

## Essay Writing for OCR H573- first examination 2018

Key to your success is writing good quality essays under exam conditions. The way to get good at essays is really practice, as well as reacting to the feedback that you are given by your teachers. You will get lots of help throughout the year, but here are a couple of guides which should help you get going. It will take a bit of mastering, and your first few essays might score at the lower end but as with everything, the key is practice.

### The Introduction

The introduction is the place which has the most impact. You need to ensure that you set out ready to impress the examiner straight away. Use the following guide to help you do this:

<b>D</b>	efine your terms	Are there any words in the question which need explaining? If the question asks you to compare, how will you define success?
<b>I</b>	mplications	Why is this question important? What difference would it make if the statement is true? This helps you to show the examiner you grasp of what the question is asking.
<b>S</b>	cholars	Who are the key scholars involved in this debate? Do you know the names of their works or articles they have written? Use them!
<b>C</b>	onclusion – signpost it!	You need to show what your conclusion is going to be right at the beginning. You must clearly state your <b>line of argument</b> you are going to be pursuing throughout the essay from the very start. <b>SUPER IMPORTANT.</b>

### The Middle

The bulk of the essay. Each paragraph/section of your essay should be structured in this way.

<b>P</b>	oint	Give a scholarly reason to support your line of argument. This must refer to the question. Use the key language of the question to make sure you do this. Use <b>evaluative</b> language.
<b>E</b>	xplain	Explain the point, using as much scholarly language, quotations and ideas as you can. Detail is king. Remember to keep linking ideas back to the question.
<b>R</b>	esponse	Give an alternative view and/or criticism of this idea using scholarly argument. Every paragraph must have some form of debate in. If you write a paragraph without some form of debate in it, you are doing it wrong.
<b>E</b>	valuate	Give a judgment. In the debate you have just had, which is the strongest? Who is the winner? Explain why using scholarly argument.
<b>L</b>	ink	A mini-conclusion: Link back to your line of argument.

## Conclusion

Your conclusion must be a direct response to the question. You should avoid using the first person (“I think that...” or “In my opinion...”). There are a couple of things you must do:

<b>R</b>	<b>refer</b>	You must refer directly to the question, using the language of the question to make it obvious. Re-read your introduction and re-state your line of argument.
<b>J</b>	<b>judge</b>	You must make a clear judgment about whether the statement is true/argument is successful. Use evaluative language to make this clear. “The most effective argument in favour of this point is...”

### What is the examiner looking for?

They want you to critically evaluate and justify a point of view through the use of evidence and reasoned argument. Grade ‘A’ candidates characteristically:

- ✓ Construct a coherent and well-organised argument supported by scholarly examples and/or sources of authority and evidence
- ✓ Identify strengths and weaknesses of the scholarly arguments included
- ✓ Use accurate and fluent expression
- ✓ Reach a reasoned and well-justified conclusion



Examiners: they're not all bad

One of the great things about OCR is that they have a ‘positive-marking’ policy, that means that they want to reward you for all the impressive things you demonstrate in the exam. They accept that there is no ‘set way’ to answer a question, and will award a range of interpretations, arguments and scholarly ideas – so long as you are answering the question directly, that is!

### A (very important!) note on evaluation

The chief examiner is clear that the best essays are the ones which are the most evaluative. Evaluation involves making a judgment. For example, writing:

*Hume argues that miracles are the least likely of events.*

Is not as evaluative as writing:

*Hume rightly argues that miracles are the least likely of events.*

It is very clear that evaluation should happen throughout your essay if you want to score higher marks.

### Example questions from each paper:

- ‘The teleological argument is the most successful argument for the existence of God.’ Discuss. (40)
- Evaluate the claim that ethical terms are meaningless. (40)
- Assess whether Christianity and feminism are compatible (40)