GUIDE TO THE WRITING AND PRESENTATION OF ESSAYS
UTS: ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

GUIDE TO THE WRITING AND THE PRESENTATION OF ESSAYS
ANALYSIS, ARGUMENT AND CRITICISM

The study of the humanities and social sciences requires an analytical, not a descriptive, approach. Written work must present an argument. Essays are generally answers to questions that ask whether or not you agree with a certain statement, or that ask you to discuss something critically, to assess a statement, or to make a choice. University essays, especially in the humanities and social sciences, are therefore arguments for or against certain propositions. An argument is a series of generalisations or propositions, supported by evidence or reasoning and connected in a logical manner, which leads to justified conclusions.

Furthermore, you must sustain your argument by giving evidence and reasons. Assertions do not constitute an argument. You must support your opinions with good evidence and valid reasoning. You will learn what counts as good evidence and valid reasoning by experience and by consulting your lecturers. Being critical may mean determining whether or not the evidence available justifies the conclusions that are drawn from it; or it may mean uncovering and questioning the assumptions that underlie political and other theories in the humanities and social sciences.

ESSAYS

Essays give you a chance to show what you can do; that you understand the question asked; that you understand the issues involved; that you have done the appropriate amount of reading. Having got that far, you must then show that you can communicate your understanding to others.

Make sure that you actually answer the question. If you are asked to assess, or to choose, or to discuss – do it! Do not write down everything you know about the subject: it may not all be relevant.

Your lecturers and tutors are not looking for ‘correct answers’. There is no ‘line’ for you to follow. They are concerned with how well you make your case. Whether they agree or disagree with your judgment is not essential to your mark. Disagreement does not lead to bad marks; bad essays do.

If there are important arguments against your position, do not ignore them; deal with them honestly. Give those who disagree with you a fair go. Try to meet their arguments with better ones. Scholarship is not a matter of political point-scoring: you must respect evidence and superior arguments.

Your argument should be consistent, and the language used should be clear, grammatically correct, and precise. Furthermore, an essay is a finished piece of work, not a draft or series of notes although you are encouraged to produce drafts of your essays.
PLANNING AND WRITING
Choosing your topic
Many subjects offer several topics for essays. Choose one carefully and begin working on it early. Fit your preparation and writing into the framework provided by essay deadlines in other subjects. This will avoid frantic, last minute rush. Essays are often best done when the topic interests you, but beware of becoming consumed by it: your capacity for scholarly analysis may be impaired, or you may neglect your other course work.

It is vitally important to address directly the essay question or topic at hand. Begin by carefully examining the key words and concepts in the questions. Pay particular attention to the difference between commonly used words. For example:

> compare:
  examine the characteristics of the objects in question to demonstrate their similarities and differences;
> contrast:
  examine the characteristics of the objects in question to demonstrate their differences;
> analyse:
  consider the various components of the whole and explain the relationships among them;
> discuss:
  present the different aspects of a question and problem;
> evaluate:
  examine the various sides of a question to reach a normative judgment.

Once the topic has been clarified, you should break it down into its component parts. This enables you to decide what material is relevant to the topic.

Outline
After analysing the question, the components should be organised to form an essay outline (or plan). The outline helps to ensure that your essay has a coherent, logical structure. It also eases the preparation of your essay by guiding your reading, note-taking and writing. Outlines enable you to assign relative weighting to the different parts of your answer by differentiating which points are central, and which peripheral. They will thus assist your research effort.

Research
Wide reading is essential if you wish to submit a good essay. Without wide reading you will not have the breadth of knowledge necessary to evaluate the work of the materials and to put their themes into perspectives. Effective research depends on knowing what to look for, so always keep your essay outline in mind. Ensure that you read to answer the specific sections of your outline.
The reading requirements are, of course, related to the nature of the subject and topic. Some topics may require a detailed analysis of a small number of texts; yet it is rarely sufficient to read only one or two books on a particular topic. Reading guides are issued to help students choose material. These are starting points. Further references may be compiled by using bibliographies in textbooks, for example.

