

Essay skills

Right, it's time to look at the most useful skills in the world.





Take some time to plan your answer

Planning helps you get your ideas in order, so you don't run out of things to say once you start writing.

For each essay question you get:

- Read the question carefully.
- Read every text or source you need to.
- Check you know how to answer the question.

Now make a quick plan:

- Jot down your main ideas.
- Link your ideas to a topic or theme.
- Outline the structure of your answer.

And remember:

- Don't cross out plans.
- Ideas that are on plans CAN BE MARKD
- but only if they are NOT crossed out.



Write well to get marks in essay questions

Structure your writing

- Use paragraphs to organise your points and link ideas.
- Link your paragraphs using phrases such as 'on the other hand' and 'in addition'.

You should aim to:

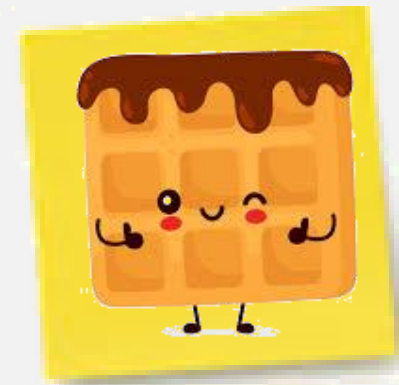
- Start with short introduction
- end with a brief summary/conclusion that clearly reminds the reader of your main argument.

Write clearly:

- Don't make your sentences too complicated.
- Check your argument is easy to understand.
- Use specific examples and precise quotes.

Answer the question

- Make sure your aren't just waffling
- Make sure everything you write is relevant,
- Keep your ideas clear and to the point.



Remember that you are writing for an examiner

Standard English

Make sure you write properly:

- Avoid informal words. (Romeo's mate Mercutio)
- Steer clear of slang (The poem made me LOL)
- Don't use filler words. (Pollution is, like, bad)

Explaining phrases

Explain things clearly using phrases like:

- this signifies that...
- This highlights...
- This suggests that...
- Furthermore

These will keep your answers easy to follow.

Linking words

Link ideas and points with words such as:

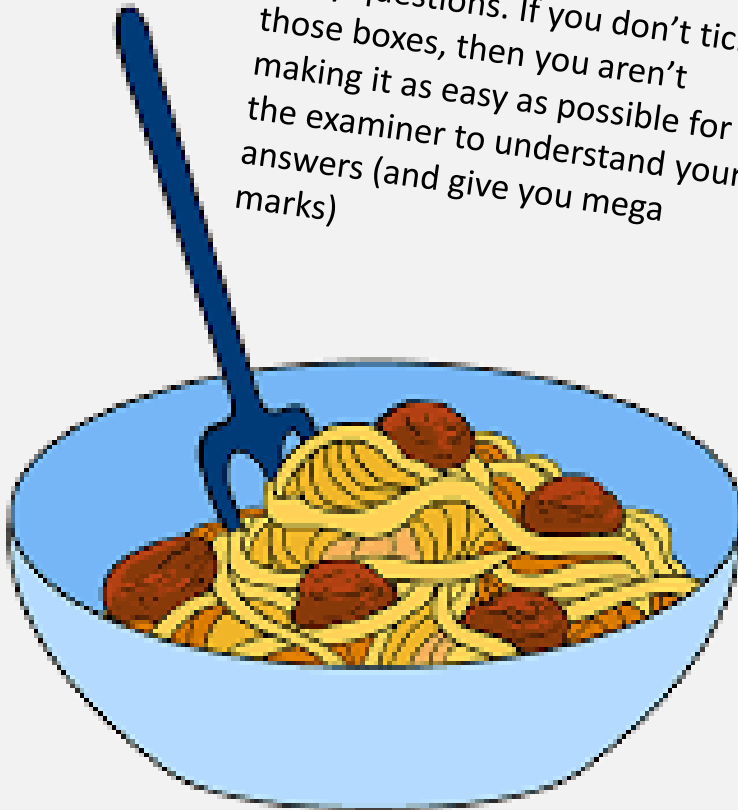
- However
- In contrast
- Similarly
- Alternatively

They will make your answer flow nicely.



Don't forget to check your SPaG

Writing clearly and having good SPaG is really important for essay questions. If you don't tick those boxes, then you aren't making it as easy as possible for the examiner to understand your answers (and give you mega marks)



Recipe for perfect SPaG:

- Avoid common spelling mistakes (e.g. mixing up there and their)
- Use punctuation properly – remember to check it's all correct
- Don't change tenses by mistake – it's confusing and won't make sense
- Watch out for double negatives – avoid them in your essays.
- Start a new paragraph for a new point – don't just write in one block of text.
- Leave time to quickly check your answers. Take 5 minutes to fix any silly mistakes.



How to deal with essay questions

