
LANGUAGE & CULTURE

Champlain College Saint Lambert

6I8-4I2

RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

Effective content writing

Questions to ask of your essay content

Mini guide

These are suggested questions to ask as you review and revise your essay. They can be asked in any order.

- Have I used an appropriate number of examples? Are they good examples?
- Have I used enough evidence from the literature?
- Have I made sufficient reference to relevant theories or schools of thought?
- Was the structure I used a useful one in supporting my argument, or does it need to be modified?
- Does my writing fall clearly within the structure I have used, or has it become a bit mixed up in places?
- Is all of the material I have used relevant to the essay title?
- What is the balance in my essay across the different elements of the title? Have I used too many words to address one element, and too few to address another?
- Have I answered what was actually set, or have I answered what I preferred to write about?

Questions to ask of your introduction and conclusion

Mini guide

These are suggested questions to ask as you write your essay, and during the review and editing process. They can be asked in any order.

Questions to ask of your introduction

- Have I shown that I understand the task that has been set?
- If appropriate, have I started off broad then narrowed down to the focus of my essay?
- Have I given an outline of the way I plan to respond to the title?
- Is my introduction a true indication of what the reader is about to read?
- Do I think that the reader will be confident, after he or she has read my introduction, that I have interpreted the title sensibly?

Questions to ask of your conclusion

- Have I referred back to the title of the essay?
- Is my conclusion genuinely well-supported by the evidence and argument that I have presented?
- Is my conclusion directly relevant to the essay title?
- Have I identified the most important conclusion, not just an interesting side issue?
- Have I made sure that I have not introduced a new argument at this stage?
-

Nota Bene! These are not necessarily the only questions you need to ask.

Questions to ask about your level of critical writing

Mini guide

These are suggested questions to ask as you write, and then review and revise your essay. They can be asked in any order.

- When I have used evidence or examples, have I always explained why I decided they were useful to include?
- Have I presented different points of view; evidence for and against; and/or different possible interpretations of evidence?
- What is my balance between descriptive writing and critical writing?
- Is my material presented in the best order for making my argument?
- Have I used good examples, and the most relevant evidence, or can I think of more appropriate material that would make my argument stronger?
- With the evidence I have used, have I made reasonable interpretations, or have I made tenuous links that the reader will not agree with?
- Have I stated where I believe that my argument may be weak?
- Have I stated where there may be scope to take a different interpretation from that taken by another author?
- Have I made the best use of paragraphs to make clear where I am separating description from critical writing?
- Have I questioned assumptions sufficiently?
- Is my writing sufficiently balanced, rather than one-sided?
- Do I use sufficiently cautious wording e.g.: suggests that ...; is evidence for ...; it is possible that ...; this could be interpreted as ...?
- Have I used an appropriate number of examples?
- Are they good examples? In other words, do they do the job I say they do?
- Have I used enough evidence from the literature?
- Was the structure I used a useful one in supporting my argument, or does it need to be modified?
- Does my writing fall clearly within the structure I have used, or has it become a bit mixed up in places?
- Is all of the material I have used relevant to the essay title?
- What is the balance in my essay across the different elements of the title?
- Have I used too many words to address one element, and too few to address another?

- Have I answered what was actually set, or have I answered what I preferred to write about?
- Is there anywhere where the reader may have a question that I have not answered?
- Have I expressed my ideas clearly, or are there places where my explanations can be improved?

Nota Bene! These are not necessarily the only questions you need to ask.