Tonight’s Collaborate Session will begin at 7pm AEST.

While you’re waiting please make sure your audio is working... run the ‘audio setup wizard’ located under the tools setting.
Your assessments in Blackboard
Assessment details and submission

Assessment outline, details and criteria

Click here to submit your assignment in Turnitin
Academic Writing Process

1. Analyse Question
2. Criteria & Rubric
3. Research
4. Brainstorm Key Ideas
5. Structure & Outline
6. Draft
7. Proofread, review criteria, final draft
8. Submit
9. Originality Report
Academic writing skills

- You will have different types of assessment tasks but they all use academic writing skills.
- If you know how to write a good academic essay, this will help you with other types of assessments such as reports, blogs, wikis, reflective essays, lesson plans, presentations, etc.
- Academic writing requires wide and critical reading and the development of a reasoned and coherent argument based on your analysis of different theories, research and evidence.
Common Problems

- Too much description, not enough analysis
- Poor structure
- Insufficient or inadequate sources
- Language too informal
- Too many quotes, poor paraphrasing
- Incorrect referencing
- Plagiarism
Critical analysis: evaluate and compare ideas

Brainstorm and plan your essay structure. Link ideas and sentences

Read widely and critically. Go beyond learning materials, do your own research

Reference as you go. Acknowledge all your sources.

Use academic language: critical, formal, objective

Put things in your own words, use few direct quotes

Check your referencing style using the referencing tool.
Getting Started
Step 1: Analyse the question

- Spend a lot of quality time with the question.
- What exactly is it asking you to do?
- What are the key words / concepts / theories?
- Your report or essay may be well-researched, beautifully written, elegantly structured and perfectly referenced, but if it doesn’t answer the question your marks will suffer.
Analyse the question, define key words:

Assignment questions generally consists of three elements:

- the **subject**: indicates the general area
- the **focus words**: indicate the part of the subject you must focus on, and limit yourself to
- the **task words**: tell you what you must do with the information.

Are there any key terms or concepts you need to define?
Step 2: Check the assessment criteria

• Always read the assessment criteria carefully before you begin your assignment.

• You are told where the marks are, your grade should not come as a shock!

• Before submitting your assignment assess your drafts against the criteria and marking rubric. Have you:
  – Answered all parts of the question?
  – Included the most important information and excluded irrelevant information?
  – Referenced correctly, checked grammar and spelling?
### Swinburne Online

#### Marking Guide / Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>No pass</th>
<th>Pass 50-59%</th>
<th>Credit 60-69%</th>
<th>Distinction 70-79%</th>
<th>High distinction 80-100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary of the scope and purpose of educating for a sustainable future</strong> (30%)</td>
<td>Did not meet criteria.</td>
<td>Demonstrates developing skills and ability to summarise. Has identified some elements of the scope and purpose but could be more succinct and/or use more clarity in discussion.</td>
<td>Demonstrates effective skills and ability to summarise information from the literature.</td>
<td>Demonstrates very good skills and the ability to summarise information from literature. Describes values of education for sustainability.</td>
<td>Demonstrates exemplary skills and the ability to summarise. Has clearly and succinctly described education for sustainability and discussed a broad range of relevant values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis of the ecological approach</strong> (40%)</td>
<td>Did not meet criteria.</td>
<td>Demonstrates an adequate level of analysis and understanding of an ecological approach and the concept of ecological literacy. Identifies some features of an ecological approach.</td>
<td>As per Pass and: Identifies features of an ecological approach and describes the benefits and limitations of being ecoliterate.</td>
<td>As per Credit and: Offers a detailed synthesis, interpretation and analysis of the research.</td>
<td>As per Distinction and: Offers a systematic synthesis, interpretation and analysis of research with additional research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format and structure</strong> (15%)</td>
<td>Did not meet criteria.</td>
<td>Adequate attention to detail and spelling; grammar and expression is of a satisfactory level. Essay includes an introduction, clear paragraphs and conclusion. Some errors throughout.</td>
<td>Adequate attention to detail and spelling; grammar and expression is of a good standard. Essay includes a clear introduction, sequenced paragraphs and a conclusion. Minimal errors throughout.</td>
<td>Essay is of a professional standard. Attention to detail, spelling, grammar and expression are of a high level. Essay includes a clear introduction, logical and flowing paragraphs and an effective conclusion.</td>
<td>Essay is a professional standard. The introduction is inviting, paragraphs are well written, flowing seamlessly and conclusion is succinct and effective. Attention to detail, spelling, grammar and expression is exemplary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reference to relevant readings and resources</strong> (15%)</td>
<td>Did not meet criteria.</td>
<td>Basic reference to relevant readings and resources.</td>
<td>Significant reference to relevant readings and resources with substantial reference to the key ideas.</td>
<td>Significant reference to relevant readings and resources with in-depth discussion of the ideas beyond the prescribed texts.</td>
<td>Outstanding reference to relevant readings and resources and in-depth discussion of the ideas beyond the prescribed texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 3: Research

