

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON  
*Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui*



**School of Architecture**



# THE ART OF WRITING ARCHITECTURE ESSAYS

# THE ART OF WRITING ARCHITECTURE ESSAYS

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**Attachment: ARCH 171 History of Architecture - How to Write an Essay**

## 1 WHY WRITE ESSAYS

### Learning and assessment

The two main reasons for setting essays are:

- to encourage you to read widely and learn more about the topic, to consider new ideas, then to organise and express what you have learned in written form
- to enable your progress in learning and writing skills to be assessed

Essay-writing skills provide your lecturer with evidence of the gains you are making in your course of study. In the process of researching and writing about a specific topic, you will learn far more than by just reading about it. Gagne (1965) claims that while we retain only about 10% of what we read, and 20% of what we hear, we retain over 70% of what we say or write ourselves.

### Short- and long-term goals

Teaching objectives at each level of study guide your lecturers' expectations of students' development. Read the objectives stated in the paper outline and take them into account when writing assignments.

More specific skills, which you will develop when writing essays, include:

- effective use of library resources
- the ability to analyse a question
- the ability to combine material from many sources into a coherent argument
- referencing and bibliographic skills
- familiarity with and effective use of the language of architecture
- skills of visual analysis
- the ability to write so others can enjoy reading your work.

All these skills are valuable in the longer term, not just for passing papers. The ability to communicate knowledge and ideas to others in written form will always be useful if not essential in your personal and professional lives. And in the process you will also be increasing your knowledge of architecture.

**Audience**

All writing is done for an audience. The most successful writing is tailored to the needs and expectations of the intended audience. In the case of essays, your audience is your lecturer or tutor – the person marking your work. While they may well know more about the topic than you do, you should not try to write what you think they will agree with. It is important to formulate and explain your own ideas.

It may help to think of your audience as yourself before you did the detailed study for the essay - in other words, someone who has a broad knowledge of the subject area, but needs to have the specific question answered.

## 2 ARCHITECTURE ESSAYS

### what are they?

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines essay as a 'literary composition'. The word comes from a French word meaning 'attempt', originally from the Latin 'to weigh'. So the literary form 'essay' implies a weighing of evidence, or an attempt at persuasion to a certain argument. The writing of an essay is a formal exercise, requiring non-colloquial language and careful attention to sentence structure.

An architecture essay is a literary composition devoted to the discussion of the context of, and ideas about, architecture.

### Talking about architecture

Architecture students are required to write essays in a number of papers. These may range from critical academic essays in architectural history and theory, through to formal technical reports, or poetically inclined design descriptions. In each case, however, the same general rules of essay writing apply. All architectural writing should be well organised, clear and comprehensive, grammatically correct, follow academic protocols, and, above all else, it should directly address the issue under discussion.

Architecture essays do sometimes differ from other forms of academic writing by including visual material in the form of images, pictures, diagrams, drawings, and photographs. It is a part of the descriptive process of buildings that we need to refer to how things or ideas 'look'. Where graphic material is used in an essay it should be treated as another part of the formal essay process. Thus, it should always be referred to in the written body of the essay, it should be inserted as close to the written reference as is possible, and the source of the image should be correctly attributed. This includes images used from books, personal photographs, or computer sources. It is important to remember that including an image does not surrender responsibilities of writing.

### Aims – what do we expect?

A good architecture essay is well researched, well argued, and well written. It is also handed in on time. Lecturers have examples of good essays, which you can look at.

### Process – what goes into an A essay

The process of writing an essay requires a student to:

- identify the requirements of, and possibilities inherent in, the topic or question
- formulate and develop a coherent argument
- accurately present an appropriate range of visual and written evidence
- show originality and independence of thought
- write with fluency of style and correctness of mechanics.

### Product – what makes an A essay

The finished product demonstrates how well you have completed the process of planning, researching and writing your essay. It is the means by which your skills, and your progress in developing those skills, are assessed.

### Deadlines

Deadlines are set to help you plan and organise your work so that you do not fall behind. Your tutor may grant extensions on medical grounds, provided you supply a medical certificate from your own GP or from Student Health Services. You must apply for an extension *before* the due date.

Your paper outline will explain the mandatory paper requirements concerning where and when essays should be handed in and what the penalties are for late work.

