WHAT ARE ACADEMICS LOOKING FOR?

When you write an essay the marker will want to see that:

✓ The essay question has been answered
✓ There is reasoned argument and adequate supporting evidence
✓ The essay contains relevant information and has an appropriate focus
✓ The essay is well structured and has a logical organisation
✓ There is adequate analysis and commentary
✓ Sources have been referred to and cited in the appropriate way, and the essay has a reference list or bibliography
✓ The essay is well-written in a clear style suitable for the paper or course
✓ Academics also look for: Original ideas or approach
  Evidence of wide reading
  Neat presentation

Common Faults

✗ Missing the point of the question
✗ Failure to deal with part of a question, or limited coverage of an important issue
✗ Too much narrative at the expense of analysis
✗ Poor organisation or argument
✗ Insufficient supporting evidence
✗ Irrelevant material
✗ Conflicting ideas or evidence poorly explained
✗ Plagiarism
✗ Heavy dependence on quotes - the “cut and paste” essay
✗ Other faults include: waffle, padding, generalisations, oversimplification, complex sentences that lose the reader, jargon, clichés.