

# HOW TO WRITE AN ACADEMIC ESSAY

## How to get started

1. Read the Essay question carefully and preferably before you start your session readings for the subject
  - Underline the key words and phrases
  - Express the task in your own words
  - Look for anything specific the assessor wants included.

For example:

***“Analyze how Revelation uses material from the Old Testament and how this contributes to our understanding and application of the text.”***

The key words and phrases here are;

**Analyze** how **Revelation** uses **material from the Old Testament** and how this contributes to our **understanding and application of the text**.

Be very clear about what the Essay question is asking and remember that everything mentioned in question will need to be addressed in your answer.

## Start to take read widely on your topic and take notes

- Read your Session Readings, any other readings you have been given specifically for the essay and any relevant textbooks.
- Search ATLAS database for recent and relevant journal articles in your topic (e.g. use of Old Testament in Revelation). *You should have completed the forms to give you access for this online database during your admission process.*
- Take notes according to each section of your question.

## Create Your Outline and Plan out your work

Before you start to write make sure you divide your word count so you know how much you need to write for each section. This is important because if you have prepared well, you will have more raw material to use than the space to use it!

A *suggested* outline for a 2000 word essay on the example question above would be;

Introduction:	150 words
Body:	
<i>How OT is used in Revelation</i>	750 words
<i>How this use helps us understand Revelation</i>	475 words
<i>How this helps us apply the text</i>	475 words
Conclusion:	150 words

## Start to Write

### 1. Begin with the Body of your Essay

- Write each section of the body of your essay ensuring that you address every section of your essay question.
- Always use 3<sup>rd</sup> person to articulate opinion and argument unless you have been asked to give personal reflection.
- Write in a formal manner and avoid colloquial language.
- Use footnotes to explain assumed knowledge and to define terms that you use in the body of your essay. This can also be a good way to manage word count.
- Use headings to break up the body of your essay according to your essay question.

### 2. Introduction and Conclusion:

Write your introduction and conclusion after you have written the body of your essay

- Introduction: an outline of the approach that you will take in this essay
- Conclusion: summary of the points you have made

## Proofread your work

Ensure you proofread your work by reading it out loud and asking someone else to read it as well. Do not rely on spell and grammar check.

