Writing Your Research Essay

CITS3200 / StudySmarter

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STUDY Smarter

Organise your ideas
Take your position
Plan your structure

Organise your ideas
First, consider the question!

Ask yourself:
- What are the instructions?
- What is the topic?
- What am I being asked to do?
- What do I know already?
- What else do I need to know?
- What are the task words?

But...

don't spend too much time reading.

At this stage, you only need to know enough about the topic to be able to form an opinion.

Brainstorm your ideas

Sort your ideas into common areas
For example...

smart devices & ACS ethics

Plan your structure

How do you get all your great ideas into a final, polished structure?
EACH ELEMENT OF AN ESSAY IS LIKE A FUNNEL

GENERAL (background / topic sentence)

SPECIFIC (thesis statement / examples & evidence)

These elements join together to form the body of the essay

Introduction

PARAGRAPH ONE

PARAGRAPH TWO

PARAGRAPH THREE

Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

1. Topic
2. Background/Context
3. Thesis statement
4. Brief summary of main points
**BODY PARAGRAPHS**

1. Topic sentence
2. Supporting material
3. Concluding sentence
4. And/or link to the next paragraph

**CONCLUSION**

1. Restate/reaffirm thesis
2. Summarise main points
3. Discuss wider context

(But no new information!)

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**Take your position**

**Thesis Statement**

(related to the assignment question)

**ONE SENTENCE**

Your Argument
A GOOD THESIS STATEMENT SHOULD...

1. Outline what your assignment will set out to do
2. Clearly address the topic and limit its scope
3. Be brief, direct and unambiguous
4. Indicate your overall or general position in relation to the assignment topic/question

Taking the ACS Code of Ethics/Code of Professional Conduct as a starting point, comment on the ethics of creating autonomous, Internet-enabled (or at least communicating), “smart” devices.

THESIS STATEMENT

This essay will comment on the ethics of creating smart devices with reference to the ACS Code of Ethics.

This essay examines the ethics of creating smart devices in relation to the ACS Code of Ethics and argues that the more autonomous smart devices become, the more important it is to satisfy clients' and the broader public's concerns over privacy.

What's next?

A tutor's perspective on how to get higher marks for your essays!

Writing essays: Get better marks
Mon 22 Aug, 1-2pm, Rm 2202
Wed 24 Aug, 10-11am, Rm 2202 (rpt)

Writing and study advice at

WRITESmart Drop-in

Weekdays, 10am-12pm.
Reid Library ground floor.
English language support at English Language Bootcamp
Mondays, 10am-12pm.
Student Central, room 2202

DISCUSSION NOTES
It is your argument – don’t write yourself out of it (‘It could be argued that…’). Whether you write in the first person is a case of preference (yours and your tutor’s!), but own whatever it is you are saying.

Recognise the limits of your argument and of your sources (Wikipedia, the blood samples, scope and context…).

Writing isn’t just writing! Jotting down notes in a coffee shop, talking through the topic with friends etc. all help towards generating ideas, which makes sitting down at the computer to face the blank screen a lot easier.

DISCUSSION NOTES
Read journal articles for content and style. Note that subheadings can be useful in longer assignments, but they also break up the flow of the text, which is not ideal in a short essay.

Leave time between finishing writing and proofreading; if you’re in the writing ‘zone’ you’ll miss errors. It’s worth proofreading in hard copy in a different location to where you write. Reading the text out loud is also useful, as is asking someone else to help you (work with someone who is not writing about the exact same topic to avoid accidental collusion).

Don’t submit the first draft! Leave enough time for two or three drafts to make sure the argument is fully developed throughout the essay.