

## ESSAY WRITING STANDARDS: Guidance for learners

### Presentation

- Write out the full question.
- Use headers or footers for pagination, your name and assignment number e.g. Q0006  
Your name 1-3.2docx
- Incorporate a word count at the end of the assignment. Do not include the bibliography in the word count.
- Work should be presented as one complete document.

### Fonts

- Use an easy to read sans serif font such as Calibri, Arial or Verdana. The use of informal fonts such as Comic Sans is not recommended except in special circumstances. Some people with dyslexia find the use of comic sans helpful.
- Do not use more than 3 different fonts in the same piece of work.
- Font size: 11 or 12 point is recommended for the body of text. Headings and titles can be a size or two larger.
- Avoid the use of underlining except when really necessary.

### Spacing

- Line Spacing: 1.15 to 1.5 for the body of text is easy to read.
- Use spaces after paragraphs and headings.

### Spelling

Correct spelling is required. The occasional error will not be penalised, but frequent errors and obvious lack of proof reading will result in referral of work for re-submission. It is recommended that Sanskrit terms and names frequently used are added to the spell checker.

### Grammar and punctuation

Grammar is concerned with the correct structure of sentences. If sentences are ungrammatical the correct meaning can be obscured. Each sentence should contain just one idea. It should start with a capital letter and conclude with a full stop or question mark. Beware of using

exclamation marks as they signify the emotion of the writer. Beware of too many question marks. The writer's aim is to answer the question, not to ask the questions.

It is important to incorporate the correct use of: capital letters, commas, full stops, colons, semi colons and apostrophes.

## Structure

Most academic essays follow a structure that starts with an **introduction** followed by paragraphs forming the **body of the essay**, which elaborates on the introduction, and finishes with a **conclusion**. Not all assignments will fit exactly into this structure and you may find the use of headings and sub headings more appropriate on occasion.

## Introduction

The introduction sets out the topic of the essay and summarizes how the subject will be tackled. Key terms may be defined here. Quotations are not usually used in the introduction as this is *author's* response to the topic not the view of others.

## Mainbody / Development

The main points of the essay and supporting evidence are developed in a series of paragraphs.

It can be helpful to think of each paragraph as being a sub heading of the main title. Within each paragraph there should be one main idea which is often expressed in a *topic sentence*. Other sentences expand this idea by developing the argument or providing illustration. Words or phrases such as "however", "on the other hand" or "in conclusion" can carry the meaning forward from one paragraph to the next.

## Conclusion

This is the summary of the discussion/arguments so far and a clear statement of conclusion if required. New ideas are not introduced at this stage.

## Quotations

Quotations are used to convey the *exact* idea of a particular author or to provide *evidence* for a point the writer of the essay is making. The over-use of quotations is to be avoided. A common mistake is that an essay just becomes a list of quotations without interpretation or evaluation of the quotations.

When using quotations the following rules should be followed:

- Quotation marks must be used with acknowledgement of where the quotation comes from in brackets [Author, date, page number].

- A longer quotation should be on a separate line, indented, single-spaced and acknowledged as above.
- Quotations must be absolutely accurate; if a word is inserted it must be indicated by the use of square brackets - [ ]- and if a word is omitted, it must be indicated by the use of three dots (an ellipsis) - ... .

## References and Bibliography

It is recommended that the **Harvard System of Referencing** is followed. An excellent resource for detailed information on the Harvard system is

[http://libweb\(anglia.ac.uk\)/referencing/harvard.htm](http://libweb(anglia.ac.uk)/referencing/harvard.htm).

The bibliography is always at the end of the essay. A bibliography should contain full and accurate references of each item from which the writer has quoted or referred to in the body of the text, as well as any other works used in the research. According to the Harvard Method, references are arranged in alphabetical sequence by name of author, followed by date of publication. If there is no author, the item should be listed by title.

### Your bibliography:

#### For books, record:

- The author's or editor's name (or names)
- The year the book was published
- The title of the book
- If it is an edition other than the first
- The city the book was published in
- The name of the publisher
- The page reference

e.g. Stiles M. (2000) Structural Yoga Therapy, York Beach: Weber, p13

#### For journal articles record:

- The author's name or names
- The year in which the journal was published
- The title of the article
- The title of the journal
- As much other information as you can find about the journal, for example the volume and issue numbers

- The page number/s of the article in the journal

e.g. Clark R. (2012) 'Warm-Up and Mobilisation: Yoga Warm-ups', Spectrum, Autumn 2012, pp. 15-19

**For electronic resources:**

- The name of the author (if known)
- The date of the material published or updated (if known)
- The title of the information
- The type of media (email, forum, online)
- The electronic address or email
- The date you accessed the source

e.g. Swami Jnaneshvara Bharati , Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: The 196 Sutras, (Online),  
<http://www.swamij.com/yoga-sutras-list.htm> (20/8/12)

It is a very good idea to keep a record of all the texts or sites visited whilst researching an assignment as you may find these hard to find at a later point; these can include those not directly used within your assignment but show the extent of your research.

## Essay Checklist (for optional use by learners)

Before submitting final draft use the checklist to see that requirements are met:

|                          |   | yes | no |
|--------------------------|---|-----|----|
| Title                    | Have I written out the full question?   |     |    |
| Introduction:            | Have I commented on the topic of the essay? E.g. what are the main issues.  |     |    |
|                          | Have I included which aspects I will be dealing with?   |     |    |
| Main Body                | Does each paragraph have a clear purpose?   |     |    |
|                          | Is there enough explanation/ discussion?  |     |    |
| Conclusion               | Is there a sense of ending?   |     |    |
|                          | Have I fallen into the trap of repeating the introduction?  |     |    |
| General                  | Have I analysed and answered the question asked?  |     |    |
|                          | Is there order and organisation of material?  |     |    |
|                          | Have I enough material as a whole?  |     |    |
|                          | Have I put in irrelevant material or unnecessary padding?   |     |    |
|                          | Have I been careful to distinguish between my ideas and those of other authors by citing and acknowledging all sources? |     |    |
|                          | Have I added a complete bibliography of <i>all</i> sources including those not directly cited in the text?              |     |    |
|                          | Have I checked my spelling, grammar and punctuation?  |     |    |
|                          | Have I added the word count ?   |     |    |
|                          | Have I used a sans serif plain font, size 11 or 12? Have I spaces after paragraphs and headings?                        |     |    |
| Header and/<br>or footer | Is my name, assignment number and page number on every page?  |     |    |