

CONTENTS:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction | 11 |
| <u>Chapter 1 – Working Constructively</u> | 13 |
| i. Taking Notes | 14 |
| ii. Choosing your essay title and collecting material | 19 |
| iii. Choosing when and where to work | 26 |
| iv. Organising your material and planning Your essay | 32 |
| v. Your first draft | 41 |
| <u>Chapter 2 – The Review</u> | 51 |
| i. Reviewing your draft | 51 |
| ii. Spelling and using the right word | 63 |
| iii. Punctuation | 76 |
| iv. Readability | 85 |
| <u>Chapter 3 – The Crucial Details</u> | 89 |
| i. The final check | 89 |
| ii. Quotations | 91 |
| iii. Referencing | 95 |
| iv. Presentation | 109 |
| v. Afterwards | 114 |
| <u>Appendix – Sample Essay Plan</u> | 117 |

INTRODUCTION

The skills required for essay writing are the same as those required for employment. The ability to communicate fluently and clearly in writing is essential in letters, reports, press releases and many other business documents. This book is intended for those who are starting to write formal, academic essays and for those who would like to improve the standard of their work.

Embarking on higher level courses, including A-levels, degrees and vocational training courses, can be daunting to those with little experience of essay writing, or for those who lack confidence, but this book will provide some basic advice and guidance which will enable the reader to gain a better understanding of what is expected of her or him.

Schools, universities and colleges will differ slightly in their requirements, as will individual tutors within those establishments, but all will be looking for concise, focused and well researched essays. This book will help you to achieve a high standard in your written work.

When you are asked to write an essay, you are being asked to provide an argument which you can explain and justify, one which (depending on the title provided) supports, criticises, explains or discusses one or more points. Your argument or arguments must be based on your research and must be:

- objective: supported by evidence and not influenced by your own personal prejudices or emotions

- logical: consistent and clearly reasoned on the basis of the evidence to hand
- precise: well-defined and unambiguous

Your essay should present your arguments in a well-organised way and show that you have engaged with the course, researched your subject thoroughly and analysed it critically.

There are several stages to essay writing and, in an ideal world, you would have plenty of time to devote to each of them but, in reality, they will need to overlap to a certain extent, depending on the time you have and the availability of resources. This book will guide you through the stages and offer advice on some of the best ways to tackle them.