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Seven Steps to Excellent
Essays and Assignments

Mal Leicester & Denise Taylor

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SAGE Publications Ltd
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
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2455 Teller Road
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3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

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Presentation and Academic Conventions



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Introduction

In this chapter we consider the professional presentation of your work. Good presentation and good English contribute to a good grade. We also show you how to use the academic conventions, such as acronyms, quotations, references, etc. You are not born knowing the correct use of these, but correct use gives a good impression, and that good impression may well influence your grade.



You can lose or gain marks for the presentation of your work. You may even lose more marks than the substance of your essay warrants because we are all more influenced by appearance than we tend to realise, including assessors. Do not use complicated folders, ribbons or pictures and illustrations on the front cover. A good initial impression is created with a simple, professional and easy-to-read presentation of your essay. Check if there are department guidelines on the presentation of your work and follow these to the letter. If there are no such guidelines, ask your tutor for advice.

Use Good Principles of Presentation and Style

In the absence of guidelines from your tutor, college or university, apply the following presentation principles:

- **Fonts:** Use a 12 point font for the main body of your text and no less than an 11 point font. Choose a font that is popular such as a plain serif (Times New Roman) or a sans serif (Arial). These are widely accepted fonts, although some universities do have their own very specific preferences. (A tutor may allow a dyslexic student to use his or her preferred font.) Do check this. Differentiate your headings in different sized fonts so that your essay is easy to navigate.
- **Line spacing:** Use at least 1.5 line spacing and ideally double line spacing when presenting your essay. This allows the assessor space to mark your essay.
- **Margins:** If there are no specific guidelines on margins, use a minimum of 2.5 cm all round and a maximum of 3 cm all round. Generally, a wider left-hand margin will allow for any binding.
- **Pagination:** Use page numbers, generally in the bottom right hand corner in the footer. Page numbers need to be clear and easy to follow. For larger bodies of work that have an automatically generated contents page, remember to check that your page numbers correspond before final submission.
- **Content formatting:** Check that all the sections of your content flow correctly and that there are no headings left hanging at the bottom of a page. Move these on to the next page to ensure the flow of text. Section breaks can be easily inserted into your document.
- **Binding:** For shorter essays, neatly staple your document before you hand it in. For longer pieces of work, use binding to present your work professionally. Simple spine binders with plastic or cardboard covers give a document a good finish.
- **Quality of paper:** Although it is not essential to use a higher grade of paper than 80gsm, it will give your document a more professional feel if you use a slightly thicker grade (90 or 100gsm). Also, print on white paper. Don't use coloured paper unless this is specific to your work. The aim is to appear highly professional, not attention-seeking.

Presenting your work professionally demonstrates that you have paid attention to the details and that you have taken pride in what you have produced, which will make a difference to your grade as presentation often forms a percentage of the marks given.

Use Correct English

A good piece of work is marred by language errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. An otherwise good piece of work will lose marks for this, and a poor piece may well slip down into a fail grade. If you need help with your written English, the university may provide classes.

Always proofread your completed essay for grammatical and typographical errors. And, of course, you should make use of the spellcheck facility on your computer. In particular, check that you have written in complete sentences, each with a subject and a verb and an object and a full stop.

An essay is a formal piece of work. Do not use slang or contractions such as ‘don’t’ and do not overuse bullet points which are not a substitute for formal discussion. Do not try to sound intellectual and ‘academic’. You will merely sound pompous. Try to write the claims of your essay and each sentence of it as clearly and unambiguously as possible.

A common error is the misused apostrophe. If you are not sure about using apostrophes correctly, master it once and for all in Appendix 2. Correct use of the apostrophe gives a good impression of someone in control of their work. Appendix 2 also gives brief advice about the use of the colon and semicolon. If you are unsure of other aspects of punctuation, or if you are unsure about good grammar, there are books which will teach you. For example you could consult *Academic Writing and Grammar for Students* (Osmond, 2015). (A brief review of this is given in Chapter 8.) Also useful, and written with humour, is Lynn Truss’ *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* (2003).

