Essay writing

Dr Matthew Copping
A good essay?

• Answers the question
• Clear (well-written and structured)
• Concise
• Balanced (physically and intellectually)
• Persuasive
• Makes a clear argument – has a clear conclusion
• Coherent
• Confident and accurate use of relevant literature
• Proper punctuation and spelling
• Suitable balance between descriptive and analytical/critical
• Fully and properly referenced
Essay questions

• Why do some teams succeed and others fail?
• Is it possible to predict team performance?
• What factors should be taken into account when managing project teams?
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• Is it possible to predict team performance?
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Academic writing style

- Complexity
- Formality
- Precision
- Objectivity
- Explicitness
- Accuracy
- Hedging
- Responsibility
The second important way in which the print media promotes scientific misunderstanding is through a quasi-hierarchical system of over-exaggerating scientific claims. Typically, in the tabloids, even the most cautiously-framed scientific discovery is translated in dramatic, sensational headlines – e.g., ‘New cure for brain cancer’ – where, as here, the headline is itself an over-exaggeration of the claim being made in the article. Indeed, a distinct terminological difference is observable between the headline – ‘cure’ – the article – ‘new and exciting treatment’ – and the original press release – ‘offers the potential for developing new approaches to treatment’. At each level, the terminology used expresses a movement from circumspection to certainty, from limitation to comprehensiveness. However, while at one level this reflects a simple commercial need to attract readers, it is also a manifestation of a more general principle observed in science communication. As Jan Golinski has noted, the movement from research article ‘claim’, to textbook ‘fact’ is facilitated by an equal process of consolidation, simplification, and extraction from the specific circumstances of its origins. Clearly, therefore, it is insufficient simply to blame poor journalism, without also recognising that exaggerated-certainty is an issue as much within science as without.
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Explanation and example
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Analysis of example
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**Analysis of topic**
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Critical contextualisation
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Essay Structure (1)

Introduction
- 5-10%
- Thesis Statement
- Define scope & terms
- Roadmap

Body
- 80%
- Balanced structure
- Appropriate structure
- Paragraphs
- Use of evidence
- Logical progression (narrative/thematic)
- Signposting
- Citations/references

Conclusion
- 10-15%
- Restate general conclusions
- Summary conclusion/judgement
- Look forward
Essay Structure (2)

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