

LAST MINUTE ESSAY WRITING

IN COLLABORATION WITH PREVIOUS WARWICK STUDENT, ARIN OSOSANYA



*Let's face it, most of us have been there: you promised yourself you would start your next assignment two weeks earlier, but somehow you blinked and the deadline which was only three weeks away is suddenly two days away. You need to write 3000 words in three days, but you don't have a single word down on your document. You don't even know where to start. If that sounds like you, you have come to the right place! **Here are some of Arin's top tried-and-tested tips for writing a good essay in a short time frame.** The goal here is working as smart as possible in a short time frame.*

Start with what you have

Most of the time, your essay will be on a topic you have already covered in class. That makes things a bit easier because you would have made notes from your lectures and seminars on that topic. Looking through your notes is a great way to start because it helps you get a better idea of what your argument could be for the essay.

You might have to pull an all-nighter...

When you have your general argument, using your lecture and seminar notes, write down three to four main sub-arguments which link to your general argument. This could be from a thematic perspective (i.e looking at different themes which support your main argument) or, it could be from a theoretical

perspective, there are so many ways to go about it!

Get all the research out of the way

Next, I would suggest starting the research as early as possible. Once you have an idea of what your argument is, begin to read as widely as possible around that topic. We often underestimate how long it will take us to complete certain tasks such as reading and planning. Given the time constraint, it is best to read as efficiently as possible. One of my favourite ways to do this is by using "junkyard documents". A junkyard document contains a table where you can track your research and organise the main points from each source into your essay. For example, if you have three main arguments, you could colour code each quote from your sources based on which argument it pertains to. Ideally, you want to find interesting and

unique sources that extend beyond the recommended readings provided by your professor. Look at the bibliographies of the recommended readings to find other relevant sources you could explore.



The literature should contain evidence that supports your argument, but also include sources which you can critically analyse. Bonus points if you interact sources with each other. For example, Writer A, makes a point which supports your argument and Writer B writes a paper critiquing Writer A's point. In your essay, you could include both sources and critically analyse Writer B's point, linking it back to the essay question. This shows that you do not just understand

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the topic, but you also understand the academic perspectives on the topic, and you are able to contribute unique ideas to the ongoing discussion.

On essays where you have more time, consult the Research and Academic Support Librarian (RASL) for your department. The RASLs can help you with referencing and avoiding plagiarism as well as help you to develop your critical skills in locating and selecting trusted sources.

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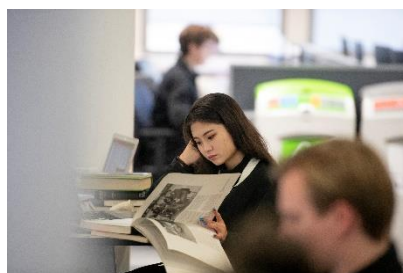
Plan, Plan, Plan

No matter how little time you have, I will always suggest planning before you put pen to paper, or, in this case, word to document. Even if you only spend thirty minutes on your plan, having a rough outline of your main points in one document will speed up the writing process.

Just put words down

You might have to pull an all-nighter, but the best way to write is to write. That means it's okay if it's initially

a mess of words which don't make sense. For each section, use the junkyard document and your plan to string sentences together. Don't forget to reference and update your bibliography as you go, insuring you are following your department's preferred referencing style- this will save lots of time at the end of your essay, trying to find the correct citations for references in your paper.



When you've reached the word limit, give yourself a solid 2-3 hours to read through your essay and finetune your referencing. That one-last read-through makes all the difference because you will likely spot avoidable lexical mistakes. You may feel exhausted at this point and eager to hit 'submit', but this is a crucial step you don't want to skip. Even better if you can put your essay through a grammar and spelling check online such as Grammarly.

Once this is done, congratulations, you've finished your essay! Hit submit and embrace some well-deserved rest.