**Note-taking**
Use your essay outline as the basis of taking notes from your readings. Try not to photocopy large slabs of reading: it often delays the hard work of reading and thinking; unhappily, it sometimes substitutes for them.

Be organised in your note-taking. Maintain an order that you can follow and that will be of assistance in writing the essay. Such an order might be provided by your essay outline. How you choose to make notes is up to you. Keep an accurate record of the full reference and write down the page from which you obtain each piece of information, even though it may not be a direct quotation.

**Writing and revising**
The essay should be a coherent and logical piece of analytical prose that, in the first place, answers the question set and, in the second place, cogently argues, carefully documents, and clearly expresses your case. Writing an essay is almost always a process of writing and revising.

The structure of the essay has three parts: an introduction, the body of the essay, and a conclusion. The introduction should introduce the topic to be discussed and prepare the reader for what is to follow; be concise. It may be useful to summarise briefly the overall theme or argument of the essay, indicating the main points to be made. The body of the essay is the place to present your argument. Attend to the logical sequence of your presentation, and to considerations about evidence as discussed above. The conclusion should restate briefly the key arguments and their implications.

You will find it helpful to write more than one draft. Use the first draft to map out your ideas within the framework of your essay outline. Second and subsequent drafts must pay more attention to working and style. Ask yourself these sorts of questions: Does the introduction outline the basics of your argument? Does the essay progress in a logical and cohesive way? Do paragraphs have main ideas followed by explanation? Have you defined terms (when first used) appropriately within the context of discussions? Are the spelling and grammar correct? Does the conclusion draw together the arguments and answer the original question? Does the format (use of headings, paragraphs, type-face, bibliography, footnotes, etc.) assist with essay clarity? Are all borrowed ideas referenced throughout the essay? Always assess your own work by imagining that you are writing for the average intelligent reader: have you included enough information and evidence, in the right order, to allow such a reader to follow your argument? Would such a reader be convinced by your argument?

Try to confront your own assumptions and prejudices as you write. Your task is to
convince by argument, not by appeal to the prejudices of others. If you are aware of the presuppositions of others through wide reading, you are prepared to be more conscious of your own presuppositions.

STYLE
**Grammar:** Sloppy grammar distracts the reader’s attention from your ideas.

**Spelling, hyphens:** The standard spelling reference for Australian writing is the *Macquarie Dictionary*. English spelling is preferred to American. The *Macquarie* is also useful as an up-to-date guide to current hyphenation of words. The tendency in recent years has been to use fewer hyphens, and many words which formerly consisted of two components have now become one.

**Abbreviations:** Use full names of states in the text, though abbreviations may be used in footnotes. Use a full stop after an abbreviation (Vic.; ed.), but not after a contraction (Qld, eds). For abbreviations that consist of capitals, do not use full stops: NSW, ADFA; also BA, PhD, MA. Symbols for currency and units of measurement have no full stop (5 km, 25 lb, 6s). Plurals of abbreviations do not need an apostrophe: MPs, Revs.

**Capitalisation:** The rules of capitalisation are complicated and the decision whether or not capitalise is still frequently left to the discretion of the writer. For the sake of consistency, and of appearance, we advise authors to err on the side of lower case usage, except in the case of organisations and institutions and with certain titles (eg. ‘President Bush’, but ‘the prime minister, Mr. Howard’). If in doubt, opt for the lower case.

**Quotations:** Use single quotation marks; for quotations within a quotation, use double quotation marks. Indent quotations of more than forty words and double space. Use the spelling and punctuation of the original. Use [sic] (without a full stop) only to indicate that the spelling or turn of phrase derives from the original. Put any interpolations in square brackets. If omitting material from a quotation, use three ellipsis points (...). Do not use ellipsis points at the beginning of a quotation.