### **How architecture essays are marked**

Your tutor marks your work. For each assignment, tutors discuss the specific questions and their requirements. Sample cross checking is done between tutors as well as the paper co-ordinator(s), to ensure consistency for the whole class. The skills your lecturer is looking for are set out on page 21 on the sample assignment marking sheet.

If you do not feel that your work has been fairly marked, you can ask the paper co-ordinator to arrange for it to be re-marked by someone else. Read the marker's comments carefully.

### **Feedback**

You can discuss your essay writing with your tutor at any stage. You do not have to wait to get back a completed essay to check whether or not you are on the right track.

### Learning from the marker's comments

When you have an essay handed back, read the marker's comments carefully. If any comment is unclear or inadequately explained ask for more feedback. And keep your tutor's points in mind when writing your next essay.

This aspect of essay writing is often underrated, but can improve your grades dramatically. The comments your tutor makes are your cues to approaching your next essay.

### **word count – why and how?**

The word limit stated for your essay is a guide to what is expected from you. You should stay within 10% of the limit. The word count does not include quoted material or the bibliography.

If you are not using a computer with a word counting facility, you can easily estimate your word count. Pick three or four lines of the writing or typing you use for your final copy, and count how many words there are in each. Take the average of these, and multiply by the number of lines on your page. This gives you an approximate number of words per page.

If your essay is too short, you may not have put enough into it. Think about how you can develop your argument. Have you given enough evidence to support your claims? Is there a counter-claim you should discuss?

If your essay is too long, you may have got carried away. Have you stuck to the essay question? Have you been repetitive? Do you have phrases that are too wordy? It probably needs to be tightened up by cutting out material which is not strictly and logically tied to your argument. Editing always improves your work (see page 17).

### **Presentation**

Essays should be **typed or word-processed** unless you have a good reason for not being able to do so. If you must write your essay by hand, make sure your handwriting is very neat. The important point is that they are easy to read. Other things to remember:

- use A4 paper
- use one side of the paper only
- double space your text
- ensure you leave a wide left-hand margin for the marker's comments
- number the pages
- keep a copy for yourself.

Putting your work in a plastic sleeve or folder will keep it tidier. (Please do not put each individual page in a plastic sleeve – it makes annotating your work unnecessarily difficult.) Securely staple the top-left corner so no pages can become detached.

The front cover or title page should include:

- your name
- the paper number
- your tutor's/lecturer's name

- the assignment number and date
- the essay question in full.

**You should always keep a hard copy of your essays when you hand in the original.** Do not rely on computer files, which can be lost or corrupted. Given considerations of legibility, material costs and machine and staff time involved. Please do not submit your essays by fax machine or email.

### where to go for help

You should never feel at a loss with essay writing. General and specific help is readily available from the following:

#### People

- Tutor

Your tutor is your first contact for any questions or difficulties you may have. Tutors are there to help you learn and develop your skills. They want you to do well. Ask them exactly what they expect from your work, if they haven't already made it clear to you. Talk to them about your essay plan, your draft outline, or any particular part of an essay you are finding a problem.

- Lecturer

Like tutors, lecturers want you to succeed in your studies. They set the essay questions, so if you are not clear about how to tackle a topic, ask for help.

- Student Learning Support Services

The SLSS is in the courtyard at the back of 14 Kelburn Parade. They run short courses (1-2 hours) on various aspects of study skills, language and writing skills. These are free, but you need to book in. Go and ask about the courses, or ring them on 463 5999. Student Learning Support Services also offer one-to-one sessions, 'drop in' sessions, and practical help and advice for students wishing to set up study groups. A 'drop-in' session especially geared to Maori and Pacific Nations students (MAPIS) is held each Friday 1-4pm. Essay-writing workshops are sometimes held at the Schools of Architecture and Design at 139 Vivian Street. See Reception or check the noticeboards for details.

- WRIT 101 - Writing English

The English Language Institute (Level 2, Von Zedlitz Building, Kelburn Parade) offers this 18 point paper which can be part of your degree. WRIT 101 (or WRIT 151 for non-native speakers of English) teaches all aspects of writing at tertiary level. It uses practice and feedback to develop skills in self-criticism to help you recognise and improve on defective elements in your own writing.

