Within your essay you will be hoping to demonstrate or prove something. You will have a point of view that you wish to convey to your reader. In order to do this, there are academic conventions that need to be followed:

- Evidence (referenced using the UCA Harvard system)
- Paragraph structure
- Academic language

Using evidence

You should support what you wish to say with a reasoned, well-researched argument supported by evidence. Evidence requires the introduction and analysis of quotations, paraphrasing, imagery or data - all of which must be referenced. Evidence strengthens your discussion and demonstrates your awareness of critical theory within your discipline.

You may reference different sources to support your argument. These could include:

- Texts (any written document).
- Illustrations (including images from books, the Internet, films, videos and plans/architectural drawings/maps).
- Data (including facts and figures, graphs and questionnaires).
- Your appendix (where you may have collected transcripts of conversations or interviews by e-mail, tape, telephone or video or other detailed information that you wish to reference).
- Exhibitions.
- Archives.

By commenting on or evaluating the work of others, you demonstrate your own understanding of the topic you are investigating and indicate how your contribution to the debate fits in.

When interpreting other people's work and using it in your own way you can indicate the significance of these ideas to your own argument. Ensure you make a clear distinction between the evidence you use and your own analysis and discussion. In order to discuss others' writings, you need to use quotations or paraphrasing.
Quotations

According to Godfrey (2009:23) ‘Quotations are exact phrases or sentences taken directly from your readings’. They should be used to underpin an idea or to support your argument and not as a substitute for it.

You should frame quotations within your argument. You may need to explain or elaborate their significance and use them to stimulate further discussion.

- Use ‘quotation marks’ to identify the words of others.
- You must always attribute the source of your quotation by referencing (using the UCA Harvard system).
- Quotations should not constitute more than 25% of your word count.
- Show your understanding of the context you found your quotation in.
- Take care not to change its meaning when you make use of it.
- Try to keep quotations concise. They are often more effective when they are short and to the point.
- Keep the use relevant and consistent to the point you are making.
- Validate your sources carefully, especially if using the Internet.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing (indirect citation) is when you explain another person's ideas in your own words. It should be used for the same reasons as direct quotations - to provide evidence for your discussion. You must attribute the source of the idea if it is not your own by referencing (using the UCA Harvard system).

Paraphrasing can be used to integrate others' ideas smoothly and succinctly into your own discussion, and can be useful to summarise ideas. To do this, you need to:

- Use different language to the original author.
- Avoid just changing a word here and there, or changing the word order.
- Keep the original meaning.
**Paragraph structure**

A reasoned argument consists of a series of logical steps you make in order to lead to a point where you can form some sort of judgement on the issue you have been examining, or come to some sort of conclusion.

- Paragraphs are organised in order to build your argument in a series of logical steps.
- A typical paragraph is concerned with a single step in your argument.
- The first sentence of a paragraph is the topic sentence. It clearly states which step in your argument you intend to deal with in this paragraph.
- Subsequent sentences explain, define and expand upon the topic sentence.
- Evidence is offered.
- Evidence is commented on.
- A conclusion may be reached.
- Try to make each paragraph link to the previous paragraph and lead into the subsequent one.

**Language & style**

Being able to express your ideas in formal English is a requirement for written course work, and is a valuable transferrable skill in terms of employability. Academic writing demonstrates your ability to present your ideas convincingly, with authority, accuracy and clarity. Visit this page from UCL for help with grammar.

- Use objective language, for example, rather than ‘I find it difficult to identify’ use ‘It is often difficult to identify...’ ‘It can be seen that...’ ‘There are a number of...’
- Adopt a cautious academic style. Avoid conclusive statements, for example, use ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘it seems that’, ‘appears to’, ‘possibly’, ‘probably’, ‘seemingly’, ‘the evidence suggests that’, ‘it could be argued that’, ‘research indicates...’
- Try to avoid assumptions and generalisations, for example, ‘everyone can see’, ‘everybody knows’, ‘public opinion is...’
Linking ideas together

Guide the reader through your writing by signposting:

To indicate timescales:

➤ when, while, after, before, then...

To draw conclusions:

➤ because, if, although, so that, therefore...

To offer an alternative view:

➤ however, alternatively, although, nevertheless, while...

To support a point:

➤ or, similarly, incidentally...

To add more to a point:

➤ also, moreover, furthermore, again, further, what is more, in addition, then...
➤ besides, as well...
➤ either, not only, but also, similarly, correspondingly, in the same way, indeed...
➤ with respect to, regarding...

To put an idea in a different way:

➤ in other words, rather, or, in that case...
➤ in view of this, with this in mind...
➤ to look at this another way...

To introduce and use examples:

➤ for instance, for example, namely, an example of this is...
➤ such as, as follows, including...
➤ especially, particularly, notably...

To introduce an alternative viewpoint:

➤ by contrast, another way of viewing this is, alternatively, again, rather, another possibility is...
➤ conversely, in comparison, on the contrary, although, though...
To return to emphasise an earlier point:

➤ however, nonetheless, despite, in spite of...
➤ may be true...
➤ although, though, at the same time, although ... may have a good point...

To show the results of the argument:

➤ therefore, accordingly, as a result...
➤ so, it can be seen that...
➤ resulting from this, consequently, now...
➤ because of this, hence, for this reason, owing to, this suggests that, it follows that...
➤ in other words, in that case, that implies...

To sum up or conclude:

➤ therefore, in conclusion, to conclude, on the whole...
➤ to summarise, to sum up, in brief, overall, thus...