

SUNNY ENGLISH LEARNING CENTRE

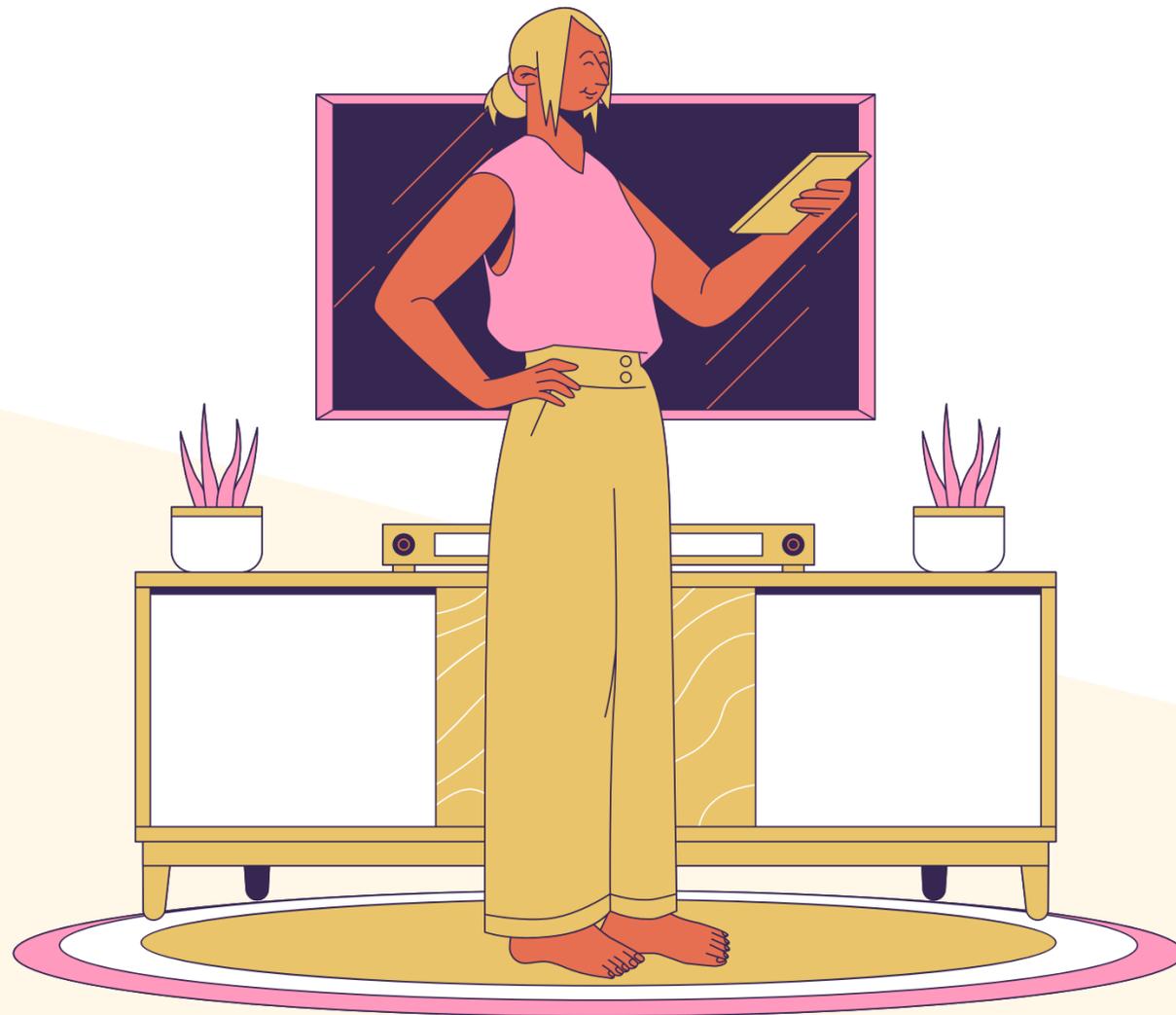
SUNNY'S GUIDE TO: UNIVERSITY



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ACADEMIC WRITING: ESSAYS

What is an essay? It is a short, formal piece of writing with a clear argument and aim. It must be clearly structured and to the point, with examples and sources to support points.

What is it for? With this piece of writing, students should persuade the reader that their argument is correct. There are several types of essays depending on the course/subject (argumentative, evaluative, discursive).

Why are they useful? Essays are used to assess students' understanding of a topic and their ability to express opinions in a clear and intelligent way.



HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN ESSAY

First, you must choose your question carefully. Professors will usually give you a list of possible questions. Choose the one that interests you the most: you must have a clear argument and know the topic well in order to write a successful essay.

