

Guidelines for essay writing

General

- essays have to be submitted both electronically and in a hard copy
- deadline: **paper to be handed to tutor in Week 10; electronic: Friday 6 p.m., Week 10**
- check formal criteria (e.g. **cover sheet, presentation**, etc) on website ([Current Students > Undergraduate > Essays](#))
- familiarise yourself with the [17-point marking scale](#); it will give you a good idea of what is expected from your essay
- Look at the Writing Programme’s website ([Current Students > Undergraduate > Essays > Academic Writing Programme](#) – link in right column; needs login) for slides on essay writing ([Submission Guidelines](#); [Decoding essay titles and planning](#); [Using evidence and avoiding plagiarism](#))
- book a meeting with the Royal Literary Fellow who’s there to discuss anything related to essay writing and to help with draft ([Current Students > Undergraduate > Essays > RLF Fellow](#))

References

- read and use about 3–5 secondary sources; use the sources critically
- give reference whenever you use an idea from one of your sources, whether you quote it word for word, or just repeat it with your own words; otherwise it’s **plagiarism**
- dictionaries, encyclopaedias (on- or off-line), etc. *do not count* as secondary sources, but if you use them, please give reference
- please refrain from using plot summaries, or websites like Sparknotes, Gradesaver & co.
- references have to be consistent, preferably according to the [MLA conventions](#) (but you can use [MHRA](#) too)
- guides to [working with sources](#) and [MLA](#) are available on the Academic Writing Programme’s Website
- do not forget to include a **bibliography** (containing *all* primary and secondary sources)



(Source: [Library of Congress](#) / [Wikipedia](#))

For *first year* students:

Essays of around 2500 words (one paper copy) to be handed in to tutors in week 10. Please also make an electronic submission of your essay by 6pm, Friday of week 10.

For students taking module at *Honours level* and *visiting students* who are not staying for the whole year, or who are taking the module at Honours level:

One paper copy and one electronic submission of an essay of 3000 words to be handed into English Department office by noon on Tuesday of week 10.

1. Investigate the relationship between magic and Christian morality in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.
2. What does *SGGK* teach us about the character of Arthurian chivalry?
3. Examine the poet's use of patterning and symmetry in *SGGK*.
4. Explore the representations of gender in *SGGK*.
5. Does the comedy of the fabliaux successfully conceal their social cruelty towards the peasant classes?
6. Explore the presentation of the relation between youth and old age in any two or three of the following: the *Miller's Tale*, the *Merchant's Tale*, the *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*, the *Pardoner's Tale*.
7. Explore the interplay between fabliau and romance in any two of the following: the *Miller's Tale*, the *Merchant's Tale*, the *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*.
8. Discuss the relationship between 'autobiography' and fiction in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale* and the *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*.