• Research is an essential part of academic writing.
• Your assignments need to be supported by research of reputable sources such as journal articles, industry reports, books, etc.
• There will be a range of different views and positions on every topic that support or contradict each other and use different evidence or examples.
• Reading widely will expose you to a range of views on a topic that test your ideas and assumptions and allow you to develop a coherent, well-supported argument.
Where to start researching

• Check your weekly readings and learning materials for relevant information and research ideas on your topic – key concepts, theorists, themes, issues.
• Do further research via the Swinburne Library website http://www.swinburne.edu.au/lib/ or Google Scholar http://scholar.google.com/
• Remember to keep a record of your references as you go

Join our Research and Referencing Collaborate Session at 7pm on Tuesday 14 November for more information
Reading

• Learning to read critically is a very important skill for academic writing and research.
• The more you read, the more your writing will improve.
• Be strategic:
  • What are the key issues/debates on the topic?
  • Who are the key theorists?
  • What is the writer’s argument?
  • How is this similar/different from other views?
  • What evidence has been used to support each position?
  • How relevant is this to my assignment question? Why is it important? Does it develop my argument / hypothesis?
Planning
Step 4: Brainstorming

- Based on your reading, jot down key ideas / concepts / theories to include in your essay
- Do a mind map to help you group your ideas together and identify any connections, similarities or differences between them.
- Use your mind map to help you plan your essay and work out what to cover in each section of your assignment?
- Be selective – make sure you only include important and relevant information
Mind map
Step 5: Structure / Outline

- Use your brainstorming notes or mind map to start planning your essay structure / outline
- Based on your word count, how many words will be in each section?
- What key topics will you include in the body of your essay? What are the key sections of your essay?
- Once you have written the topic headings for each section, make a dot point list of what you will include in each section.
- What will you include in your introduction and conclusion?
- Identify gaps in your knowledge where you need to do further research
- Check your essay outline against the assessment criteria, have you covered everything you need to?
Essay structure

**Introduction**
- Background
- Thesis statement

**Body**

**A:**
- Topic sentence
- 1. Support
- 2. Support
- 3. Support
- Concluding sentence

**B:**
- Topic sentence
- 1. Support
- 2. Support
- 3. Support
- Concluding sentence

**C:**
- Topic sentence
- 1. Support
- 2. Support
- 3. Support
- Concluding sentence

**Conclusion**
- Restatement or summary of main points
- Final comment

**Note:**
The body is the longest part of your essay. It can have as many paragraphs as necessary to support your answer (within the word limit).

Approx. 10%

Approx. 80%

Approx. 10%
Step 6: Writing your first draft

- Start writing
- Use your essay outline and brainstorming notes as your guide
- Select from your readings evidence and ideas that support and develop your argument.
- Develop your argument throughout your essay. Your introduction sets the scene and outlines your argument, the body of the essay develops your argument and provides evidence/research to support it, your conclusion summarises the key points of your argument and any conclusions reached.
- Each paragraph in the body of your essay should include a main point, explanation, examples and supporting research/evidence.
- Reference as you go
- Give yourself enough time to write and edit more than one draft
Developing your argument

• Your argument is your position or your academic point of view on the topic, it’s a combination of reason, analysis and evidence.

