



ACE Quick Guide to Writing the Main Body

The main body is the **longest part** of your assignment: it follows your introduction and precedes your conclusion. This is where you **respond to the assignment brief** and **develop your arguments and ideas in detail**.

Breakdown of an academic assignment

Introduction	5 - 10% of word count
Main Body	80 - 90% of word count
Conclusion	5 - 10% of word count

(Please note, this is general guidance. Always confirm with your module tutor!)

Key Features of the Main Body

When writing the main body of your assignment, you should:



Respond to the **assignment brief** and ensure you meet the **learning outcomes**.



Divide your work into **clear sections** using **headings** (you can also use **sub-headings** if you are writing a report).



Use **paragraphs** of **similar or equal length**. Each paragraph should have a **clear focus/function** that contributes to the overall development of your assignment.



Provide **in-depth discussion, analysis and evaluation** of the topics/ideas/arguments covered.



Draw on **scholarly literature** to **support main points/ideas/arguments**. You should also explore **alternative perspectives** and **counterarguments** where possible.



Structuring the Main Body

There are many different ways to structure the main body of your assignment. Your structure will be dictated by what the assignment brief is asking you to do.

Following these key steps will help you create a coherent structure:

Review the assignment brief: Break it down into sections and sub-sections.

Make a skeleton plan: Map out your sections and sub-sections on a planning document using headings and sub-headings. You can develop your ideas by creating a bullet pointed list of what you want to cover in each section/sub-section.

Allocate word count: Identify how many words you need for each section/sub-section. This information may be included in the brief. If not, use mark allocation to calculate word count.

Identify your paragraphs: Once you have developed your ideas and allocated your word count for each section/sub-section, you can divide your work into paragraphs. Each paragraph should have a clear focus/function (see **TEEEL paragraphs** on p. 3).

Refer to the brief: When making your plan, you should consistently consult the brief to ensure you are answering the assignment question and meeting the learning outcomes.

Use linking language: When writing your assignment, you should use relevant linking language to connect your points/arguments/ideas and paragraphs. For example: 'as discussed above', 'additionally', 'subsequently', 'in comparison to', 'secondly', etc.

Structuring Paragraphs in the Main Body

Your main body should be constructed by paragraphs of similar or equal length (approximately 200-250 words). Many learners write paragraphs that are too short because they do not include sufficient analysis, or make their paragraphs too long as they develop several different points instead of focusing on one main idea.

To ensure you are writing fully developed paragraphs with sufficient evidence, analysis and evaluation, you can structure your paragraphs using the **TEEEL method**:

Topic, Expand, Evidence, Explanation, Link (TEEEL)

Topic – Clearly and succinctly tell the reader what the paragraph will be about.

Expand – Make sure your reader understands the main idea by providing any additional information and/or defining industry terms and/or relating it back to your experiences in the workplace.

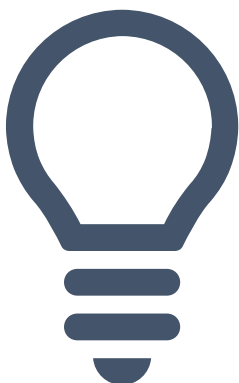
Evidence – Incorporate some evidence to support your main idea. This evidence should be a paraphrase supported by a reference to a scholarly resource.

Explanation – Explain how the evidence supports or develops your argument. You should also discuss the extent to which it can be applied to your organisation and consider the strengths and limitations of the evidence, demonstrating its value, coherence or relevance. You may want to bring in further supporting evidence and/or explore potential counterarguments and alternative perspectives.

Link – Conclude your paragraph by clearly and succinctly summarising your overall point/argument that links back to your main idea or link forward to the next paragraph. You may also propose a recommendation.

(Adapted from University of West London, 2020)

Additional Tips



- Ensure you use **subject-specific terminology** outlined in the assignment brief throughout the main body.
- **Store the sources you use** - you may wish to refer to them later.
- **Check your work for weak points**, e.g. unjustified assumptions, lack of evidence, logical inconsistencies, repetition, uncertainty etc.
- **Proofread** your work to check for errors.

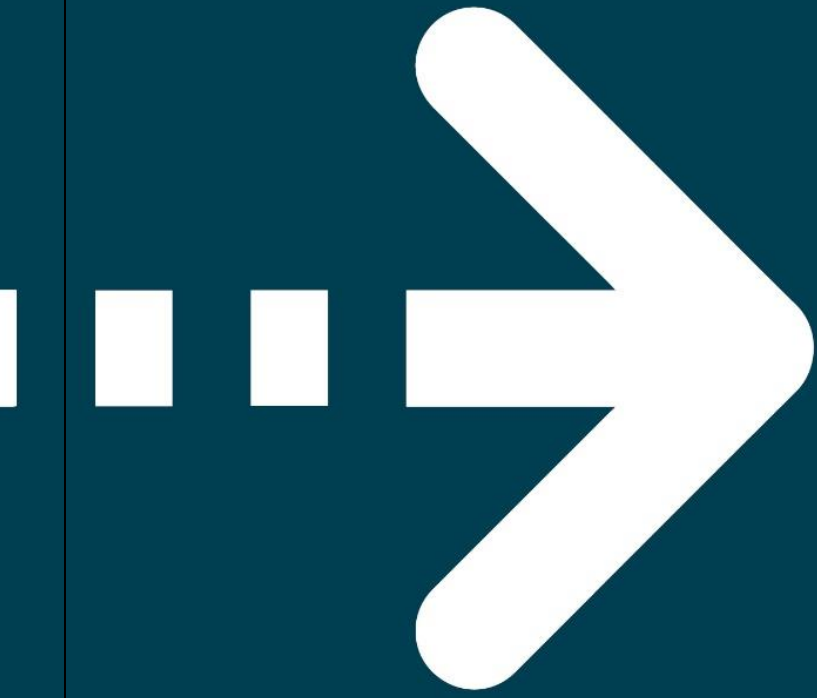


Additional ACE Resources

- Introductions and Conclusions Quick Guide
- Critical Writing: Building an Argument Quick Guide
- Use of Sources Quick Guide
- Editing and Proofreading Quick Guide

References

University of West London (2020) *Writing Critical Paragraphs*. Available at: <https://www.uwl.ac.uk/current-students/support-current-students/academic-support/writing-critical-paragraphs> (Accessed: 19 March 2024).



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