

## 1.2 Research Essays

	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
<b>See 2.6</b>	<b>Structure the essay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposition states your position and is followed by the main points to be covered</li> <li>• The proposition shows understanding of the question</li> <li>• The <b>argument</b> presents your ideas with evidence</li> <li>• The conclusion summarises the points made</li> </ul>
	<b>Present an argument</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence is provided to support your opinion</li> <li>• Your position remains clear throughout</li> <li>• Opposing views and evidence are considered</li> </ul>
<b>See 2.12</b>	<b>Reference thoroughly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The source of each claim made is acknowledged</li> <li>• The <b>Harvard system</b> is used consistently to cite sources and to list references</li> </ul>
	<b>Write clearly and concisely</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arguments are clear and concise</li> <li>• Grammar and spelling are accurate</li> </ul>

### Definitions

An essay is a formal presentation of an argument.

A research essay refers to the most recent and significant research and literature in presenting an argument.

### Purpose

To persuade an audience of your point of view.

### Audience

Your assessor, who is an academic, will assess the clarity of your argument and how well you justify your position and acknowledge your sources.

### Structure

Proposition	State your point of view on the topic.
Introduction	Outline the main points you will discuss.
Presentation of points	Each paragraph should contain one main point, which is proven, developed or illustrated.
Conclusion	Summarise or restate the main issues and the conclusion.

### Language and style

**See 2.8**

Essays have a formal tone to indicate impartial analysis and **good style** is important. Your writing should be clear and concise, using your own words. Acknowledge sources when others' words or ideas are used. Avoid skimpy paragraphs and overlong sentences and paragraphs.

### Steps

1. Underline the key words in the assignment question and roughly draft an argument, using what you know. Plan what further information and evidence you need to read.
2. Read **critically and analytically** about the topic: interpret, compare information, work out relationships, check relevance to the topic. Note your sources, being sure to record the page numbers. See 2.7
3. Rearrange or redraft your argument as further ideas are found to support or counter your position. With each draft refine your ideas.
4. Check that your argument flows well, is introduced in the first paragraph and reiterated in the last.
5. **Proofread**, and cross-check references in the essay and the reference list. See 2.8

### Hints

It is often best to write (or rewrite) the introduction last, when you know exactly what position you have argued in the essay.

1. Use direct quotations to illustrate key points, but avoid excessive use of quotations.
2. Make sure you have **taken a position**; not just presented others' ideas. See 2.6

### Useful references

Clanchy, John & Ballard, Brigid (1981 or 1997) *Essay Writing for Students*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.

Webb, Carolyn & Drury, Helen (1995) *Essay Module*, in the series Writing Practice for University Students, from the University of Sydney. To use this reference, arrange a time with the **Learning and Teaching Development Unit**. See the **LTDU website** for times of workshops on essay writing. See 2.1