Outcomes

Revise how to:

- analyse essay questions
- brainstorm to develop a concept map for an essay
- use a concept map to develop an essay plan or map
- use the major structural sentences of your draft to edit and revise your draft
The 7 steps for writing a successful essay

1. Analyse the question
3. Make a plan
4. Research and select appropriate resources
5. Read and take notes
6. Write and revise
7. Edit and proof-read
Step 1. Analysing the question

Read your assessment task questions and all instructions carefully.

Identify the question and analyse it. Identify:

- the type of essay you are required to produce – task words such as discuss, analyse, explain, compare etc. provide this information;

- the subject or topic of the essay and the types of information that will be included in the body of the essay – content words provide this information; and

- the parameters or limits of the essay – limiting words that restrict or control the essay, for example, the time frame and the location. Limiting words also include the word count and the number and type of resources required.

Remember to view the marking rubric before you start your assessment, it often provides further clarity.
What are some of the major obstacles to gender and ethnic equality in New Zealand organisations? What organisational strategies and/or social policies would you recommend to address these issues? Be as specific as possible.

What additional information would help clarify the requirements of this task?

Find out what you know about the topic already:

- review the lecture notes
- review the reading you have already done and the notes you have already taken
- brainstorm to produce a concept map (Remember a concept map includes the relationships between different information and concepts.)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZJj6DwCqSU
- do some initial pre-reading on the topic

Can you answer the essay question you been asked in one sentence? This should become yourprovisional thesis statement.

A provisional thesis statement will help you write an outline, plan or map for your essay and should help direct your research and selection of appropriate resources.
Brainstorming

Brainstorm the following essay question, then use it to produce a concept map.

In an essay of 500 words, identify what makes a successful essay.
Pre-reading

What pre-reading can you do to prepare to begin your assessment task?

- The lecture notes
- The required and recommended reading for the unit
- The textbook
- Another textbook

Peer reviewed journal articles (often the preferred or required type of resource for an assessment task) can be difficult to read. Begin by reading materials that are easier to understand. A basic understanding of the topic will enable you to comprehend more difficult types of texts such as some peer reviewed journal articles.
Writing a Provisional Thesis Statement

**Topic**

A successful essay has **three key elements**: A, B, and C.

Claim or controlling idea: your attitude, opinion or position on the topic.

A successful essay has **three key elements**: a strong thesis statement, logical organisation, and clear writing.

A successful essay has **three key elements**: focus, organisation, and clarity.

Specific points that will be made in the body of the essay. May also indicate the organisation of the information in the body.
Writing a Provisional Thesis Statement

Write a provisional thesis statement for the following essay question:

While most university courses require students to write essays as part of their assessment, graduates are never required to write essays in the workplace.

In an essay of 500 words, discuss the validity of setting essay assignments as a component of student assessment at university.
Step 3. Make a plan

General essay structure:

**Introduction**
- contains the thesis statement

**Body**
- the content
- presents the arguments for the thesis statement in detail and with support

**Conclusion**
- paraphrases the thesis statement
- summarises the research that supports it

**References**
- the end-text references must match the in-text references
Make a plan

A comprehensive essay outline, plan or map will contain the following information:

**Introduction**
- thesis statement
- approximately 10% of the total word count

**Body**
- the content
- the number of paragraphs
- the single idea to be developed in each paragraph
- approximate word count per paragraph

**Conclusion**
- paraphrases the thesis statement
- summarises the research that supports it
- approximately 10% of the total word count

**References**
- the end-text references must match the in-text references
A plan, an outline, an essay map

Write an essay plan for the following essay question:

While most university courses require students to write essays as part of their assessment, graduates are never required to write essays in the workplace. In an essay of 500 words, discuss the validity of setting essay assignments as a component of student assessment at university.
A plan, an outline, an essay map with topic sentences

Introduction  Body  Conclusion

Thesis Statement

Topic sentence
Topic sentence
Topic sentence
Step 7. (Revise) edit and proof-read

Draft and revise:

- Read your draft. Does it make sense?
- Identify the key sentences that summarise your argument: the thesis statement and the topic sentences of each paragraph.
- Look for words, phrases, or sentences that show the relationships between pieces of information and between paragraphs (e.g. therefore, because, in addition, in contrast etc.). Are the relationships made clear? Will the reader understand? Do you need to improve the clarity?
- Identify supporting evidence. Is it sufficiently supportive? Is the information referenced correctly?
- Is there any unnecessary information that does not contribute to the message or argument?
Step 7. (Revise) edit and proof-read

Edit for organisation and meaning:

- **The introduction.**
  Is it obvious which sentence is the thesis statement?
  Will the reader be able to identify the topic?

- **The body.**
  Have you used key words and concepts appropriate to the essay question and the discipline?
  Is the information presented in a logical order that makes it easy for the argument to be followed?
  Have you engaged critically with the resources you have read?

- **The conclusion.**
  Has the thesis statement been rephrased?
  Are all the main ideas summarised?
  Ensure there is no new information in the conclusion. There should be no references in the conclusion.
Step 7. (Revise) edit and proof-read

Proof-read for surface errors:

- for grammatical errors,
- for punctuation errors, and
- for spelling errors.
Summary

- Good preparation and planning are the first stages in the production of a successful essay.
- Find out what you know. Write a concept map.
- Draft an initial thesis statement.
- Write an essay map.
- Research to select appropriate resources.
- Take notes.
- Draft and revise your essay.
- Edit for organisation and meaning.
- Proof-read for surface errors.
- Submit your best draft.