For good communication with your reader, on the whole you should not use overlong sentences or very long paragraphs. A paragraph contains the development of one particular thought. A long paragraph may well have developed two ideas and a very short paragraph may well have failed to fully develop any point at all.

If you have exceeded the word length required for your essay, check it for any repetition you may have unwittingly included. In addition, do a pruning job. Most work is actually improved when we cut out unnecessary words; ‘unnecessary words’ do not add anything to the meaning of the sentence. You may be surprised to find how many words you save by cutting out such ‘wasted’ words.

For example:

A good essay will not contain far too many language mistakes and errors which will give a bad impression to the tutor who is marking it. (26 words)

A good essay will not contain so many language errors that it gives a poor impression to the assessor. (19 words and a better sentence)

If you have not produced sufficient words, do not try to pad out your essay with irrelevant material or ‘wasted’ words. Instead, think hard about each part of your answer. What aspects would benefit from further work? What ideas would benefit from clarification? What other thinkers have had different or additional points to make?

Make sure that you have included the essay title at the top of your essay. Do not change this in any way. For example, do not shorten it, or put it in your own words. Having the accurate title there will help to keep you focused on it, and if your group has had several choices of essay question it may also be helpful to the assessor.

Finally, if your department requires a submission sheet with your essay, make sure that you have included it and that you have entered all the details required.

Use Academic Conventions Correctly

It is important to use the correct academic conventions. Do so from the start and they will soon become second nature and help your work to give a good impression to the academic reader. And it is not only about a good impression. If you are found to have plagiarised, for example, your essay may well be disqualified. If you reference incorrectly, you may well lose considerable marks. In what follows we will cover: plagiarism, acronyms, the use of tables and diagrams, the use of quotations and quotation marks and, last but by no means least, correct referencing.

Avoid Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using someone else’s work without acknowledging this. You are passing off another’s work as your own (Neville, 2010). This may be done deliberately, as with copying some text without reference, or even by buying a ready-made essay. However, it can also occur unwittingly. After you have read something, perhaps several times, and assimilated this so that it becomes part of your own thinking, you may reproduce it, unthinkingly, as part of the flow of your own ideas.

Plagiarism is often noticed by the assessor. The plagiarised section may be markedly different in style from the student’s or the assessor may simply

recognise this particular piece. Some universities use software to detect plagiarism. Minor plagiarism may result in your having to resubmit your essay with a cap on the mark awarded. Serious plagiarism may even lead to a student having to leave their course.

You are reading this book because you want to produce a good essay and you are not likely to plagiarise on purpose. We will focus, therefore, on how to avoid accidental plagiarism.

- a. When you want to use the work of another be sure to reference this correctly. If you want to make use of lengthy material, do not quote long sections, but do not copy it all down unacknowledged. Simply explain in your own words what the writer has said, perhaps with a significant short quotation from their work, and acknowledging the source of the material/ideas.
- b. In Chapter 1, you were advised to make notes of your reading in preparation for your essay. This should enable you to know who has said what and enable you to reference accurately.
- c. If you have written something in your essay which you feel you have read, but which you cannot place you can say..... *Some writers have argued that.....* and then rewrite the section without looking at it so that the actual expression of the ideas is your own.
- d. If you are still unsure that you have not avoided plagiarism, you could use a software package on your own work.

Use Acronyms Correctly

An acronym is a group of capital letters which are accepted as standing for a group of words.

For example, BBC is an accepted abbreviation (acronym) for the British Broadcasting Corporation. HE is recognised as an acronym for Higher Education.

The rule for using acronyms in an academic piece of work, such as an essay, is as follows:

The first time you use the group of words for which there is a recognised acronym, place the acronym in brackets immediately after the words. Subsequently, use the acronym without the words. The reader now knows what the acronym stands for.

For example:

- Students in higher education [HE] will be expected to write essays. They may be given three or four essays each year. They will be expected to write these to a standard required in HE.
- The Workers' Educational Association [WEA] offers short courses to working and retired adults. These students gain social as well as educational benefits from attending WEA courses.

