



# Essays

## Why should I write essays?

In most professional contexts you'll need to be able to persuade someone of something by using evidence and reasoning, e.g. to try a different way of doing something, to buy a product, or to invest money in a new project. Writing essays gives you practice in communicating persuasively and logically.

## What's an essay?

The purpose of an essay is to put forward an argument in response to a question or statement. The writer uses evidence to persuade the reader that their argument makes sense and is worth accepting.

## What's in an essay?

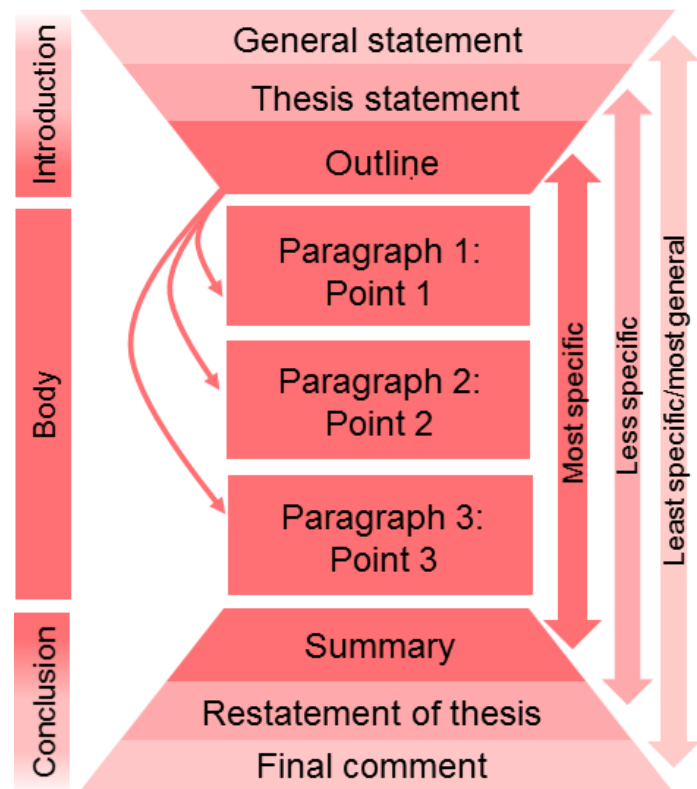
The key elements of an essay are the **argument** and the **reasoning**. The argument is what you're trying to convince the reader about. The reasoning is how you show that your argument is worth believing. It could include **evidence**, **explanations**, or **examples**.

You structure your argument and reasoning in a particular way:

- The **introduction** presents the argument and outlines the reasons that will be presented. It moves from more general information to more specific information.
- The **body** section presents the different points of reasoning, one per paragraph, with evidence included and cited. Each paragraph explains a point made in the outline. The paragraphs should follow the order of points mentioned in the Outline.
- The **conclusion** summarises the reasoning and restates the argument. It moves from more specific to more general information.
- The **reference list** includes all the sources of evidence and ideas that you have referred to in your essay.

Tip: For more detailed information about essay purpose, see the [Essay purpose guide](#).

Tip: For more detailed information about essay structure, see the [Essay structure guide](#).



## Example

### Essay task

**Identify** and **discuss** the most serious occupational hazards of nurses.

**Identify:** say **what** are the most serious occupational hazards for nurses

**Discuss:** talk **about** the most serious occupational hazards in some **detail**

### Identify thesis statement based on brainstorm

There are several different occupational hazards for nurses but the most serious one is violence.

(An alternative thesis statements could be: The most serious occupational hazards for nurses are violence and stress.)

### Essay outline

#### Introduction

- Introduce the general topic: occupational hazards of nurses
- State the argument: there are various occupational hazards for nurses but the most serious is violence against nurses.
- Outline the main points: three serious violence-related hazards and how they affect nurses

#### Body

- Paragraph 1: Violence from patients (explanation, evidence and examples from research)
- Paragraph 2: Violence from family of patients (explanation, evidence and examples from research)
- Paragraph 3: Violence from other staff (explanation, evidence and examples from research)

#### Conclusion

- Summarise the main points (reasons)
- Restate the argument: the most serious occupational hazard for nurses is violence
- Finish with a general statement about the topic: nurses should be aware and hospitals should take responsibility for minimising the risk of violent situations

### Common problems

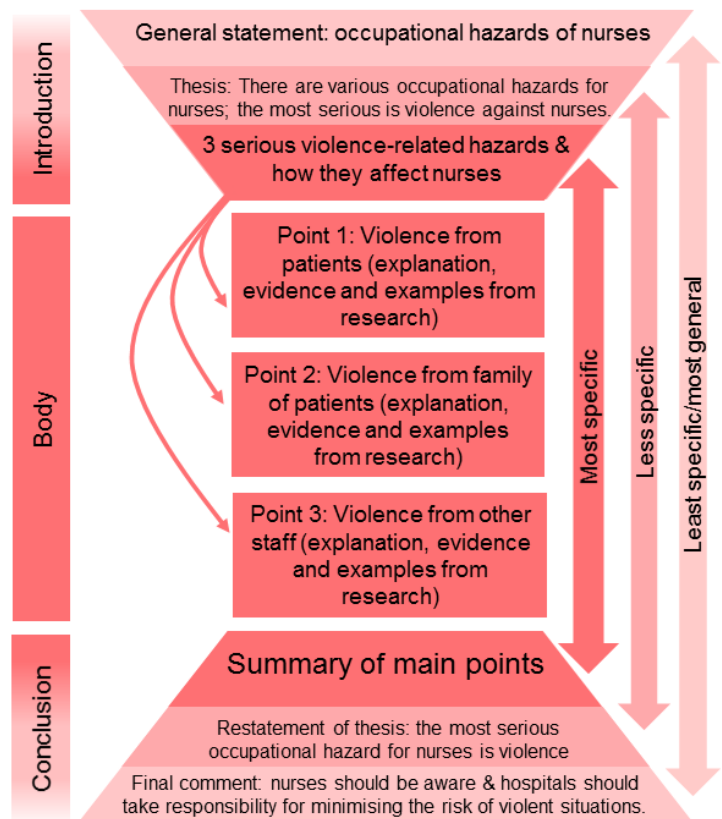
- Irrelevant content or ideas not well organised – use the [Essay drafting tool](#) to help organise your ideas or read the [Essay structure guide](#)
- Informal/inappropriate tone – read the [Essay tone guide](#)
- Not enough evidence to support your reasons – go to the Library's [Referencing and Citation Guide](#) for help with correctly formatting your citations and references

### Brainstorming ideas: occupational hazards of nurses

- risk of back injuries
- stress
- dangers of radiation
- infection
- violence from patients or others → most serious

Tip: For help with understanding task words, read the [Common task words](#)

Tip: For a step by step break-down of the essay writing process and deadlines for each step, use the [Assignment Calculator](#).



Tip: Don't bring in any new evidence in your conclusion.

## Activity

1. Look at your essay task/question and rewrite it in your own words. Do you understand what it is asking you?
2. Write your response to the question (your argument) in one sentence. This is your thesis statement.
3. What three main points of reasoning could you use to support your argument?
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

## Next steps

Use the [Essay drafting tool](#) to draft your essay based on the points you came up with.



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Kim Heckenberg (Manager)	Katrina Trewin
Linda Parker (Manager)	Claire Urbach
Tahlia Birnbaum	Anna Wallace
Tae McKnight	Fiona Webber
Beverley Miles	Lisa Worthington
Sara Perley	