- Group Study

Group study can work for some people. In its simplest form, it can just be talking to your classmates about the essay questions. You may start up a study group to share the initial research work, and discuss detailed approaches to a topic. (Student Learning Support Services can help you to set one up – see previous page.) Bouncing ideas around can be really useful, but make sure that the finished product is all your own work.

### Resources

This handbook provides information on what the School of Architecture expects from written assignments and is designed especially to assist Architecture students. More detail on the specifics of essay writing can be found in the following books:

Borden, Iain, and Katerina Ruedi, *The Dissertation: An Architecture Student's Handbook*, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000. (Available from the Architecture and Design Library).

Jones, John, and Barbara Grant, *Writing, Setting and Marking Essays: A Guide for Students and Staff*, Auckland: Higher Education Research Office, University of Auckland, 1991. (Limited copies may be available from the Architecture and Design Library).

McKernan, John, *The Writer's Handbook*, Orlando, Florida: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1988. (Available from the Main Library).

Tremewan, Tanya (ed), *Style Manual for Aotearoa New Zealand*, Canberra, A.C.T.: AGPS Press in association with Lincoln University, 1997. (Available from the Architecture and Design Library).

Turk, Christopher and John Kirkman, *Effective Writing; Improving scientific, technical and business communication*, (Second Edition) London, New York: E & F H Spon, 1989 (Available from the Main Library).

### 3 HOW TO WRITE GOOD ESSAYS

The process of planning and writing an essay demands good time management and self-discipline. These are extremely valuable skills and the sooner you develop them the more you will achieve – both at university and throughout your life. The level to which you accomplish these skills will be reflected in your essay grades.

One of the hardest parts of writing an essay is getting started. But the earlier you start planning your writing, the more likely you are to hand in a good essay.

#### Planning

The first things to do are to choose a topic and to plan your work.

what is the question?

Your choice of question should be guided by personal interest. It is always better to write about a topic that interests you, rather than choosing one because you think it looks easier. Having made a choice, you need to analyse the question:

- Identify the **subject** – this is the topic of the question. If it is not immediately obvious, try reading the question and ask yourself, ‘What, in one or two words, is this question about?’ Or, if this were an exam question and someone asked you which question you had done, you would say, ‘I did the one on ...’.
- Identify the **key structural words**, or instruction – for example, compare, analyse, etc. The following is a summary of common key structural words (with similar or related words in brackets):

#### KEY STRUCTURAL WORDS

<b>Analyse</b> (explore, consider, examine):  Break the subject up into main ideas, and describe the relationships between them.	<b>Explain</b> (account for, describe why):  Give the meaning, interpret, give reasons.
<b>Comment on</b> (discuss, explain, critique):  Discuss, explain, and give your opinion on the ideas expressed.	<b>Illustrate</b> (demonstrate, give examples):  Explain or clarify a problem using concrete examples.
<b>Compare</b> (and contrast, distinguish between):  Look for similarities and differences between the things mentioned.	<b>Justify</b> (support):  Provide the reasons for your conclusions or for the statement made in the question

**Criticise** (review, critically examine, comment on, assess, evaluate):

Make your own judgement about the views expressed and support your judgement with evidence.

**Define:**

Set down a precise meaning; or state the terms of reference.

**Discuss** (argue, debate, examine):

Present a different aspect to a problem and come to a conclusion.

**Outline** (indicate, summarise, list):

Give the main features or general principles of a subject leaving out minor details.

**Relate** (integrate):

Prove the connection between one thing and another; tell, recount.

- Identify the **aspect or focus** – which aspect of the subject is the question directed at?

Read the essay question you have chosen word for word. This might seem like obvious advice but sometimes a cursory glance at an essay topic can lead you to misunderstand the meaning of the question. By demonstrating in your introduction that you have analysed the question correctly you can approach the rest of the essay with greater confidence.

The following example shows how an essay question can be analysed:

**Question:** Describe and compare architectural developments in the New Zealand house in the period 1850 through to 1950. Note specific changes to the physical and planning features at various times.

**Subject:** History of the New Zealand house; 1850-1950.

**Key structural word(s):** describe, compare, note.

**Focus:** architectural developments, physical description, and planning issues.

By the time you have broken down the question this way, you will probably have a good idea of where to start your research. It may help to discuss it with your tutor if you are not sure you are on the right track.

