# Essays in Exams

You will usually be given approximately 1 hour to complete most essays in exams, this allows for: 5-10 minutes for planning; 40-45 minutes for writing and 5-10 minutes for editing and proof-reading.

## Planning

1. Read through all the questions and select the correct number to answer.

2. Re-read your chosen questions carefully:

* Do you really know what to do?
* Can you answer all the parts?
* What does the instruction verb (e.g. ‘discuss’) tell you to do with the topic?

1. Start with the easiest question.
2. Note down everything surrounding the question that springs to mind:

* Key points or arguments
* Theories (names/dates)
* Evidence/examples/case studies (names/dates)
* Connections to module learning outcomes

1. Make a plan:

* Decide on which thoughts are relevant to your exam question.
* Group these ideas, evidence and examples into themes or key points.
* Arrange them in a logical order.
* Structure your answer – introduction --> 4-5 paragraphs --> conclusion.

## Writing

1. Label your answer (you don’t need to write out the question but do keep checking that you are not moving ‘off-point’).
2. Write according to your plan for 40-45 minutes.
3. Write on every other line to allow room for corrections.
4. If you get stuck, look at your plan and reread your answer so far.
5. If you run out of time, write up your remaining ideas in bullet point or note format, but write a short conclusion in full sentences.

## Editing and proof-reading

1. Allow 5-10 minutes to reread your answer and edit/correct/amend it.
2. Cross out any rough drafts or notes that you do not want to be considered.

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