Planning your essay:

Use your word count – 1500-2000 words must be divided up. As a rough estimate (based on 1750 words):

- 10% of the word count should be used on your introduction – 175 words
- 80% of the word count should be used on the main body – 1400 words
- 10% of the word count should be used on your conclusion – 175 words

Of the main body (80% of total essay), you could divide your assignment into:

- 3 paragraphs of 466 words each
- 4 paragraphs of 350 words each
- 5 paragraphs of 280 words each

Essay structure: The Diamond

The introduction has its own structure and is separate from the main body.

The main body is the development of your argument into clear sections consisting of paragraphs. Each of these paragraphs in itself has a start, middle and end.

The conclusion also has its own structure and purpose and is separate from the main body.

Thinking of your essay as a diamond will remind you that whatever points you start you have to finish off (this also applies to paragraphs). This is key to making your work flow:
Each paragraph will also follow the diamond pattern.

An opening sentence will be followed by supporting evidence and/or examples to back up your points. You may of course present any opposing argument as well, to show you are considering alternative viewpoints, but your motive here will be to show that your argument is best. This will be followed by a mini conclusion, which may be your comment or a link to the next section/paragraph.

An opening ‘topic’ sentence,

Followed by:

Supporting evidence and/or examples to support or contrast with your point.

Followed by:

A mini conclusion to the paragraph. Your comment or link to the next section/paragraph
Paragraphs need to *PEEEE*

- **POINT**: You need to first provide a point to the paragraph. This will need to link in with the end of the preceding paragraph somehow, using connective phrases.

- **EXPLAIN**: you then need to contextualise the point and explain a little about it.

- **EXAMPLES**: you then need to introduce examples, e.g. contemporary case studies such as the current debate in the UK, once again, for decriminalising drugs.

- **EVIDENCE**: For instance, statistics or research studies, depending on the topic. This will also include more referencing of source material.

- **EVALUATION**: This is where you weigh up what has been said in the paragraph, giving you the opportunity to then identify an issue which you can then go on to discuss in the next paragraph. Final sentence links to first topic sentence. This sentence effectively comments on and concludes this paragraph. It needs to link to the next paragraph as best you can.

See also: