

Analysing the Essay Assignment Question

Learning Support

How do I ace my assignment?

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- You need to answer the question in a way that is:
 - Relevant
 - Appropriate
 - To the point
 - Well-researched

How do I ace my assignment?

- You start by ANALYSING the question itself:
 - What is the purpose of the task?
 - What is the question asking you to do?

- You DECONSTRUCT the question:
 - ASSIGNMENT structure
 - CONTENT words
 - TASK words
 - LIMIT words

What do these words mean?

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- **ASSIGNMENT** structure: the type of writing to produce
 - Essay
 - Report
 - Critical review
 - Literature review
 - Reflective journal
 - Portfolio
 - Case study
 - **CONTENT** words: the subject matter of the essay question
 - **TASK** words: what you must do
 - **LIMIT** words: the boundaries of the essay

TASK words

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- Analyse
 - Argue
 - Assess
 - Compare
 - Contrast
 - Criticise
 - Define
 - Describe
 - Discuss
 - Elaborate
 - Enumerate
 - Evaluate
 - Examine
 - Explain
 - Interpret
 - Justify
 - Outline
 - Prove
 - Review
 - Summarise
 - Trace

Assignment Question Example

- Read this question carefully:

In the last 20 years, rates of divorce have risen significantly worldwide. Write a literature review of the studies investigating the reasons for this increase in divorce rates and the impact on the children in such families. Consider the implications for the development of counselling programmes for the children of such families.

Assignment Question Example

- ASSIGNMENT structure
 - A literature review

In the last 20 years, rates of divorce have risen significantly worldwide. Write a literature review of the studies investigating the reasons for this increase in divorce rates and the impact on the children in such families. Consider the implications for the development of counselling programmes for the children of such families.

Assignment Question Example

- CONTENT words
 - Ideas central to the literature review

In the last 20 years, rates of divorce have risen significantly worldwide. Write a literature review of the studies investigating the reasons for this increase in divorce rates and the impact on the children in such families. Consider the implications for the development of counselling programmes for the children of such families.

Assignment Question Example

- TASK words
 - Investigate: to find out and ascertain
 - Consider: discuss and look into

In the last 20 years, rates of divorce have risen significantly worldwide. Write a literature review of the studies investigating the reasons for this increase in divorce rates and the impact on the children in such families. Consider the implications for the development of counselling programmes for the children of such families.

Assignment Question Example

- LIMIT words
 - Boundaries/constraints of investigation and discussion

In the last 20 years, rates of divorce have risen significantly worldwide. Write a literature review of the studies investigating the reasons for this increase in divorce rates and the impact on the children in such families. Consider the implications for the development of counselling programmes for the children of such families.

Tips for Planning the Assignment

1. Analyse the topic:

2. Brainstorm:

- What do I already know?
- What have I read?
- What ideas or questions do I want to research?
- Which authors might be interesting/valuable?

3. Plan your time:

- Work back from the due date to plan time for research, drafts, and editing. Take account of other work due.
- Use diary and weekly planners to ensure all tasks are accounted for.
- Set specific goals (write introduction, read articles).

Tips for Planning the Assignment

4. Construct a rough plan:

- What are my main points?
- What other ideas are worth including?

5. Start your preliminary research:

- Revise lecture notes and main text books.

6. Revise your plan

7. Begin researching:

- Keep your topic in mind.
- Focus your research on relevant texts.
- Record your findings.

Tips for Planning the Assignment

8. Revise your plan:

- Consider the relationships between ideas.
- Select key points from sources.

9. Start writing:

- Keep your topic in mind.
- Keep the reader in mind.

10. Make several drafts.

11. Edit/Proof read final draft:

- Follow formatting requirements.
- Check for grammar, coherence and flow.

12. Make an appointment with a Learning Adviser

13. Submit.