

Getting Started with an Essay

Dr Misha Hebel

WCSIM



A red notebook with a textured cover and a red pencil are positioned on the left side of the slide. The notebook is open, showing white pages, and the pencil is sharpened and lies diagonally across the bottom left corner.

Objectives

- The Essay Writing Process
- Free Writing
- Mind Mapping and Organising Ideas
- Question Analysis and Writing

What to think about before you start

- Why are you writing this essay?
- What does it want me to do?
- How does it want me to do it?
- How am I going to do it?



Two Types of Essays

- 1 – You answer a question you have been given
- 2 – You write the question you are going to answer

Getting Started

- We all struggle with writing
- Don't expect to write an essay in one session
- Essays are a significant learning experience
- Get ideas onto paper
- Talk to other students



Free Writing: 'A warm-up for the mind'

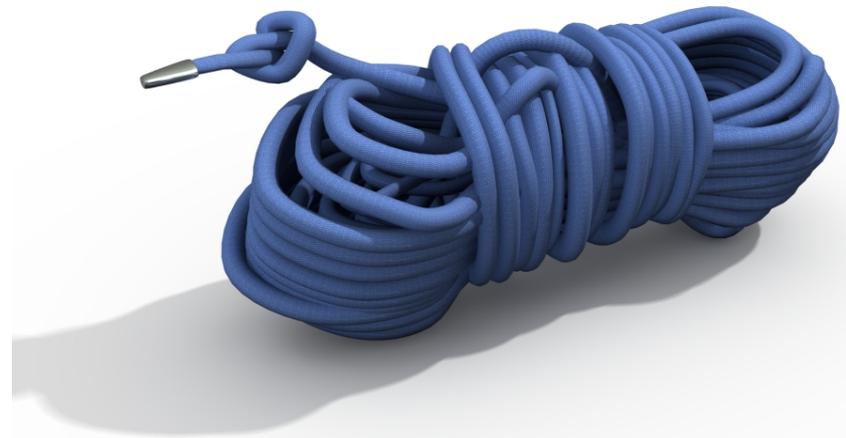
- Using the following essay question, or use your own...
- You have 5 minutes to write as much as you can about the question

University teaching should change to meet the needs of all students. Discuss.

The Question String

What questions are within the question?

Anti-discrimination laws can
never succeed. Discuss.



Analysis

- Delete the nonsense
- Are there any patterns?
- Use a mind map to organise these ideas
- The more you practice, the better you will become



Analysing an Essay Question

- Write the question out in full
- Underline the keywords
- Put the title in a circle
- Put the question into your own words
- Remember every word counts!

Questions

- **Topic** – *What, in general, do you have to write about?*
- **Focus** – *What particular aspect of the topic do you have to address?*
- **Question word** – *What do you have to do?*
- **Viewpoint** – *What do you need to support or challenge?*

Sample Question

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Critically evaluate | the effects of Thatcherism | on the economy of the UK. | |
| Question word | Focus | Topic | |

Some Key Words

| Descriptive | Analytical | Discursive |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| describe | compare | criticise |
| define | contrast | evaluate |
| summarise | analyse | discuss |
| what | | |
| state | | |
| how | | |

Sample Questions

University teaching should change to meet the needs of all students. Discuss.

Topic

Focus

Viewpoint

Question

Summary

- Normal to struggle
- Focus on the title
- Structure is everything
- Make a good start
- Be clear

