

## Quick guide to Writing The Main Body of Your Essay

The main body is the central part of your essay where you will develop your argument. The main body is broken down into paragraphs and each paragraph will develop this argument.

### Structuring your essay

In many ways, writing is like taking the reader on a road trip where you are the navigator. Much as signs help us to find our way, you need to use techniques in the main body to guide the reader through your essay so that they do not get lost and lose interest. So, with this in mind, consider the following questions when writing:

- Does your argument unfold logically throughout your work?
- Is there a clear link between your paragraphs that the reader can follow? Do you make effective transitions between them?
- Do your sentences follow on from one another (i.e. are you making effective use of connective phrases to link them)?

### The first paragraph

The first paragraph after your introduction provides a good opportunity to define key terms you are using. It is important to define terms that are unique to your discipline and to provide the reader with a sense of how you will be using these in your essay. It might also be useful to define and explain how you will be using key theories and concepts that feature in your essay.

### Subsequent paragraphs

Each additional paragraph must follow a clear structure to ensure that your argument unfolds in a logical, coherent and effective way. The precise structure you follow will depend on what you are hoping to achieve in your essay but **PEEL** can provide a useful model to follow:



## Point Evidence Explain Link

Rather than thinking of media audiences as passive recipients of media content, it could be argued that they are active in their consumption of texts. **Stuart Halls' (1980) encoding/decoding model, for instance, states that audiences 'decode' media content in relation to their own identities, values and belief systems. In applying Hall's theory to audiences of Hollyoaks, it could be suggested that young audiences might forge particular connections with the show due to the pervasiveness of themes around bullying, schools cliques and sexual exploration that resonates with youthful audiences (Smith, 2016). Although Hall's theory shows that media audiences can be active, it could also be claimed that some audiences are more active than others according to a range of social and cultural factors (Young, 2015).**

**Please note:** the above is a shortened paragraph to provide an example and you will be expected to include more detail than this.

## Developing an argument

An academic argument consists of claims you make with reasons provided to support them. Ultimately, an argument is developed with an intent to persuade your reader of a certain point of view. When developing your argument, some tips to consider are:

- Ensure that your argument is clear and focused
- Use each paragraph to progress your argument further (i.e. use the PEEL approach to further your main argument)
- When putting ideas forward, link them to your main argument – for example, 'this supports the argument that ...'; 'this furthers the claim that ...'
- Use evidence to support your argument (such as research studies or examples) and make it clear to the reader how the evidence relates to your argument
- Refute counter-arguments if relevant: considering counter arguments can be useful and you can also use them to develop your own argument – i.e. 'although it could be argued that [...] the argument withstands that [...]

**Also consider the following tips:**

- Remember to plan your essay: consider how you will arrange your ideas and what evidence you will use for support
- When planning, consider using subheadings to show how you might to break up your content. You can always remove the subheadings before submitting your assignment (check your assignment guidelines to see if subheadings are required)
- Repeat key terms and phrases to show the reader that you are returning to your key ideas
- The ideas in your essay need to be joined up. For instance, you could use phrases such as: 'as discussed above'; 'as will be explored'; 'to develop this further'; 'this links to the idea'



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