

STUDY AID 8: ARGUING SKILLS

Contents

AIMS

SECTION 1: Opening comments

SECTION 2: Essay conventions

SECTION 3: Prioritisation

SECTION 4: Effective argumentation

SECTION 5: Characteristics of a good argument

SECTION 6: Closing an argument

SECTION 7: Grouping causes

SECTION 8: The advantages of causal groupings

SECTION 9: Figures and diagrams

SECTION 10: Closing comments

Aims

The study skills learnt in this section should enable the student to: -

- Follow essay conventions
- Sift relevant from irrelevant information
- Retain control over the middle part of the essay
- Present effective arguments
- Place an analysis of causes into neat categories
- Further illustrate an argument (if needed) with legible figures and diagrams
- Close an argument

Section 1: Opening Comments

Arguing skills are those which present evidence-based viewpoints in an orderly, logical and plausible manner. They're often placed within the '*main body*' of the essay and strive to: -

- 1.1 Keep to the original aims of the essay
- 1.2 Sift relevant from irrelevant information
- 1.3 Present an orderly '*list*' of causes, based upon verifiable data and views '*for and against*' a particular argument or research finding

Section 2: Essay Conventions

Essay Conventions are those guidelines which must be followed if a written piece of work is to score high marks. Using them makes the art of reading and writing far more enjoyable. They consist of: -

A Citation – an indirect description of an argument which uses '*reported speech*' to reference another person's work e.g. '*Professor Jones criticised Professor Smith's theory for its lack of scientific validity.*'

A Paraphrase (or summary of a quote) which must be clearly distinguished from both a direct quotation and a citation, e.g. '*According to Professor Hyde the speed of light is a universal constant.*'

An Amplification, brings out a fuller meaning of a word and should be placed in brackets () as should dates, citations and brief numerical information e.g. "*The speed of light is a universal constant (its speed cannot vary in any part of the universe),*" (Hyde 2012).

A Quotation – is a direct insertion of another person's work. **Short quotations** (usually those under thirty words) are enclosed in quotation marks e.g. Professor Jones said "*Professor Smith's theory lacks scientific validity.*" However, **long quotations** should be printed in single typescript as a separate paragraph (which is sometimes indented to the left for clarification), e.g. Richard Smith (2011) in the preface to his poetry book '*At 47*' revealed that: -

*"A key characteristic of this collection is the variability in both style and subject matter. In **Part A** especially, readers just do not know what is coming next. A happy go-lucky poem about a pussycat could easily be followed by something abstract on Post Modernism; a sad poem involving death could be followed by a biting satire on some aspect of Britain's contemporary political and social scene. A conscious attempt has been made to explore a wide range of human emotions and topics."*

Lines of poetry or verse are usually distinguished by a diagonal line (/) as in the case of one of the poems in '*At 47*,' e.g. "*At forty-seven/I discovered/I was a Poet/Didn't want it!/Didn't expect it!*"

To purchase a full PDF copy of this material, please scroll down the sidebar and go to '*Disclaimer*' and '*Purchasing Instructions*.'