Use Tables and Charts Correctly

The rules for the use of tables and charts and other diagrams are also quite simple. Only use a visual representation if the information it provides will aid understanding, or if it can provide the information more concisely than can prose. Introduce the table and give it a number and name.

The following Table 7.1: *Census of the number of hunters in Europe* conveys in just one page, a huge amount of information.

TABLE 7.1 Census of the number of hunters in Europe

	Countries	Km² × 10³	Hunter Numbers	Population × 10⁶	% of Hunters	Pop / km²	Ratio To Pop
	France	643	1,313,000	63.7	2.1	99	1:47
	Germany	357	340,000	82.4	0.4	230	1:241
	Italy	301	750,000	58.1	1.2	193	1:77
	Spain	505	980,000	40.4	2.3	80	1:44
	United Kingdom	245	800,000	60.8	1.3	248	1:74
Nordic Region	Denmark	43	165,000	5.5	3.1	128	1:327
	Finland	338	290,000	5.2	5.8	15	1:17
	Norway	324	190,000	4.6	4.75	14	1:21
	Sweden	450	290,000	9	3.22	20	1:31
Baltic Region	Estonia	45	15,000	1.3	0.1	29	1:100
	Latvia	65	25,000	2.3	1.2	35	1:80
	Lithuania	65	32,000	3.6	0.9	55	1:113
	Poland	313	106,000	38.5	0.3	123	1:363
Atlantic Region	Belgium	31	20,000	10	0.2	323	1:500
	Ireland	70	350,000	4.1	8.9	59	1:12
	Luxembourg	3	2,000	0.4	0.5	133	1:200
	Netherlands	42	26,500	16.6	0.1	395	1:626
Central European Region	Austria	84	115,000	8.2	1.4	98	1:70
	Czech Republic	79	110,000	10.2	1.1	129	1:91
	Hungary	93	54,500	10	0.5	108	1:183
	Slovakia	49	55,000	5.4	1.1	110	1:100
	Slovenia	20	22,000	2	1	100	1:91
	Switzerland	41	30,000	7.6	0.43	185	1:233

	Countries	Km² × 10³	Hunter Numbers	Population × 10⁶	% of Hunters	Pop / km²	Ratio To Pop
Mediterranean Region	Cyprus	9	45,000	0.8	6.4	89	1:15
	Greece	132	270,000	10.7	2.7	81	1:37
	Malta	0.3	15,000	0.4	3.7	1333	1:27
	Portugal	92	230,000	10.6	2.3	115	1:43
South East Region	Albania	29	17,000	3.6	0.6	124	1:176
	Bosnia Herzegovina	51	50,000	4.6	1.2	90	1:80
	Bulgaria	111	110,000	7.3	1.4	66	1:66
	Croatia	57	55,000	4.5	1.37	79	1:73
	Moldova	34	–	4.3	–	126	–
	Montenegro	14	–	0.7	–	50	–
	Romania	238	60,000	22.3	0.27	94	1:372
	Serbia	88	80,000	10.1	0.7	115	1:137
	Turkey	781	300,000	71.2	0.42	91	1:237

(Source: FACE/CIA World Factbook, <http://www.face.eu/about-us/members/across-europe/census-of-the-number-of-hunters-in-europe-september-2010>.)

Ensure that you provide useful, relevant explanation and discussion of any visual representations which you include. If you have taken these representations from elsewhere, be careful to give the source.

Use Quotations and Quotation Marks Correctly

Quotations

Do not use too many quotations. This gives the impression that you lack confidence in your own ideas. Do not use very long quotations. Where you want to use the work of another, you should explain what they have said in your own words. Reserve quotations for words that are so well expressed, or so memorable or so well known and much quoted that they are worthy of repetition. Where you use your own words, you must still give the reference, which shows that you are using the literature and protects you from the charge of plagiarism. When you do use a quotation, this should be discussed, or at least commented upon, to show that you understand it. When you give the reference for a quotation, you should also give the page number.

