Academic writing: writing the assignment

Student & Library Services
Use the WEED model for paragraphs

One point per paragraph, incorporating evidence

- **What** - topic sentence
- **Evidence** - references
- **Examples** – expanding on evidence
- **Do** - sum up – so what?

(Godwin, 2014)
The WEED model for paragraphs

• **What**: You should begin your paragraph with the topic or point that you’re making, so that it’s clear to your lecturer. Everything in the paragraph should fit in with this opening sentence.

• **Evidence**: The middle of your paragraph should be full of evidence – this is where all your references should be incorporated.

• **Examples**: Sometimes it’s useful to expand on your evidence. If you’re talking about a case study, the example might be how your point relates to the particular scenario being discussed.

• **Do**: You should conclude your paragraph with the implications of your discussion. This gives you the opportunity to add your commentary, which is very important in assignments which require you to use critical analysis.
Keeping within the word count

- If available, look at the marking criteria for your assignment
- Which areas get most marks and have you allocated them sufficient words?
  - The introduction may only be 5% so don’t have too much in this section
  - If one section gets 20% and another gets 10% write twice as much for the 20% section
  - Don’t write too much on a section you are happier about, and miss out or barely cover others. You won't get many more marks for the area you’re happier with and may miss out all the potential marks from the other areas.
  - If there’s no indication of different marks, treat each criteria equally
Keeping within the word count

• Be concise
  • Some Schools stop reading at the end of the word count so lecturers may miss important parts of your argument if they’re written after this
  • Take out the word count for the introduction and conclusion, then divide up the remaining words between the criteria and weighting
  • Being concise is a skill in itself and aids clarity. See the How to be Concise worksheet for more guidance
  • Have a few drafts and remove any unnecessary detail
Here is an example of a paragraph which goes into too much detail. See the next slide for a more concise version.

The interviews were carried out in the library, which provided a central meeting place, and is commonly known to all students, so this suggested they could find it easily. The researchers disputed how to recruit people and after long arguments, settled on using email and a poster in the Students’ Union. On the first afternoon, 3 students attended followed by 2 students the next day. One of the students kept receiving calls from his friends on his mobile, and this disturbed his interview as he kept leaving the room to answer the phone.
Here is a more concise version

The researchers interviewed five students, who volunteered in response to an email and poster in the Students’ Union.

- Is the location of the interviews and why it was chosen important? If not, miss it out
- We only need to know who was interviewed, not about any disagreements about the process
- There was too much detail about when the interviews happened and someone taking calls. This would only be mentioned if it had an effect on the interview results
Proofreading Tips

✔ Leave your assignment for a few days – come to it with a fresh perspective otherwise you’ll read what you thought you had put in

✔ Read it aloud – you’re more likely to hear mistakes

✔ Use spell check – but with caution!

✔ Proofread several times, looking at different aspects each time e.g. spelling, sentences, paragraphs, flow.

✔ Look over your past assignments – make a note of your common mistakes.

✔ Get a friend to look over your work, but develop your own proofreading skills too. Help available from: http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/proofreading
Resources