• Your argument should:
  – **Be coherent**: have a logical structure where your argument develops throughout your essay to reach a logical conclusion
  – **Explain** your reasoning: background to topic, key concepts/theories, analysis of evidence and conclusions reached
  – **Use evidence/research** to explain, support and develop your point of view or refute the point of view of others: include examples, research results, arguments from academic literature and key theorists.
  – **Use reason**: make logical connections and explain your analysis or reasoning so that your argument is easily understood
Introduction

• Sets the scene: gives brief, relevant background information about the topic
• Overview: A brief outline of the main points of the essay, in the order they will appear in the essay
• For argumentative essays, includes your contention (argument or point of view)
• Rewrite your introduction once you’ve finished your first draft
Body

• Each section/paragraph discusses ONE idea in detail
• Each paragraph is like a mini essay:
  – Topic sentence (intro – 10%)
  – Evidence, explanation & examples (body – 80%)
  – Concluding sentence (conclusion – 10%)
• Each section should build on and develop your argument
• Logical progression of ideas
• Critical analysis of supporting research / evidence
Conclusion

• Final paragraph reiterates the key points of your argument and conclusions drawn
• Reminds the reader of the most important ideas discussed
• Must not contain any new information (although if relevant you may want to include a note on implications for future research, i.e. gaps in research, future directions)
Referencing

• You must reference ANY words/ideas/images from ANYWHERE other than your own head

• You must include:
  – In-text citations in the body of your essay
  – Reference list at the end of your document which only contains sources you included in-text citations for

• References must follow the correct referencing style for your unit (see ‘About this Unit’ in Blackboard for details).

• APA style (Education and Psychology students) or Harvard style (all other students) formats.
Presentation

• Attention to detail: make sure you don’t lose marks on presentation.

• Poor presentation will distract your marker’s attention from the content of your essay. Good presentation makes your writing clear and easy to read and understand for your marker.

• Make sure you proof-read your assignments before submitting your final draft.

• Make sure your argument is clear, concise, appropriately referenced and easy to comprehend.

• Make sure you use appropriate academic language (critical, formal, objective), correct spelling and punctuation, and that your referencing is accurate and follows the correct style.
The more you read academic literature (journal articles, books, reports, etc.) the better you will get at academic writing. Reading academic literature you will also become more familiar with the writing style and terminology used in your discipline.

- Critical / Analytical
- Formal
- Objective
You need to critically analyse a topic not just describe it
Identify and evaluate the significance, importance, strengths and weaknesses of the evidence
Clearly state your argument supported by research and examples
Analyse the research. What are the strengths and limitations of both sides?
Compare different theories and supporting research. What are the similarities and differences? What is the relevance of any links?
Argue a case and draw a conclusion based on evidence and reasoned judgement
Formal

• Use formal language.
• Keep your writing clear and concise. Make sure your sentences aren’t too long or too short.
• Avoid using:
  – Slang / colloquial language (kids, Aussies, chooks, guys, wanna, gonna)
  – Contractions (can’t, doesn’t, hadn’t)
  – SMS language (gr8, lol, whatever other abbreviations the kids are using these days :-/)
  – Idioms (jump on the bandwagon, throw in the towel)
  – Exclamation marks!
  – Rhetorical questions (Is this the kind of person who should be running a country in this century?)
Objective

• Avoid using ‘I/we’
• Avoid referring to yourself as the agent (i.e. ‘The study was undertaken’ NOT ‘I undertook the study’; ‘This report examines’ NOT ‘In this essay I will examine’).
• Impersonal expressions: there are..., this raises...
• Avoid emotional expressions
• Express opinions ‘objectively’ (i.e. ‘It has been argued’ NOT ‘In my opinion’; ‘Some writers claim’ NOT ‘I believe that’; ‘It is clear that’ NOT ‘In my view’)

Step 7: Review, proofread, re-draft, edit

Before submitting remember to:
• Re-read the assignment criteria and rubric, have you adequately addressed each key criteria?
• Read your assignment out loud to make sure it makes sense
• Proofread your assignment for spelling, grammar and punctuation
• Take a break and return to your assignment with fresh eyes before you rewrite your final draft.
• Re-read and edit your final draft before submitting.
Step 8: Originality Report

• Submit your assignment before deadline to check your originality report and check formatting in Turnitin.
• Check that you have referenced correctly, quotes in quotation marks, paraphrasing in own words.
• Make any changes and resubmit before deadline (you can submit as many times as you like up until the deadline).
Advice and Support
eLAs: for advice relating to unit content

• Post it on the discussion board
   “I’m a bit confused about the theory of _____. I think it means _____________, is this correct?”