**Numbers:** Spell out the numbers one to nine and spell out even hundreds, thousands and millions, except if they include a decimal point or fraction (eg. 4.25, 41/4), or where they refer to page numbers, or where there are sets of numerals, some of which are higher than ten (eg. 14, 9 and 6). Use arabic numerals (11, 12, 13…) for other numbers.

Percentages are expressed as figures followed by % even if the number is less than 10.

Always write out a number or year if it begins a sentence.

Large numbers should be written with a comma rather than a space (eg. 50,000).

Dates should be written thus: 9 January 1956.
Periods of time should be written thus: 1970s (not 1970’s); 1984-85 (not 1984-1985, or 1984-5).

Avoid Roman numerals wherever possible.

Dates: These are shown as 15 January 1970. Months should be spelled out in full. No apostrophe is used in 1870s, 1900s, except in a construction like: 1960s and ’70s. Show a span of years as 1845-50, not 1845-1850.

Underlining/italics: In most books and journal articles, emphasis is added to words by italicising them. Foreign language words that are often used in English, but are not yet fully naturalised, are italicised. This does not apply to terms such as vis-à-vis, or laissez faire. If in doubt, check the Macquarie Dictionary.

PRESENTING AND SUBMITTING THE ESSAY
  > ALL essays must be printed or typed in double-spacing in 12 point font on one side of the sheet only (the absolute MINIMUM font size is 12 pt Times New Roman), and with a margin of at least 4cms left, 3 cms top and bottom.
  > Always DO a spell-check.
  > Check that you have supplied a BIBLIOGRAPHY.
  > MAKE SURE all your footnotes are correct.
  > PROOF READ all work, and if possible, get someone else to proof read your work.
  > KEEP a copy of your essays/assignments etc. Tutors are NOT responsible if your work goes astray or never reaches us.
  > FILL in a COVER SHEET and make sure your NAME and Student Number are on it!

Essays that do not meet these criteria may be returned to students for reformatting.

Remember: Satisfying the above stylistic criteria goes a long way to making your work reader friendly, and therefore marker friendly.
Authors must acknowledge the sources of their information and ideas. Become familiar with the conventions for documenting the material you consult, or you run the risk of being accused of plagiarism. This is easily avoided if you provide references in your work as recommended in this outline. A modified form of the Harvard System is the referencing system used in this subject. The modified Harvard System is straightforward, easy to use and causes minimal disturbance to the text. It allows the reader to see immediately the association between the source and its author and the date of publication.

IN-TEXT REFERENCING
When you cite a reference in the text of your assignment you should include the author’s surname, year of publication, and page numbers.

A direct quotation uses the exact words from the source. For a short quote, quotation marks are used to distinguish the original text and the author(s), year and page number are given. Short quotes (1-4 lines) are incorporated directly into the text. DO NOT ITALICIZE OR BOLD OR USE A DIFFERENT FONT FOR QUOTES!

Example
Some critics suggest that the “taxation advantage enjoyed by superannuation funds, relative to private investment in shares, was somewhat neutralised in 1988” (McGrath & Viney 1997, p. 137).

If the quote starts on one page and continues to the next, then it would be cited as:
Some critics suggest that the “taxation advantage enjoyed by superannuation funds, relative to private investment in shares, was somewhat neutralised in 1988” (McGrath & Viney 1997, pp. 137-38).

When making a direct quote longer than 4 lines it is necessary to include the quote as a free-standing block, without quotation marks, single spaced (if the assignment is doubled spaced) and indented two centimetres on the left margin.

Example
In responding to the problem, some critics suggest that bullying itself demonstrates an overall lack of communication skill and a frequent use of discouraging tactics or strategies….Such findings clearly conflict with an educational practice…that emphasises the importance of communication in all areas of daily life, and most significantly, in the university classroom where students are encouraged to contribute to, and learn from, debate and dialogue, while developing respect for diverse opinions. (Smith 1984, p. 66)
Other critics, however, disagree, and propose that bullying may have more to do with underlying social and familial difficulties than is suggested by the communication theories around bullying (Yang 2001, pp. 30-38; García 1991, p. 11).