For short quotations, enclose the author's words in quotation marks. For longer quotations (three lines or more), introduce it with a colon and set it off

in a block quote (indented on both sides). In his useful book about academic writing and grammar, Osmond makes the following point:

Usually, it is better to paraphrase than quote directly, because it proves to the reader that you have understood an idea so well that you can express it in your own words. Sometimes, however, a well-chosen quote can illustrate your skill in knowing when someone else has written it best. It is better to have more indirect citation than direct. I tend to recommend that about two thirds of your citations are indirect, and one third direct. (Osmond, 2015: 119)

Use of Quotation Marks

You may want to quote a brief phrase and you can do this simply within your own text provided that you use quotation marks and give the reference. For example:

Since the work of R.S. Peters we have surely accepted that education is a 'normative' concept, because 'worthwhile' learning is involved (Peters, 1966).

We saw in Chapter 5 that you should indicate with quotation marks when a word refers to a concept and this has not been indicated in the text:

Education is a normative concept.
Peters' understanding of 'education' has been influential.

Use Citations and References Correctly

Where your essay or assignment requires you to refer to the work of others, you will need to use citations and references. A citation is where you refer to someone else's work in the body of your text.

For example:

It is estimated that wolves first came into contact with humans some 10,000 years ago. We cannot be certain about this, but one of the oldest archaeological sites that contains both human and wolf remains is the Sandia Cave in Las Huertas Canyon, New Mexico (Busch, 1995).

Midgeley (2003) argues that in order to justify our destructive behaviour towards animals we construct narratives that see them as 'other', as different from ourselves, and often as something that is of lesser value or worth.

In a citation, you will use the name of the author(s) followed by the year of publication, and in some citation styles, the page number where the information you have sourced can be found. The citation is then followed by the bibliographical reference which is usually at the end of the article or book.

There are many different styles for referencing the work of others. Before you choose a style that you prefer, make sure you check the style guide or recommendations from your college or university. Some institutions are quite strict on referencing styles.

However, if there is no specific requirement from your college or university, then you can choose to use one of the more popular styles for citations and referencing. Some of these styles are adopted for specific areas of study. For example, Harvard is often used in humanities subjects, the Vancouver system is used in medical and scientific papers and APA (the American Psychological Association style) is mainly used in the social sciences. Each referencing style will give you examples of how to produce your citations and bibliography references for the different sources of work including books, academic journals, digital sources, reports, articles in edited collections and websites. They will also give guidance on secondary referencing where you may be referring to a source within a source.

Software Tools for Managing Citations and References

It can be a chore trying to keep track of your citations and references. You can, of course, use a manual system such as an index card referencing system. However, technology now provides us with a wide range of free or cost-effective software tools that make the job easier and potentially more accurate too. Most of these also integrate with browsers (e.g. Google Chrome) and word processing software such as Microsoft Word and automatically update your citations and references as you produce your essays and assignments. These are useful tools for longer assignments, but if you adopt them early in your academic studies, you will become familiar with these tools, which will make life easier when you do move on to larger academic projects such as dissertations and theses.

Your university or college library will have information on citation management tools, and an Internet search will also provide you with lists of some of the best programmes and apps that can either be loaded onto your computer or mobile device or accessed via the web. Many of the programs are free for a certain level of use or on a trial basis. Some will require a pro account if you want to use them more extensively.

A few of the more popular tools and programs can be found in the list below, but do your homework and evaluate them to see which ones will suit your needs:

- BibMe – www.bibme.org
- RefDot – this is a Google Chrome extension – simply search RefDot
- Zotero – www.zotero.org
- Mendeley – www.mendeley.com

Be Conscientious About Proofreading

Proofreading your work is very important. It is, however, more difficult to do effectively than you may imagine. It is easy to get sucked into the meaning of the piece and miss typographical and other small errors. Alternatively, one can be so focused on these, that a contradiction or a repetition could be overlooked. You need to macro read for the meaning/content and read again, a micro read, for the typographical errors, grammar and punctuation. Moreover, you may be so familiar with your own thinking for the essay that you read what you think is there rather than what is actually on the page. You have become too close to the material.

