ESSAY WRITING PROCESS

Forces working for:
- Success and achievement
- Early efforts leading to more thought, feedback, better access to materials, etc.

Forces working against:
- Time
- Lethargy
- Lack of confidence or experience
- Other pressures

Analyze the question
- Understand what is being asked
- Make a summary in your own words
- Check the key words, definitions
- Know limits within the question

Plan an approach
- Brainstorm and group ideas
- Create a skeleton outline

Research, gather and process information
- Use reading lists, textbooks,
- Review notes and reading sources, etc.
- Check back to your essay plan
- Make notes and acknowledge sources and your question analysis
- Explore other possibilities
- Make sure things are relevant - sift and select.

First draft and reworked draft
Check for logic, style, clarity, tone, structure and accuracy
- Does it answer the question?
- Be critical

Final draft
Check for spelling punctuation, grammar, correct format, correct references, whether it is within the limits set.
Planning an Essay

1. **Read over all your notes.**
   A. List all the points you consider will be important for answering the question. Don’t worry about ordering them yet.

2. **Read through the list of important points.**
   A. Draw a mind-map, which includes all your ideas as well as the points on the list.

3. **Classify and organise this material.**
   A. Group related points into broader categories.
   B. Rank categories by importance. Usually, the most important points will come first in the essay.
   C. Within categories, the general points should come before the particular points.
   D. In ordering categories, think also about the relationships between categories – plan for a smooth transition from one idea to the next.
   E. Make a firm(ish) decision about what the main argument (thesis) of the essay will be.

4. **Write a plan.**
   A. Arrange the plan in sections.
   B. Number and scope of sections depends on length and depth of assignment.
   C. Under each section heading, list the points or arguments in that section. Include quotations or examples you will use.

5. **Plan an introduction and a conclusion.**
   A. An introduction should:
      - engage the reader’s interest;
      - give background details or context if necessary;
      - have a thesis statement;
      - give an idea of what you plan to cover and the order in which you will cover it.
   B. A conclusion should:
      - sum up your main points clearly and convincingly;
      - reflect the thesis statement;
      - finish on a strong, positive note.
      - not introduce new material.

6. **Cross-reference your notes with your plan. Try colour coding.**