**Essay planner**

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|  | plan and prepare |
| **step 1** | * [Analyse the assignment task](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/approaching-question-0) carefully and read the marking criteria. Clarify any points with your educator.
* Brainstorm your initial ideas in a mind map and use this to inform your research and create a [plan](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/preparing-plan-writing-or-presenting-0).
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|  | research and take notes |
| **step 2** |  This is often the most time-consuming stage of completing your essay.* Search for relevant sources via the [Library](http://libguides.navitas.com/information_skills/online). See the [Library guides.](http://libguides.navitas.com/criminology)
* Keep a record of your quotes, paraphrased content and your own ideas. Avoid plagiarism by noting full bibliographic information and page numbers for quotes and paraphrases.
* [Read](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/reading-and-note-taking) and [take effective notes](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/note-taking-2) . Take notes under headings related to the essay question.
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|  |  Review your plan and write your first draft |
| **step 3** | * Review your mind map; has your position changed? If so, this is ok. Sometimes after conducting research we may discover new information. Update your plan if needed.
* Decide what points you will make to support your position using the scaffold below to help [plan your body paragraphs.](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/paragraphing-0)
	+ Look at the evidence you have collected how can it be organised together. For example: if you were writing an essay on the impacts of drugs you might group together economic factors and then social factors. You can include counter arguments; this is where you present arguments against your own and then point out reasons why they are wrong.
	+ Check your final plan against the question to make sure all your paragraphs are on topic and support your position.
	+ Use your scaffold notes to write your first draft.
* Use [academic writing](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/academic-writing-0) and include [paragraphs](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/paragraphing-0) that include topic sentences and supporting evidence to write your essay one paragraph at time.
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|  |  revise and re-draft |
| **step 4** | * Look at our guides on creating [Paragraphs that Pop](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/paragraphs-pop-webinar) and [Sensational Sentences](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/sensational-sentences-webinar).
* Check the [referencing guide](http://libguides.navitas.com/harvard)to make sure you have referenced everything correctly.
* Make sure your [essay flows and has cohesion](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/cohesion-linking-ideas-1).
* Format the assignment correctly. Refer to the [presentation checklist.](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/effective-speechmaking-and-presentations-2)
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|  |  proofread and submit |
| **step 5** | * Look at our guide on [proofreading](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/editing-and-proofreading-0) .
* Submit your essay to [Smarthinking](http://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/smarthinking) or [Grammarly](https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/grammarly) at least 48 hours prior to the submission deadline for feedback on your structure, spelling and grammar.
* Submit your essay.
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**Essay Scaffold**

| **Paragraph Elements****(Each paragraph should contain bulleted elements listed)** | **Enter notes for each paragraph (dot points)** | **Word Allocation** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction*** Introductory sentence
* Background to topic
* Thesis statement
* Main points to be explored in the paper (essay outline)
 |  | (5-10% of word count) |
| **Body paragraph 1*** Topic sentence (in your own words, not a quote or paraphrase)
* Support with academic reference (x 2 minimum)
* Link to theory
* Elaborate point / Analysis
* Example (if relevant)
* Concluding sentence
* Link to main idea of next paragraph (if possible)

(Avoid finishing paragraphs with a reference) |  |  |
| **Body paragraph 2*** Topic sentence (in your own words, not a quote or paraphrase)
* Support with academic reference (x 2 minimum)
* Link to theory
* Elaborate point / Analysis
* Example (if relevant)
* Concluding sentence
* Link to main idea of next paragraph (if possible)

(Avoid finishing paragraphs with a reference) |  |  |
| **Body paragraph 3*** Topic sentence (in your own words, not a quote or paraphrase)
* Support with academic reference (x 2 minimum)
* Link to theory
* Elaborate point / Analysis
* Example (if relevant)
* Concluding sentence
* Link to main idea of next paragraph (if possible)

(Avoid finishing paragraphs with a reference) |  |  |
| **Body paragraph 4*** Topic sentence (in your own words, not a quote or paraphrase)
* Support with academic reference (x 2 minimum)
* Link to theory
* Elaborate point / Analysis
* Example (if relevant)
* Concluding sentence
* Link to main idea of next paragraph (if possible)

(Avoid finishing paragraphs with a reference) |  |  |
| **Body paragraph 5*** Topic sentence (in your own words, not a quote or paraphrase)
* Support with academic reference (x 2 minimum)
* Link to theory
* Elaborate point / Analysis
* Example (if relevant)
* Concluding sentence
* Link to main idea of next paragraph (if possible)

(Avoid finishing paragraphs with a reference) |  |  |
| **Repeat above structure for as many Body paragraphs needed, depending on the word count and the marking criteria.** |
| **Conclusion*** Summary of main points
* Restate thesis statement
* **Ensure you have answered the assignment question**
* Final comment (always end with your own words, not a quote or paraphrase)
 |  | (5-10% of word count) |