Here are some tips for effective proofreading:

- Work through the checklists at Appendix 1.
- This will include:
 - Asking a critical friend (see page 63) or, simply, a literate friend to proofread your essay.
 - Doing a macro read.
 - Doing a micro read.
- Finally, submit your essay on time! This might require you to print your essay and hand it in with a submission sheet, or you may need to submit it online using eSubmissions. (Check with your tutor or university the correct submission format.)

The following short piece, about epistemology and your essay, demonstrates well-presented work, using the academic conventions correctly.

Sample Essay: *Epistemology and your essay*

Epistemology

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with the nature of knowledge. Some understanding of the nature of knowledge is relevant to the academic essay writer because of the assumption that an essay in Higher Education (HE) is seeking to convey (and demonstrate) knowledge about, and understanding of, the subject under discussion.

What, then, is meant by 'knowledge'?

Knowledge

Knowledge is more than mere belief. We may hold a false belief, but, if we claim that we know something then we are claiming that it is true. Even truth is insufficient for knowledge. We might arrive at a true belief by pure guesswork. However, to have knowledge means that we hold a justified true belief.

At HE level it is expected that the claims made by the essay writer will be justified in the essay. In this way the essay is seen to be seeking knowledge and will be assessed as appropriately rational. Indeed, to be rational, the strength of the claims made must fit the strength of the justificatory evidence. For example:

There is little evidence, but it is at least plausible that...

On balance, from the evidence currently available, it seems unlikely that...

The evidence is now substantial. It is no longer irrational to accept this alternative view.

The question that arises, however, is what counts as good evidence. What are the accredited sources of knowledge from which we can derive justified true belief?

The Sources of Knowledge

Primary Sources of Knowledge

Sense Experience

It is through our senses that we learn about the physical world. This is the only avenue by which information about the external world can reach us. We have direct privileged access to our own inner world of sensations such as pain. The more shared and shareable that sense experience is, the more this agreement in experience confers reliability upon it. (An hallucination, for example, is not readily shared and shareable.) This is called empirical evidence; the scientific method of observation and experiment based on sensory experience.

Reason (Logic and Evidence)

Logically true statements provide knowledge. Tautologies and valid deductive arguments based on true premises produce logically true statements.

Secondary Sources of Knowledge

Secondary sources of knowledge are useful and can be drawn upon in an essay. However, this must be done with an awareness that they are secondary sources, which means that they have relied on primary sources. They should be used with caution and lead to qualified, rather than absolute, claims to knowledge.

Authority

We often accept something is true because an authority tells us so. The reliable authority uses primary sources of knowledge. An authority is a useful source for the essay writer,

(Continued)

(Continued)

because an easy writer is unable to check everything for themselves. However, the writer should notice the background of the authority and assess the evidence they cite and the arguments they deploy. How credible is this person and are there opposing points of view to consider?

Intuition

Sometimes we have unconsciously noticed things. Or we may have read something in more than one reliable context but do not remember this consciously. Thus, we may have correct intuitions. But we may also have false ones. An intuition must be justified by a primary source of knowledge to count as knowledge.

Forms of Knowledge

Hirst introduced the idea of different forms of knowledge (2010). He introduced seven such forms: 'mathematics, physical sciences, human sciences, history, religion, literature and the fine arts, philosophy' (2010: 35). Hirst argued that each of these distinct forms has four distinguishing features: its own key concepts, for example number and matrix in mathematics and good and ought in morality; its own logical structure, or, in other words, the conceptual structure through which its own aspects of experience are made meaningful to us; distinctive truth criteria through which its claims can be tested against experience, and, finally, its own methods for exploring a particular area of human experience. (2010: 33–34)

Hirst's influential ideas have been critiqued both positively and negatively. For the essay writer, the important point to assimilate is that justified claims do not only rely on sense experience/observation and experiment but also on a variety of forms of valid reasoning and reflection. Mathematics has its own laws. The social sciences are less hard-edged than the physical sciences since, for example, they must recognise that individuals have privileged access to their own inner experiences. History relies on the interpretation of documentary evidence. Religion acknowledges religious experience, revelation and the interpretation of the scriptures. Literature encourages aesthetic appreciation of literary forms and techniques of literary criticism. In other words, there are a variety of VALID ways in which we make sense of our shared experience of our shared physical, social and interpersonal worlds.