The use of the 3 ellipsis points (...) indicates that text from the original quote has been omitted. The use of the 4 ellipsis points (....) indicates that the material between the sentences has been omitted.

A PARAPHRASE AND A SUMMARY
These are two more ways of putting somebody else’s ideas, materials, and data, into your own words. Both modes need to acknowledge exactly where the information comes from. You show the author's name and year of publication with the page numbers. You can do this in two ways.

1. In the first example prominence is given to the information by enclosing the source details in the brackets:
   The theory was first propounded in 1971 (Larsen 1971, pp. 17-27).

2. In the second example the source is given prominence as the name of the author is included in the text of the assignment:
   Larsen (1971, pp. 17-27) was the first to propound the theory.

AUTHORS ONE AND MORE
One work by a single author
The theory was first propounded in 1970 (Larsen 1971, pp. 17-27).
OR
   Larsen (1971, pp. 17-27) was the first to propound the theory.

One work with two or three authors
It is futile to maintain that the sexes are interchangeable (Moir & Jessel 1991, p. 18).
OR
   Moir and Jessel (1991, p. 18) claimed that it is futile to maintain that the sexes are interchangeable.

One work with more than three authors
Cite the name of the first author followed by et al. and the year.

Authors with multiple articles or books published in the same year
Distinguish the publications from each other by adding a,b,c etc. after the author's name.
   (Dickinson 1990a) OR (Dickinson 1990b).

Citation of more than one source
Separate the entries by using semi-colons:
   Various authors have looked at the notion of organisational leadership (Ashworth 1985, pp. 65-85; Macleod-Clark 1984, pp.20-24; Wills 1981, pp. 25-27).
Citing a secondary source
When you refer to work of authors who have been cited in the work of another and you have not read the original you should reference the secondary source not the original. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck note that in some societies humans are seen as basically evil (cited in Schein 1997, p. 20).

CHAPTER IN AN EDITED BOOK, AN ARTICLE OR A PAPER
Cite the authors of the article or chapter (not the editor, unless the work is that of the editor) and the year.
(Ross 1999)

ANONYMOUS WORKS
Use *title* in italics and year if there is no author. Do not use Anon or Anonymous in your reference
(Maximum Linux Security 1999)

NEWSPAPERS
Cite as you would a journal article.
(Macklin 2001, p. 18)
If there is no author provide title of newspaper, day month year of publication and page number.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION
This could include letters, interviews, telephone conversations and emails. These communications do not provide data to which others may refer and are therefore not included in the reference list. Follow this example for in text referencing:
Jones (1989, pers.comm., 6 May) believes that...

ELECTRONIC JOURNALS, WEB SITES
Citing electronic journals, web pages or web sites follows the same principles as for books. However Internet documents often do not contain page numbers. In this instance, use the paragraph number, preceded by the paragraph symbol or the abbreviation para. For electronic sources that do not provide page numbers and where neither paragraph nor page numbers are visible, cite the heading and the number of the paragraph following it to direct the reader to the location of the material.

(Myers 2000, para. 5)
(Beutler 2000, Conclusion section, para.1)

If the author's name is unknown, cite the web site URL.
http://www.hoopers.com/financial.plan

To cite a homepage give the address of the site and the year of the last update.
http://www.motherjones.com/(2002)
PREPARING A BIBLIOGRAPHY OR WORKS CITED/REFERENCE LIST
Do not separate titles by category (book, article, etc). Include only those works that you have cited in your essay or assignment. Order all titles alphabetically by author; if there is no author, then the title is treated as the author.

Note that in printed text the second line (if any) of an entry in the list of references is indented to emphasise the alphabetical order of the entry.

