

# Laws Essay Writing Guidance

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for Law, Politics, and Citizenship, essays.



## Good essay writing is vital in Laws subjects.

**Essay writing becomes easier when it is broken down into manageable sections** (place a tick against each of the six below sections when you complete).

**Start any homework essay early – since before you start writing, you need time for research.**

***[In answering examination questions: You need to answer all questions in essay form (i.e. apart from any 5-mark questions).]***

### **1. Think about and analyse the question (have your title with you whenever you are working on the assignment!).**

- Decide what is required. Make use of any essay guide, or past shortlisted essay as a guide (see the Essay Competition – [www.LawsBlog.co.uk](http://www.LawsBlog.co.uk)).
- Break the question down.
- Underline and note keywords. Look in a dictionary if need be.
- If need be, rewrite the title in your own words to aid understanding.

### **2. Gather/research for materials that will help you answer the essay question/title.**

- Use past shortlisted essays for ideas (do not copy/plagiarise).
- Investigate all likely sources: textbooks, journal articles, **law cases, statutes** etc.
- Make notes of useful evidence and examples and quotations. **Remember**, every point you make should be supported with referenced evidence!).
- **Be sure to keep and show the bibliographical details and provide footnotes!**
- **Remember**: in deciding what to include and what to discard, the keyword is “**relevancy**” (relate to the essay title in deciding such).

### **3. Make an essay plan (work to the title!).**

- Organise your selected material into a logical order to create a clear line of argument. Look at the essay guidance, or a past shortlisted essay, for more guidance.
  - **Your essay should be like a sandwich:** It needs **three layers** – a *top* (an **introduction**) – *middle* (**the meat in the essay/sandwich**) – *bottom* (the **conclusion**).
- ☑ **Introduction:** comment on the essay subject (a little background perhaps) and explain what the essay is about. Define any key terms, and outline how you intend to answer the essay question.
- ☑ **Use sub-headings – it helps to structure your essay.** At the end of each sub-heading section relate back to the essay title. Make your main points/argument and include supporting evidence and examples in a sensible order. One point or topic per paragraph – seek to link each point being made. **[In a law essay you should use, and underline, any relevant case or statute names.]**
- ☑ **Conclusion:** Summarise the arguments made and relate back to the words used in the title. Give an overview and a clear statement of conclusion. Include any final comments (don't raise new issues).

#### 4. Writing up:

Convert your rough draft or plan into a first draft then check it and remove irrelevant parts – seek to find ways of expanding discussion. **Remember: The marks are in the discussion and you MUST be seen to be answering the question** (Little discussion = poor marks).

#### 5. Proof read the final draft.

After giving yourself a breathing space, check the essay for readability, spelling and grammar, before you hand it in. If possible, get someone else to proof read it too.

#### 6. Submit your homework early – late homework fails.

**Attach a completed self-assessment sheet to your homework** (see <http://www.peterjepson.com/law/assessment%20sheet.htm>).

**All late homework is given a fail grade** – which will be shown on your personal 'Individual Learning Plan' (the 'ILP' is used for references and sent home to parents).