

TEN TOP TIPS FOR WRITING AN ESSAY

Tip	Explanation	Example
1. Set the context	The best way to begin an essay is to set the general context. Persuade your reader that what you are writing about is relevant to today's world.	<i>Nowadays, more and more young people are going to university and this trend is set to continue.</i>
2. Don't repeat the words of the question	It's always a bad idea to repeat the words of the question. Try to rephrase them, or don't refer to them at all (just stick to the topic – this shows that you have read the question).	<i>In this essay, I will argue that the government needs to do more to help the homeless. [In this essay I will argue that "the government is not doing enough to help homeless people"]</i>
3. State your position	Don't leave your reader guessing about what your opinion will be. Tell them right at the start – in the last sentence of your introduction. [This is only the case for one-sided essays]	<i>In this essay I will contend that we need to invest more money in green infrastructure, not less.</i>
4. Use PEE	Essays need a tight structure, and PEE is a good way to achieve this: Point – what's my main argument? (Write this as a topic sentence) Evidence – what examples can I think of to support my point? Explanation – So what?	<i>Prisoners should be treated humanely because they are human beings. By giving them work projects and small responsibilities we will enable them to integrate back into society upon their release.</i>
5. Be specific	Give <i>specific</i> examples. Don't just say "smoking is dangerous".	<i>The dangers of smoking include lung disease, heart problems and bad oral health.</i>
6. Get the connectors right	Formal connectors such as "moreover" and "in conclusion" are appropriate in an essay. But don't use too many. Two or three is sufficient.	<i>Moreover, students nowadays lack the social skills of their predecessors.</i>
7. Use conditionals	Use conditionals to show the consequences of actions / behaviour.	<i>If students can't wean themselves off video games, they will not get the necessary training in socialisation.</i>
8. Recognise the opposite point of view	Don't give lots of details, but at least mention what other people think. Then say why they are wrong.	<i>Some people might say that gap years damage students' grades, but surely life experience is more than grades.</i>
9. Keep it formal	Use formal vocabulary and avoid colloquialisms and slang.	<i>Doctors should never divulge their patients' information.</i>
10. Don't repeat yourself	In the conclusion, it's appropriate to summarise your argument, but there's no need to repeat it word for word. Try to say the same thing in different words.	<i>See example essay.</i>