**Book**
Author/s Year, *Title*, Edition, Publisher, Place of publication.

**Examples**

**Edited book**
Editor (ed.) Year, *Title*, Edition, Publisher, Place of publication.

**Examples**

**Translated Book**
If you use a 1990 translation of a 1980 work, your reference should show 1990 as the date and the title in English. If, however, you use the 1980 original, your reference should show 1980 as the date and the title should be in the original language as shown below. If you have used both, provide reference details for both books. The translator should come after the title, as follows:

Author Year, *Title* in English, trans. name, Publisher, Place of Publication.

**Examples**
For the translation:

For the original work:
**Book without a Personal Author**
Name of organisation Year, *Title*, Edition, Publisher, Place of publication.

Examples

**Book with no Author or Editor**
If no author or editor is mentioned the entry starts with the title of the book.
Title Year, Publisher, Place of publication.


**Chapter in an Edited Book**
Author(s) of chapter Year, 'Title of Chapter' in Editor (ed.), *Title of Book*, Publisher, Place of publication, page numbers.

Examples

**E-book (Online book)**
Online book databases that display the page numbers reference as you would reference a print publication. If no page numbers are visible reference as follows: Author(s) Year, *Title*, Publisher, date viewed, <URL>.

Examples

**Journal Article**
If the article is retrieved from an online journal database and is also available in print, you can cite your reference as print copy.
Author Year, 'Title of article', *Title of Journal*, volume, issue or part (if applicable), page no.s.
Examples


If your article is from a website and there are no pages given in the citation, cite as follows:

Author Year, 'Title of article', *Journal*, Volume, Issue, Date viewed, <URL>
- Title of the article has single quotations
- The journal name is in italics.
- Date viewed listed after Volume, Issue, is the date you viewed the website and should be Day Month Year, eg. viewed 1 April 2003.
- Type the full URL within angle brackets, eg
  <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue38/guy/>

Example
Smith, Linda S. 2002, 'Is this scholarship?', *The Australian Electronic Journal of Nursing Education*, vol. 8, no. 1, viewed 6 August 2003,
  <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/nhcp/aejne/>

Magazine Article
The major difference between a magazine and a journal publication is that a magazine is usually issued more frequently (i.e., daily, weekly, monthly). The magazine article can be short and written for a broad audience. Magazines are usually distinguished by the date issued rather than a volume and issue number. Cite a magazine article the same as a journal article reference only replace the volume with the issued date.

Author Year, 'Article Title', *Magazine*, Issued date, Pages

Examples

If your magazine article is from a website and there are no pages given in the citation, treat as follows:
Author Year, 'Article title', *Magazine*, Issued date (If applicable), Date viewed, <URL>.

Examples
Hollis, M. 2004, 'Probing the crystal structure of fine art', *Innovation: Built Environment & Manufacturing*, June, viewed 2 July 2004,
Marieke, G., Powell, A. & Day M. 2004, 'Improving the quality of metadata in eprint archives', *Ariadne: the Internet Magazine for Librarians and Information*
**Newspaper Article**
Cite a newspaper article the same as a journal article reference only replace the volume and issue with the issued date.
Reporter Year, 'Article title', *Newspaper (Section)*, Issued date, Pages.
- If the newspaper article is retrieved from an online journal database and is also available in print, cite your reference as print copy.
- Only use Newspaper Section, eg Good Weekend, if the article is from a section of the newspaper with its own independent page numbering.

Example

If the newspaper article is from a website and there are no pages given in the citation, treat as follows:
Reporter Year, 'Article title', *Newspaper*, Issued Date, Date viewed, <URL>.
- Date viewed listed after Pages, is the date you viewed the website and should be Day Month Year, eg. viewed 1 April 2003.
- Type the full URL surrounded by angle brackets.

Example

**Conference Paper**
This reference type is used for citing a paper delivered during a conference. If you want to cite the whole conference proceedings, treat it as an edited book instead.
Author Year, 'Title of conference paper', *Conference Name*, Publisher, Conference Location, Pages.

