How to write an essay, report or assignment

Include:

- Formal, precise and objective language
- Vocabulary from your academic discipline.
- Emphasis on objects, facts and ideas.
- Third person writing. eg He said.. Smith Indicates.. The strengths approach is...

Leave out:

- Slang, casual and/or “texting” language; jargon, abbreviations or clichés
- Passive sentences. (Better to say “Jen wrote the essay ” than “The essay was written by Jen”)
- “I” statements. For example: “I think” or “I believe”.
- Personal feelings, emotions and experiences (unless directly asked for)

Planning the assignment:

- Carefully examine the assignment requirements. Look at the Format (report, essay or short answers) word length, task words, (eg argue, evaluate, compare, discuss) key words and concepts.
- Write down some key ideas using brainstorming and free writing.
- Create an assignment plan using key ideas.
- The ideas can then often be used as the topic sentence for each paragraph.
**Academic evidence** – to support what has been written:

- Quotes from a literary or academic text
- Quotes from primary sources (people, diaries, interviews original artifacts)
- Quotes from websites, blogs or forums, newspapers, journal articles, TV, radio movies
- Images, paintings or photographs
- Charts, graphs or statistics
- A personal experience where appropriate.

**The writing process:**

- **Preparation:**
  - Understand the topic
  - Research thoroughly
  - Keep a reference list
  - Write ideas as you research
- **First Draft:**
  - Consolidate ideas
  - Organise the structure of the essay/report
  - Ensure the content is logical and ordered
- **Refinement:**
  - Read and re-read
  - Make sure the content makes sense
  - Ensure the language and spelling are correct

**General Tips:**

- Write down ideas as soon as possible
- Always keep the question in mind to avoid wandering off topic
- It is often easier to write the introduction and conclusion after you have completed the main body of work.

**Need more help?**

Contact Riverina Institute library staff [RITLibrarystaff@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:RITLibrarystaff@tafensw.edu.au)
Or visit Riverina Institute LibGuides at [http://riverinainstitute.libguides.com](http://riverinainstitute.libguides.com)