You may like the topic of a question, but find you cannot easily analyse it this way. The key structural words may not be explicit, for example:

**Question:** Is Frank Lloyd Wright a nineteenth- or twentieth-century architect?

Although it does not say so in as many words, this question asks you to compare and contrast the key characteristics of Frank Lloyd

Wright's architectural work in the period spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and to compare this with more widespread architectural developments and architects over the same period.

Remember- you can always check with your tutor on any aspect of the question you are not sure of.

In some circumstances you may write on a topic of your own choice, but you need to discuss it with your tutor first and have it approved. It must be of a standard comparable to those of the set topics. Also, it must cover the same part of the paper as the set topics.

### Thinking around the topic

As you analyse your chosen essay topic, various questions and considerations will present themselves. These should guide your initial research. But before you get too far, you need to do some planning.

Here are some strategies for tackling an essay. Try some to find what works best for you. Remember that there is no one 'correct' way to plan and write an essay. Different methods or combinations of methods suit different people.

- Mind-mapping

This is a technique which can help organise scattered ideas, and especially suits people who are 'visual' learners. Start with a blank sheet of paper, turned horizontally. Write the main subject in the middle of the page. Make branches out from the centre for each key point, and build out from these. Use arrows, doodles, or different colours.

- Brain-storming

Alone, or with others, you can use brain-storming as a concentrated ideas session. Any words, phrases or questions you think of about the topic are immediately written down. After 10 minutes or so, stop and see if you can make sense of your notes. Select the important points to think about some more, and eliminate anything which is obviously irrelevant.

- Key words

A more linear thinker might progress directly from analysis of the question to planning an answer. Take the key structural words, and apply them directly to the key subject and focus words. For example:

Describe and compare architectural developments in the New Zealand house in the period 1850 through to 1950. Note specific changes to the physical and planning features at various times.

That is, describe the typical architectural house styles of the period 1850-1950, then discuss the differences that occur over this period using specific examples.

- Argument and counter-argument

If the essay question puts a proposition or states a viewpoint, you can treat it as a debate. Can you support the argument? Can you refute it? Can you reach and support a conclusion?

**Question:** To what extent is a building influenced by the technical aspects of building, rather than the creative influence of the designer.

**Argument:** Technical factors influencing a building.

**Counter-argument:** Creative factors influencing a building.

In the process of researching both these claims, you would expect to find more convincing evidence on one side or the other. **Present all the evidence**, and explain why you support one side over the other.

- Free-writing

Sometimes you just need to start writing, with no clear idea of how you want it to turn out. Once you have analysed the question, write down the topic and start writing. Set a time limit of 10-15 minutes, and write quickly and freely without pausing. If you get stuck, don't stop – repeat your last word or phrase until you get going again. Don't stop to re-read until the time is up.

You might find you have written a draft introduction or conclusion. You might decide that the topic is utterly hopeless and you should throw it away and start again. But you are likely to come up with at least some ideas you can restructure into an essay plan. And you will have made a start on the actual writing process.

## Research

Background reading is necessary for all essay topics. How much depends on the topic, the knowledge you already have, and the extent to which you feel your own understanding is clarified by becoming familiar with others' views. The amount of reading will also be determined by how much time you have available. Plan your reading.

All the books on your reading lists are in the Architecture and Design library. There will be other sources you can use which are not on the reading list. Reading around your subject may result in a better essay and a higher mark by extending your knowledge of the subject and

by demonstrating to your tutor your ability to carry out independent research. It is also good practice should you wish to pursue postgraduate studies.

**You must always reference your sources fully and accurately.** See page 23 for details.

### Thesis statement

Begin by writing a concise statement about the topic, and your approach to it. This **thesis statement** may be a statement of opinion that you will defend or explain, or a statement of intent declaring what you will explain and illustrate in your essay. For example:

I propose to examine the development of the architecture program at the Bauhaus school of design (Germany) in the period 1919 to 1933. Particular attention will be given to the influence of Walter Gropius during the initial phase, and attempts will be made to trace this influence into current architectural practice.

This thesis is the 'kernel' of your essay, and should be written early in the planning stage. However, as you develop your ideas and research, you may find you need to refine or revise it.

### Essay Structure

Write out the essay question in full at the beginning of your essay – see page 9 under **Presentation**. Having it there at the start should help you to keep to the topic.