What, then, are the implications of these epistemological considerations for the production of good HE level essays? Since such work seeks for knowledge and understanding relevant to the essay question, a concern for rational justification is required. The forms of rational justification will be appropriate to the forms of knowledge implicit in the question. The strength of the claims made should be proportionate to the level of justification offered.

Finally, a good essay usually draws on the appropriate literature. However, students should not accept this literature uncritically. Authority is only a secondary source of knowledge. Writers drawn upon from the literature, to use in an essay, must be thought about critically and used with a rational evaluation.

Negative and Positive Approaches

In this chapter we have shown you how to present your work, emphasised the importance of good English and demonstrated the correct use of acronyms, tables and charts, quotations and quotation marks. We have also given you skills to avoid plagiarism and to be an effective proofreader.

If you do not follow this advice you will receive negative comments on your essays and assignments, such as:

Sample Negative Comments

- I could not read your handwriting. Please type and resubmit.
- The fancy font you use adds nothing and it is difficult to read. Use Times New Roman or Arial next time.
- Your work is marred by many small errors (spelling mistakes, poor grammar, punctuation errors and typos). This is careless and has cost you marks.
- Learn to reference properly. Your work is let down by omitted citations, inaccurate dates and titles of the books you have cited and inconsistent punctuation of the references.

If you follow the advice in this chapter on presenting your work, your use of English, use of the academic conventions and competent proofreading, you will have the basic requirements for good work. The feedback from your tutor may include positive feedback such as the following:

Sample Positive Comments

- Your work is well presented and well written which adds to the all-round competence of your essay.
- A professional piece of work. Well done.
- Your work has attained a high academic level. As well as presenting a well-organised and well-supported, original point of view, you write well, with full attention to all the academic conventions and with appropriate and well-placed references.
- You provide an excellent reference list. This comes out of the wide and relevant reading which you have clearly demonstrated in this essay.

Brief Exercise: Practise Cutting Wasted Words



Here is an example of a piece reduced from 75 to 50 words.

(a) Social workers work with individuals who are vulnerable and families who are vulnerable to help to improve outcomes in their lives. Social workers often work in teams from several health areas with other health and educational professionals and social workers have a range of tasks such as: protecting people from harm and abuse, supporting people to live independently, being an advocate for people, and giving them information about services they may require and find helpful.

(b) Social workers work with vulnerable individuals and families to help improve outcomes in their lives. They often work in multidisciplinary teams with other health and educational professionals. Their range of tasks include: supporting independent living, being an advocate, protecting people from harm and giving information about services they may require.

Now practise cutting wasted words out of the following short piece. You should manage to reduce this by at least 20 words:

Social workers go into social work because they really want to make a difference to people's lives. They have a desire to work with people and to help them to make their lives better. To be a social worker a person needs an undergraduate degree in social work or a Master's degree in social work and obviously they must also be properly registered with one of the four recognised UK regulators. They need a wide and extensive range of skills and abilities.

An example of this paragraph, reduced by 36 words, is given in Appendix 4.

Conclusion

The contents of this chapter include advice on the presentation of your essay, your standard of written English and your use of the academic conventions. These three elements of your essay are separable from the essay content and apply to every essay you write. They can make a significant difference to the grade your essay achieves. Getting these three aspects right may lift your mark into the next grade; conversely, poor presentation, poor English or incorrect use of academic conventions may result in your essay losing marks and consequently it may drop down a grade. To achieve a high grade in HE, an essay will usually be well presented, well written and with correct use of acronyms, quotations, tables and charts, and referencing.

Summary of Key Points

Good presentation, good English and correct use of the academic conventions contribute to a your essay receiving a good grade.

