use a matrix to gather all your sources together for each theme

These themes become the main points of your body paragraphs

Another way is to draw a concept map

For more detail see Studywell > Researching > Organising Your Notes
Plan the Overall structure

Using your notes:

1. Each grouping of evidence in a theme can become the information in a paragraph / section.

2. The theme for a group of evidence can be converted to the main point of the paragraph / section.

3. The overall summary of the main points can be made into your thesis.
Think about:

➢ How your paragraphs can be logically structured

➢ The relationships between the main points (eg. agree/disagree) and how you can use transition words / phrases to signpost this to your reader
Academic writing generally follows a diamond structure:

**Introduction**
- Introduces the topic
- Outlines the essay structure
- States the thesis
- **Topic Sentence:** Introduces paragraph topic
  - **Evidence Sentences:** Provide reasons and evidence that support the topic sentence
  - **Concluding Sentence:** Summarises paragraph

**Body Paragraphs**
- Repeats the topic
- Summarises the essay structure
- Restates the thesis

**Conclusion**
- Summarises the essay structure
- Restates the thesis

Look at the example in Studywell > Writing > Writing Structure Overview
Plan the Overall structure

Body paragraphs are ordered to suit the type of task you have been asked to do. For example:

**Theory 1**

**Theory 2**

**Theory 3**

**COMPARISON** (eg compare the three theories of …)

**Factor 1**

**Factor 2**

**Factor 3**

**DISCUSSION** (eg discuss the effect of …)

**Cause 1**

**Cause 2**

**Cause 3**

**ANALYSIS** (eg analyse the causes of …)
Plan the Overall structure

Plan out how many words you are able to write for each section

➢ Work out the overall word allowance for the assignment (1500 words)

➢ Introduction and conclusion are each about 10% of the total number. (150 words each, 1200 words remaining)

➢ Divide the remainder of the words equally (more or less) among the body paragraphs / sections (About 400 words each)
Body paragraphs are like mini-essays: topic and concluding sentences introduce and sum up the point; supporting and evidence sentences back up the point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Topic Sentence</strong></th>
<th><strong>Supporting Sentences</strong></th>
<th><strong>Evidence Sentences</strong></th>
<th><strong>Concluding Sentence</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This states he main point of the paragraph and links it with the thesis.</td>
<td>These may add information to the main point. For example, define terms or explain concepts</td>
<td>Examples, data, statistics, quotes which back up the point. These must be cited and referenced.</td>
<td>This restates the point. It may also provide a link to the next paragraph.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Studywell > Writing > Writing Structure Overview for more detail and examples.
Introductory and concluding paragraphs have a slightly different structure to body paragraphs. They are like the bookends of academic writing and tend to mirror each other.

**Introductory Paragraph**
- Introduces the topic
- States the thesis (main point of the assignment)
- Outlines the structure of the assignment (main point of each body paragraph / section)
- Defines the scope (limits) of the assignment

**Concluding Paragraph**
- Paraphrases the thesis
- Sums up the main points of the body paragraphs
- Does *not* include any new material
- Concludes strongly

Go to Studywell > Writing > *Writing Structure Overview* for detailed examples
The wording of your evidence often needs to be adapted to smoothly fit into your assignment. This can be done in three ways:

**QUOTING** – Using the authors’ own words to express their ideas.
You must use quotation marks.

**PARAPHRASING** - Using the authors’ information but expressing it in your own words.

**SUMMARISING** – Briefly mentioning authors’ ideas without explaining further.

For more detail see Studywell > Citing & Referencing > Integrating Evidence.
Editing looks at the essay as a whole

Proofreading looks at the details

Structure
Sources of information
Task requirements
Style

Word choice
Spelling
Grammar
Punctuation

For more details see Studywell > Writing > Editing and Proofreading
Reference List (in order of appearance)

PAGES 1-11


'304x400_student6', In: 304x400_student6.jpg, ed, student in library with laptop.

'student1', In: http://www.registry.ed.ac.uk/Fees/images/student1.JPG, ed, student using a computer.
Reference List (in order of appearance)

PAGES 12-


Grant MacDonald, 'fall leaf ', In: http://www.flickr.com/photos/grantmac/246785658/, ed, 2006, autumn leaf lying on the ground