Next, research the topic by doing additional reading. You may search for these online (jstor, academic journals and so on) or in your library. Read the abstract/synopsis to make sure it is relevant to your argument (or a counterargument you may use) or skim-read the text for relevant chapters/sections.

Finally, using our formula, prepare an outline of what your essay will look like. Think of your argument and the best way to support your ideas. Then... start writing! You will also need to read the sources you have chosen in more depth to support your points, but don't overdo it!



HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR ESSAY

Introduction

This should be one to two paragraphs depending on your professors' preferences. Unsure? Ask!

Start by introducing the topic with a topic sentence: this should be a generalised statement.

Briefly discuss the question: what will you be looking at? Don't refer to yourself but use general statements.

Finally, clearly state how your essay will answer the question: what examples/sources will it focus on? How will it reach its conclusion?



Body

This should be a few paragraphs (3, 4, 5 or more) depending on the total word limit. Plan ahead so you don't write too little or too much.

Each body should have a clear topic and should connect to the one before and after. Planning ahead will help with flow and structure.

Choose some examples and sources to support your argument. They may prove you right or wrong: counterarguments are also useful as you may argue against them and show critical thinking.

Conclusion

This should be one paragraph long. You should start by referring back to the general topic (topic sentence) and question.

Then, clearly show how you answered the questions by stating your position and the sources/examples you used to prove yourself right.

Remember: don't use I/my/me but use general statements to suggest your opinion is correct.

Finally, you may want to end with a powerful sentence about why your argument/position is important.

USEFUL LANGUAGE



Signposting:

Firstly, To start with, To begin with, My first point

Secondly, Next, Furthermore, In addition

Thirdly, Adding to this, Further to this, Moreover

Finally. To end with, To finish, Lastly, To sum up, In conclusion

Comparing/contrasting:

Whereas, Alternatively, Instead of, Otherwise unlike, On the other hand, In other respects, On the contrary

Equally, Similarly, In the same way, Likewise, As with, In that respect



REMEMBER

Always proofread your essay! Make sure you have paraphrased/cited your sources correctly.

Each subject and professor will have a preferred referencing system, so make sure you are using the correct one by... asking!

If you have specific questions, feel free to reach out to us.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

Wordreference for synonyms, definitions, antonyms and general questions.

Grammarly for proofreading: it's not cheating when you've been writing an essay for days!

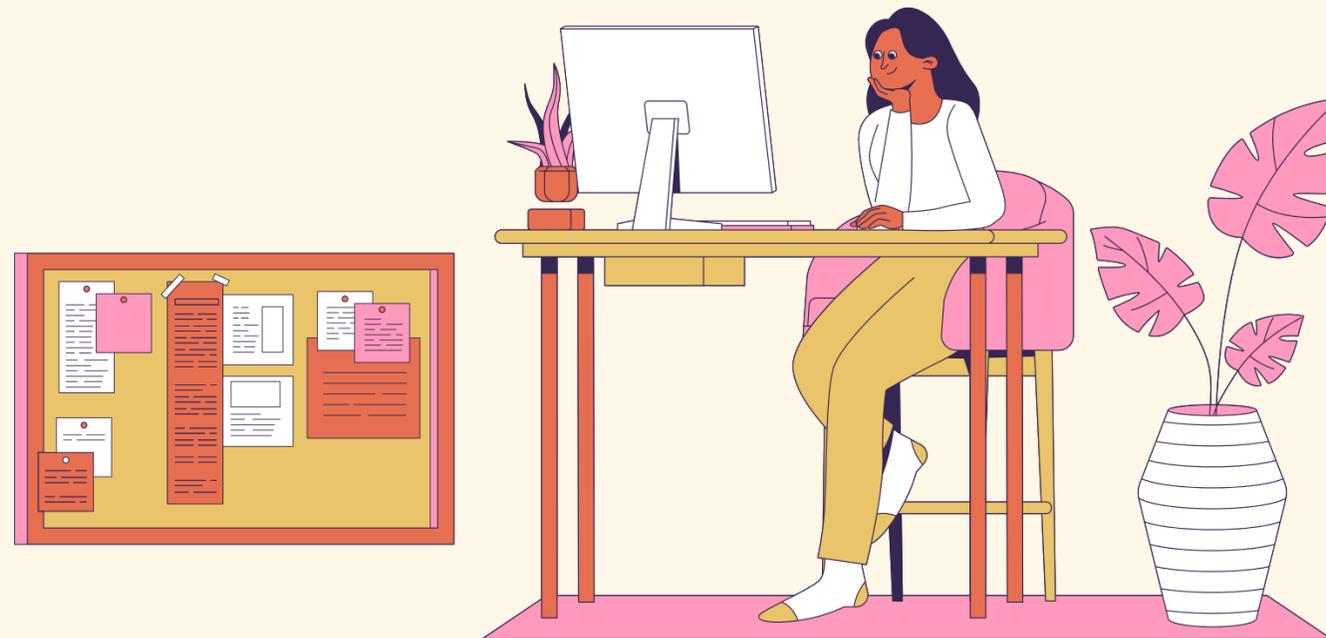
Google Scholar, Jstor, Refseek and BASE for sources.