• If it’s about an assessment item, post it under the appropriate ‘Assessment’ forum
   “In assessment 2, the rubric says we need to provide examples from our own experience. Can we use personal pronouns in this section?”
Other Support

Assessment Support in your unit in Blackboard:

**Your tutor**

Enabled: Statistics Tracking

**Yourtutor** is a real-time tutoring support service which is particularly useful if you are not sure where to start or require assistance with skills such as English language and literacy, academic writing and grammar or referencing.

You can access support via live chat and whiteboards Sunday to Friday 3pm-11pm AEST.

You do not need to schedule these sessions in advance.

Watch the video to see how it works.

Click the [here](#) to start.

**Smarthinking (Click here to start)**

Enabled: Statistics Tracking

**Smarthinking** is a tutoring support service available across most first stage units. It allows you to get feedback on an assignment or an essay draft before you submit.

You can either:

- submit to the Writing Centre and receive comments and feedback within 24 hours *or*
- use Scheduled Tutoring for a live review with audio support. (Session must be scheduled 24 hours ahead of time).

*During peak times this may be a bit longer.*

Note: you may need to enable cookies to allow this link to work. Click [here](#) to see how to do this.
# Assessment Support

## yourtutor

**What it is:** A live, real-time tutoring support service.

**When to use it:** Whenever you get stuck on a question around core maths or science concepts, or even for help with essay writing, structure, referencing or research. If you’re not sure where to start with an assessment, or you’re having trouble understanding a concept, connect in seconds to a live expert online, who can help you work it out.

**Range of services:** Our students access this service for a range of different assistance including English language and literacy, basic maths or science concepts, academic writing and correct referencing techniques.

**Access times:** You can access support on-demand via live chat and whiteboards, Sunday to Friday 3pm-11pm AEST. You do not need to schedule these sessions in advance.

**Access Conditions:** You will have unlimited access to Yourtutor each Teaching Period.*

## Smarthinking

**What it is:** Smarthinking is a tutoring support service that allows you to get feedback on an assignment or an essay draft.

**When to use it:** When you have completed a draft of your assignment, before you submit it to your eLA.

**Access times:** You will receive feedback on your assessment within 24-48 hours by submitting to the Smart Thinking Writing Centre. If you prefer to talk to someone and receive feedback in real time then use the Scheduled Tutoring Service for a live review and audio support. Please note: this live tutoring service must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

**Access Conditions:** You will be able to access 4 free submissions each Teaching Period (this equates to 3 hours of Smarthinking time). Any further submissions can be purchased from the Smarthinking site.*

*Offered in first stage and undergraduate education units only.

## yourtutor Opening Hours

**Nov 3 – Dec 13:**
Sun - Fri 3-11pm

**Dec 14-18:**
Sun-Thurs, 3-11pm

**Jan 5-8:**
Mon-Thurs, 3-11pm

**Jan 11-15:**
Sun-Thurs, 3-11pm

**Jan 18-22:**
Sun-Thurs, 3-11pm

Swinburne Online

yourtutor helps you with:

- Academic writing, including grammar, structure and referencing
- English language and literacy
- Core maths and science concepts, including those applied within Accounting and Engineering subjects
- Research and study skills, including time management
- Unpacking an assignment question, getting started when you don’t know how

“Lucas was happy to help, happy to answer my question(s!) and helped me to figure out my problem.”
- Economics, 4.28pm

“It was quick and easy. The tutor was able to assist with my specific question and provided me with the feedback I needed to continue with my reflective essay. I think I’m hooked now!”
- Essay Writing, 9.36pm

*Offered in first stage and undergraduate education units only.

Student Toolbox

• Useful tips on how to write a winning assignment, sample essays and reports can be found in the Student Toolbox:
Your Support Team

**Student Liaison Officers**

Student Liaison Officers are available to answer your questions at the following times:
Monday – Friday: 9am - 9pm
Saturday – Sunday: 10am - 6pm

**Telephone:** 1300 937 765
International +61 3 8306 0828

**Email:** help@swinburneonline.com

**Web form:** http://www.swinburneonline.edu.au/help

**Join Connect in the Student Portal**
It’s your place to collaborate with other students not only in your course, but across the whole of Swinburne Online.
You can discuss your course and even network for your future.
Thanks for your attendance

We’re done!