1. Good presentation

- Present your work in a professional way – you don't need to use fancy folders. Follow departmental guidelines on your presentation, to the letter, if they exist. If not, use a 12 point and plain serif font such as Times New Roman or a sans serif font such as Arial.
- Differentiate headings in different sized fonts to show the structure of your essay and to allow for easier navigation.
- Use at least 1.5 line spacing or ideally double line spacing.
- Use a margin of a minimum of 2.5 cm/maximum 3 cm all round.
- Use page numbers.

2. Good English

- A good piece of work is marred by language errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Take advantage of university classes in written English if you need help and if these are offered.
- Do not use slang or contractions such as 'don't'.
- Do not overuse bullet points.
- Do not try to sound academic. You will merely sound pompous.
- Write as clearly and unambiguously as possible.
- The correct use of the apostrophe, which is often used wrongly, and the colon and semicolon are described in Appendix 2.
- Do not use overlong sentences or very long paragraphs.
- If your essay is too long cut any repetitions and any unnecessary words.
- If your essay is too short consider which parts would gain by added discussion or added material.

3. Write to the exact title.

4. Complete the submission sheet if this is required.

5. Plagiarism

- Do not copy another writer. Explain what they have said in your own words and remember to cite the original.
- If you cannot remember who wrote something, say 'some writers have argued that...' and use your own words to reproduce this.

(Continued)

(Continued)

6. Acronyms

- The first time you use a group of words for which there is a recognised acronym, place the acronym in brackets immediately after the words e.g. Workers' Education Association (WEA). **Subsequently use the acronym alone.**

7. Tables and charts

- Only use a visual representation if the information it provides will aid understanding, or if it can provide the information more concisely than prose could.
- Introduce the table and give it a number and a name e.g. Table 7.1: *Census of the number of hunters in Europe.*
- Place table captions above the table, figure captions below the figure. Do not forget to provide a source for your images or data.

8. Quotations

- Do not use too many quotations. This gives the impression that you lack confidence in your own ideas.
- Do not use very long quotations. Where you want to use the work of another, you should explain what they have said in your own words. Reserve quotations for words that are so well expressed, or so memorable or so well known and much quoted that they are worthy of repetition.
- When you do use a quotation, this should be discussed, or at least commented upon, to show that you understand it.
- Place short quotations in quotation marks within the text. Introduce longer quotations with a colon, and place, indented, on the next line.

9. Citations and references

- A citation is where you refer to someone else's work in the body of your text, e.g.: Midgeley (2003) argues that in order to justify our destructive behaviour towards animals we construct narratives that see them as 'other', as different from ourselves, and often as something that is of lesser value or worth.
- If your department has guidelines about the reference style follow these.
- If your department does not have a recommended style then use a popular one (e.g. Harvard).
- Each reference style will give you examples of how to reference books, academic journals, digital sources, reports, articles in edited collections, websites and on referencing a source within a source.
- If you wish to use these, there are software tools to help keep track of your citations and references (see page 111.)

10. Proofreading

- Proofreading is important and surprisingly difficult.
- First, macro proofread your essay for clarity of meaning, repetition and structure.
- Second, micro proofread for typographical errors, grammar and punctuation.
- Do a spell check.
- You could ask a critical friend to read through your essay, before submitting it, with any required submission sheet, on time.
- Finally, to cover all these checks, you could use the checklists at Appendix 1.

For chapter exercise feedback, further reading ideas and more tips on polishing your assignment, check out the appendices at the back of the book.

References

- Busch, R.H. (1995) *The Wolf Almanac: A Celebration of Wolves and Their World*. New York: The Lyons Press.
- Hirst, P. (2010) *Knowledge and the Curriculum*. London: Routledge.
- Midgely, M. (1984) *Animals and Why They Matter*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
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- Osmond, A. (2015) *Academic Writing and Grammar for Students*. London: Sage.
- Peter, R.S. (1966) *Ethics and Education*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Truss, L. (2003) *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*. London: Fourth Estate.