Examples
Fisse, B. 2000, 'Price exploitation and the new tax scheme', *Competition Law and Regulation*, University of New South Wales Faculty of Law, Sydney Hilton Hotel, pp. 1-17.

**World Wide Web**
Use this reference type for a web site.
Author Year, *Title*, Producer, Date viewed, <URL>.
- Author of the page if it is an article or Author is the person or organisation who owns the website.
• Year is the year the webpage was last updated.
• Producer (if known) is the person or organisation actually responsible for creating the website (leave out if not obvious)
• Date viewed is the date you viewed the website and should be Day Month Year eg viewed 1 April 2004.
• Put angle brackets around the URL, eg <http://www.science.org.au >

Examples

**Motion picture & Audiovisual Material**
This reference type is used for films, videorecordings, CD-ROMs, DVDs, cassettes.
*Title* Year, *Medium*, *Production Company*, *City*  
- Medium must be one of motion picture, videorecording, CD-ROMs, DVDs, cassettes.  
- Production company or the publisher.

Examples
*Annie Hall* 1977, motion picture, United Artists, Santa Monica, Calif.  
*The Edge of the Possible* 1998, videorecording, Film Art Doco Productions, Canberra.  

**Television and Radio Program**
This reference type is used for television programs and radio programs
*Title* Year, *Medium*, *Series Title*, *TV or Radio Station*, *City*, *Broadcast date*.
- Medium must be one of television program, radio broadcast.
- Series title if known.
- Broadcast date (if known) is used for the broadcast day and must be Day Month.

Examples
*Canberra Firestorm* 2003, television program, Catalyst Television Program, ABC TV, Sydney, 3 March.  
*Shock! Horror!* 2004, television program, This is Modern Art 2, ABC TV, Sydney, 19 May.  
*PM* 2004, radio broadcast, ABC Radio 702AM, Sydney, 2 June.
Sample bibliography
Aab, B. 2001a. Good Students Read Subject Outlines, High Distinction Press, Rejkavik.
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Printer, Canberra.
No.105 March 2002), Australian Electoral Commission, viewed 17 March 2004,
Canberra Firestorm 2003, television program, Catalyst Television Program, ABC TV,
Sydney, 3 March.
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Connected World: Risks and Opportunities, McGill Queens University Press,
Montreal, pp. 125-32.
New York.
Dye, C. 1999, Oracle Distributed Systems, O'Reilly, viewed 7 July
Fisse, B. 2000, 'Price exploitation and the new tax scheme', Competition Law and
Regulation, University of New South Wales Faculty of Law, Sydney Hilton Hotel,
pp. 1-17.
Gutner, T. 2004, 'Fashion', Business Week, 3 August, p. 90
Hart, J.D. & Leininger, P.W. 1995, The Oxford Companion to American Literature,
Oxford University Press, viewed 10 October 2005,
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?entry=t123.e0017>
Higgins, C. 2004, 'Moore turns up heat in Cannes', Sydney Morning Herald, 18 May,
Hollis, M. 2004, 'Probing the crystal structure of fine art', Innovation: Built Environment &
Manufacturing, June, viewed 2 July 2004,
Publishers, Dordrecht.
Lutz, T.M. 1986, 'Evaluating periodic, episodic and Poisson models', Geological Society
of America 99th Annual Meeting Abstracts with Program, eds M. Taluv & J.
Carson, Geological Society of America, Bozeman, MT, pp. 677-89.
Marieke, G., Powell, A. & Day M. 2004, 'Improving the quality of metadata in eprint
archives', Ariadne: the Internet Magazine for Librarians and Information
Specialists, January, viewed 1 April 2003,


PM 2004, radio broadcast, ABC Radio 702AM, Sydney, 2 June.


Shock! Horror! 2004, television program, This is Modern Art 2, ABC TV, Sydney, 19 May.


The Edge of the Possible 1998, videorecording, Film Art Doco Productions, Canberra.
