



# Essays

## Why should I write essays?

In most professional contexts you'll need to be able to persuade people by using evidence and reasoning, e.g. to try a different way of doing something, to buy a product, or to invest money in a new project. Writing essays gives you practice in communicating persuasively and logically.

## What's an essay?

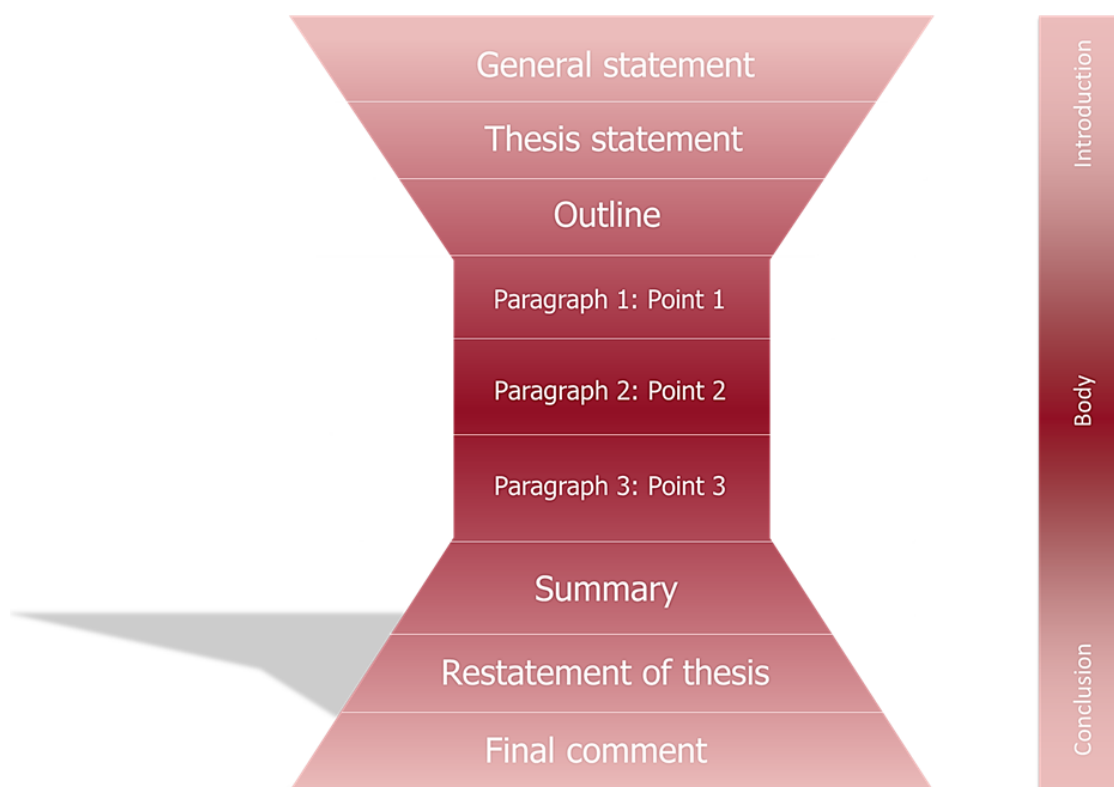
The purpose of an essay is to put forward an argument in response to a question or statement. The writer uses evidence to persuade the reader that their argument makes sense and is worth accepting.

## What's in an essay?

The key elements of an essay are the **argument** and the **reasoning**. The argument is what you're trying to convince the reader about. The reasoning is how you show that your argument is worth believing. It could include **evidence**, **explanations**, or **examples**.

You structure your argument and reasoning in a particular way:

- The **introduction** presents the argument and outlines the reasons that will be presented
- The **body** section presents the different points of reasoning, one per paragraph, with evidence included and cited
- The **conclusion** summarises the reasoning and restates the argument
- The **reference list** includes all the sources of evidence and ideas that you have referred to in your essay



### An Example Essay Plan

#### Essay task

**Identify** and **discuss** the *most serious occupational hazards of nurses*.

**Identify:** say **what** are the *most serious occupational hazards for nurses*

**Discuss:** talk **about** the *most serious occupational hazards in some **detail***

Brainstorming ideas: *occupational hazards of nurses*

- *risk of back injuries*
- *stress*
- *dangers of radiation*
- *infection*
- *violence from patients or others* → *most serious*

### Identify thesis statement based on brainstorm

*There are several different occupational hazards for nurses but the most serious one is violence.*

(An alternative thesis statement could be: *The most serious occupational hazards for nurses are violence and stress.*)

Tip: For a step by step break-down of the essay writing process and deadlines for each step, use the [Assignment Calculator](#).

## An Example Essay Outline

### Introduction

- **Introduce the general topic:** *occupational hazards of nurses*
- **State the argument:** *there are various occupational hazards for nurses but the most serious is violence against nurses.*
- **Outline the main points:** *three serious violence-related hazards and how they affect nurses*

### Body

- **Paragraph 1:** *Violence from patients* (explanation, evidence and examples from research)
- **Paragraph 2:** *Violence from family of patients* (explanation, evidence and examples from research)
- **Paragraph 3:** *Violence from other staff* (explanation, evidence and examples from research)

### Conclusion

- **Summarise** the main points (reasons)
- **Restate the argument:** *the most serious occupational hazard for nurses is violence*
- **Finish with a general statement about the topic:** *nurses should be aware and hospitals should take responsibility for minimising the risk of violent situations*
- **Tip:** Don't bring in any new evidence into your conclusion

## Common problems

- Irrelevant content or ideas not well organised – use the [Essay drafting tool](#) to help organise your ideas or read the [Essay structure](#) guide
- Informal/inappropriate tone – read the [Essay tone](#) guide
- Not enough evidence to support your reasons - go to the Library's [Referencing and Citation Guide](#) for help with correctly formatting your citations and references

### Activity

1. Look at your essay task/question and rewrite it in your own words. Do you understand what it is asking you?
  
2. Write your response to the question (your argument) in one sentence. This is your thesis statement.
  
3. What three main points of reasoning could you use to support your argument?
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

### Next steps

Use the [Essay drafting tool](#) to draft your essay based on the points you came up with.