Every essay needs three main parts, each with a specific purpose:

- introduction
- body
- conclusion

You can look at an essay as a journey or a place around which you are taking your reader.

### First draft

You don't have to start writing your essay at the beginning and work through to the end. Some people write the conclusion first, then write the rest of the essay with that end point firmly in mind. Or you could start with an introduction – but don't worry if you end up having to rewrite it later on. You may find it easiest to start with the part with which you are most familiar. Cutting and pasting is an effective way of using all your work without having to rewrite or discard too much. This can be done easily on a word processor.

Your first draft should be completed several days, and preferably at least a week, before the deadline. That way you can leave it for a day or two before coming back to look at it with 'fresh eyes'. The draft can be deliberately longer than the word limit to allow for pruning.

## Paragraphs

Paragraphs will break your essay into manageable sections of related material to aid the reader's comprehension. Each paragraph should deal with one idea only. The first, or topic sentence states the point to be made. Then develop the idea in a few support sentences. Your paragraphs should flow into each other, but keep the ideas separate. Anything unrelated to the topic sentence should be in a new paragraph.

Link your paragraphs so that each follows on from the last. Show how the ideas are related by using words such as furthermore, however, conversely, therefore, consequently (but avoid over-using any one). If the structure of the essay does not make your points flow into each other, you will need to explicitly link them back to your original thesis. It should be clear how each point helps to answer the essay question.

## Introduction

The introduction should do just that - introduce your reader to the main themes and ideas to be addressed, without going into detail. Address the implications of the question and the scope of your approach, and broadly discuss background, issues and context. It must include (usually as its last sentence) a thesis statement - see page 16.

Remember that the introduction is the first part of your work encountered by the reader. It should grab their attention, drawing them into the essay, making them want to find out more. Do not state your conclusions - if you give the game away, the reader may lose interest. If appropriate do give an indication of what your thesis intends to achieve - the reader will enjoy the anticipation of reading a satisfactory outcome of your research.

## Body

The body of an essay should present your ideas about the topic. Each new idea needs a new paragraph, and will often benefit from being broken down into several paragraphs. You will make more impact if you put the main idea first. If it is in a secondary position, it will appear less important. Introduce each idea with a sentence or two detailing its relation to the question or argument. Develop the idea by explaining it, giving evidence, and illustrating the evidence. Refer to books and articles, and put them in your bibliography. Where relevant, make reference to specific buildings. Details on how to

prepare a bibliography and reference buildings are provided in this Guide.

### Conclusion

Summarise the ideas you have presented, and say why you have reached your conclusion. State your conclusion clearly and relate it back to your thesis statement. Do not introduce any new material. Your conclusion should leave the reader believing that you have covered the topic thoroughly and convincingly.

## Editing

Here is how you make your work readable. Make sure the overall essay structure makes sense.

- Have you presented your argument in a logical sequence?
- Do your introduction and conclusion fit with the body of the essay and with each other?
- Are the main points sufficiently prominent?
- Do your sentences make sense? (All sentences must have a subject, object and verb).
- Have you used paragraphs to help order and structure your ideas? Do they flow?
- Have you checked the grammar and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, referencing, etc).
- take out or change any word or sentence which is repetitive.
- To avoid monotony, vary your sentence structure and length.

On page 28 is a **Good Writing Checklist** prepared by the VUW English Department, which you can apply to essays on architecture and other writing as well. Check to ensure the essay is neither too short nor too long. For notes on word count see page 9.

### Punctuation and spelling

Poor spelling and punctuation are major sources of 'noise' in an essay. They distract the reader and interfere with his/her reception to your ideas and message. The same applies to incorrect grammar.

Use a dictionary or spell-check, and always check the names of artists and writers you are writing about or quoting from. It is very annoying to read an essay about 'Le Corbussier', instead of Le Corbusier.

If you have trouble with grammar and punctuation, it will help to have someone else read your essay, or to read it aloud to yourself.

Student Learning Support Services can help you, or you may enrol in the WRIT 101 course (see page 10).