Sunny English for help planning, writing and checking your essay.

GIVING PRESENTATIONS

Presentations are similar to essays. They are used to assess your understanding of a topic and your ability to present and defend an argument.

For this reason, you should follow a similar structure!



PRESENTATION STRUCTURE

Introduction

Start by welcoming, looking at your question and giving an outline of the structure. What examples/resources will you be looking at and what will your presentation conclude?

Language:

Today I am here to talk to you about...
What I am going to talk about today is...
I'd like to give you a brief breakdown of...
The purpose of this presentation is...
My objective today is...
My talk/presentation is divided into "x"
parts.
I'll start with.../First, I will talk
about.../I'll begin with...
...then I will look at.....next...and
finally...

Body

Break your main argument down and don't forget to connect each point to your overall question.
Show implications of your examples/ideas.

Language:

Let me start with some general information on...
Let me begin by explaining why/how...
I'd like to give you some background information
about...
I'd now like to move on to the next part...
This leads me to my next point, which is...
Turning our attention now to...
We've looked at...So much for...To sum up...
Let's summarize briefly what we have looked at.
Here is a quick recap of the main points of this
section.

Conclusion

Summarise your presentation question, material and conclusion. Ask if anyone has questions. Presentations are often followed by a Q/A.

Language:

I'd like to conclude by...
In conclusion, let me sum up my main points.
Weighing the pros and cons, I come to the
conclusion that...
That brings me to the end of my presentation.
Thank you for listening/your attention.
Thank you all for listening. It was a pleasure
being here today.
Well, that's it from me. Thanks very much.
That brings me to the end of my presentation.
Thanks for your attention.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Unknown answer (don't panic):

That's an interesting question. I don't actually know off the top of my head, but I'll try to get back to you later with an answer.

I'm afraid I'm unable to answer that at the moment. Perhaps, I can get back to you later.

Good question. I really don't know! What do you think?

That's a very good question.

However, I don't have any figures on that, so I can't give you an accurate answer.

Unfortunately, I'm not the best person to answer that.

Reference and paraphrase:

It should be emphasized that...

I would like to draw your attention to this point...

Another significant point is that...

The significance of this is...

This is important because...

We have to remember that...

In other words,...

To put it more simply,...

What I mean to say is...

So, what I'm saying is....

To put it in another way....



TIPS FOR PRESENTATIONS:

Practising presentations skills is important for your personal development and future work opportunities. Just think about it, a job interview is a presentation of sorts. Public speaking skills are really important, so here are some tips to help you.

Look your audience in the eye: you need to communicate with them.

People tend to listen more when they feel like you're talking to them directly: easy!

Instead of sentences, use bullet points to give an outline of what you're saying. This will keep the audience engaged, otherwise, they would be spending time reading your text and not listening!

Speak slowly and pause. This will create a natural distinction between points you are making and will give your audience time to digest information. Pace yourself!

Create effective notes to help you remember the key points you want to touch on. This will help you feel in control: it's normal to forget things so prepare in advance.

Practice makes perfect, doesn't it? This is also true for presentation skills and public speaking so... get talking! To friends, to your mirror, to your parents or pets.

Remember to breathe, slowly. This will help your heart beat slow and you will feel less nervous. It's normal, so listen to your body.

TIPS FOR GROUP WORK:

Interpersonal and teamwork skills are equally as important for your development as a student, person and professional. Start practising early! University is the ideal time to find what works best for you and others, as a team. Here are some skills to focus on:

Openness: You should be willing to learn more about your group members: try to learn from them. Be open to new ideas, diverse viewpoints, and the variety of individuals present within the group. Listen to others and ask for their opinions. Remember: this isn't about you as an individual!

Trust and self-disclosure: Try to trust one another enough to share ideas and feelings. If you don't, work on it: communicate and try to build mutual trust. Demonstrate personal accountability for the tasks you have been assigned, individually and as a group. Communication is key.

Support: Always support one another: together you are stronger. To do this, plan team building sessions to develop loyalty and to cheer on the group. If you are having difficulties, let the others know so that they may help you and encourage them to do the same.

Respect: Try to communicate your opinions in a way that respects others, focusing on “What can we learn?” rather than “Who is to blame?” Look for constructive feedback, you all have one aim so: work together!



READY? REMEMBER: PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Now is the time to give it your all and to grow!