### Common errors

The following are some common spelling and grammatical mistakes. See the *Style Manual* for a full explanation of these and other common errors:

**Correct hyphenation** - 'twentieth-century architecture', but  
'architecture of the twentieth century' i.e. apply a hyphen only when the phrase 'twentieth century' is being used as an adjective and not when it is being used as a noun.  
avant-garde

**affect** - (verb) move, touch, or produce an effect on, also pretend  
(noun) feeling, emotion. Think of *affection*

**effect** - (verb) bring about, accomplish an effect  
(noun) result. Think of *effective*

**medium** (singular)/ **media** (plural)

**canon** NOT **cannon**

**apostrophes** are never used for plurals. They either indicate *possession* or the *omission* of letters:

**1940s** - no apostrophe (or 'the forties', as long as it is clear which century!). Remember that if you are discussing the 'last century', this now refers to the twentieth century!

**Sarah's** painting, **Jones'** work, or **Jones's** work

**its** - means belonging to it

**it's** - is the abbreviation for **it is**. **NB - never use IT'S unless it means IT IS!!**

**Capital letters** - it is no longer usual to capitalise the names of movements in architectural history, such as classicism, modernism etc. If you are not sure, refer to one of the books on the topic. Keep your upper case letters for proper names only, as in Le Corbusier, the Bauhaus, Ian Athfield. When quoting, follow the original exactly. Lower case letters should be used for abbreviations: p (page) or pp (pages).

### **Technical report writing**

In his book, *The Art in Structural Design*, Alan Holgate suggests that appropriateness in style in one of the keys to achieving an effective technical report:

This means setting out the report in accordance with the conventions of the discipline regarding style, headings, table of contents, figures and tables, and quotation of references. The actual system adopted is not of great importance and staff at any particular institution will have their own ideas, which they should specify to you. (Holgate, 283)

Do not hesitate to approach your tutor or lecturer if you have any doubts on the “appropriateness” of the style of your report. They will have had a good deal of experience and academic and professional environments as well and will be only too happy to share their knowledge.

Detailed information on effective report writing is provided in the publication, *Effective Writing, Improving scientific, technical and business communication*. Refer to the Bibliography at the back of this guide for publication details.

### **How to deal with writer’s block**

Most of us get ‘writer’s block’ at some stage in writing. Usually, this is a temporary condition, when we suddenly run dry and can’t think of where to go next. Simply re-reading what you have written, or leaving a gap and continuing with another idea, is usually enough to get started again. More serious blocks can be depressing. Perhaps you are worried about the deadline, or are trying too hard to produce a perfect essay at first draft stage.

Here are some techniques for ‘unblocking’ suggested in the WRIT 101 course:

- Free write as hard and as fast as you can. See if language will lead you towards a meaning.
- Break the paper down into attainable goals and concentrate on one part at a time. (You can eat an elephant if you eat one bite at a time.)
- Dictate the draft. Talk into a tape recorder and then transcribe it from that.
- Pretend you are writing a letter to a friend. Put Dear ... at the top of the page and start writing.
- Write down the reasons why you can’t get started. Once you have defined the problem, you may be able to dispose of it.
- Take a break – and then come back to it.

**WRITING THAT CAN BE DELAYED, WILL BE.**

**AVOID EDITING BEFORE YOU NEED TO.**

**4 APPENDICES**

**Sample assignment marking sheet**

**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON**

**ASSIGNMENT MARK SHEET  
NUMBER**

**COURSE**

**NAME:**

**ASSIGNMENT:**

**TUTOR:**

**DUE DATE:**

Submitted on

the due date:

**GRADE:**  
for each day late)

(2% deducted

Length:

	outstanding	very good	good	satisfactory	unsatisfactory
Understanding and definition of topic					
Formulation and development of argument					
Use of visual and written resources					
Originality and independence of thought					
Mechanics: legibility, presentation, grammar, spelling, documentation					

**COMMENTS:**

**Interpreting grades**

You can interpret your grades based on the above criteria in the following way. There are five broad categories:

1	A+	<b>Outstanding</b>
2	A	<b>Very Good</b>
3	B	<b>Good</b>
4	C	<b>Satisfactory</b>
5	D/E	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>

These categories can be broken down as follows:

<b><u>Grade</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>	<b><u>Interpretation</u></b>
<b>Outstanding</b>		
A+	85-100	Fulfils all of the criteria to an outstanding degree
<b>Very Good</b>		
A	80-84	Fulfils all the criteria to a very high standard consistently
A-	75-79	Fulfils all the criteria to a very high standard intermittently
B+	70-74	Fulfils most of the criteria to a very good standard
<b>Good</b>		
B	65-69	Fulfils most of the criteria to a good standard
B-	60-64	Fulfils some of the criteria to a good standard
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
C+	55-59	Fulfils some of the criteria to a satisfactory standard
C	50-54	Fulfils some of the criteria to a satisfactory standard intermittently
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
D	40-49	Fails to fulfil enough of the criteria to an adequate standard
E	0-39	Fails to fulfil any of the criteria to an adequate standard

## Referencing

Proper referencing is essential in essay writing to make the sources of your information clear. This refers to published material only. **Please do not reference your lecture notes.**

When you look up information in books and articles, you can use the references and bibliographies supplied by other writers to find further material. Properly referencing your own work makes it possible for others to look up your sources. It also allows you to introduce points of view with which you do not necessarily agree, and to set up reasoned debate within your essay.

### Plagiarism

Any quotation you use or ideas that are not your own must be acknowledged. Failure to do so is **plagiarism**, and is regarded as one of the worst crimes a writer can commit. It is usually easily spotted, and can have very serious consequences. This may sound melodramatic, but plagiarism is a form of theft. Proper referencing will protect you from accusations of cheating or theft of ideas.

The School of Architecture recognises two levels of plagiarism:

- **minor plagiarism** involves small amounts of material and is likely to be unintentional.
- **major plagiarism** involves large amounts of material, and is almost certainly intentional.

When plagiarism is found, the penalties depend on the degree of the offence. You will be advised of your mistake and warned against repetition. You will also be marked down, and/or asked to resubmit your work, which will be subject to late penalties. Serious or repeated offences are likely to result in failure of the paper, and the risk of disciplinary action in extreme cases. Similar penalties apply to the copying of another student's work.

Remember to reference **quotations** and **other peoples' ideas**, even if you have not expressed them in the same words as the source in which you found them.

### Quotations

There are two main ways of incorporating quotations into your writing. Where you only use a phrase or a short sentence, it can be included in a sentence of your own but should be enclosed in **single quotation marks**:

In 1959 the Antipodeans set out to defend the image in art against what they saw as the 'aesthetic censorship' of the increasing dominance of abstraction (Smith 1989:7).

These seven Melbourne artists also wanted to protect their hard-won status as professional artists against the inroads of 'people who devote the week . . . to commercial work, and then blossom forth as bright, abstract weekend Bohemians' (Smith 1959:132).

If you wish to quote a passage of three lines or more, it should be indented from the main text. **Quotation marks are not required.**

. . . there is a great deal of swift action and movement. This movement is communicated from figure to figure, from scene to scene, and encompasses the huge expanses of wall in their entirety.

(Kitzinger, cited in Demus, 343)

The quotations can be referenced either by footnotes (see page ???), or by the Modern Languages Association of America (MLA) system of putting the author's name at the end of the quotation or sentence containing the quotation, together with the page number. This is used in the above examples. The date is optional unless more than one publication by the same author is referred to in the essay.

Note that there are many different systems used for references and bibliographies. The bibliography in Chapter 5 lists a number of authoritative sources. They can be complicated and somewhat confusing, but the examples used here are in the style preferred by the School of Architecture.

### Referencing buildings

Put the architect's name first, then the name of the building (in *italics*, or underlined), the year(s) during which it was under construction followed by its location in brackets. For example:

Le Corbusier, *Chapel at Ronchamp*, 1950-54 (Ronchamp, France)

Where dates are not known exactly use 'c' to stand for *circa*, which is Latin for approximately or around (sometimes written as 'ca'). It is important to provide the accurate location of a building as there may be more than one building designed the same architect in the same area.

Subsequent references to the same architect, or the same building, can be abbreviated, but they should be stated in full in the first instance and in cases where confusion might arise (perhaps there more than one building has a similar name).

### Footnotes and endnotes

Footnotes and endnotes generally contain information on quotations or references in the text. They can also be used to mention related

material or incidental information which would be too distracting if included in the main text. They should be kept as short as possible. Footnotes are not necessary when using the MLA system of authors cited in brackets in the text. Footnotes are indicated by a superscript number beside the name, phrase, sentence or quotation to which they refer, and appear at the base of the page – under a horizontal line and in a smaller typeface (see below).

Endnotes serve the same purpose as footnotes, but appear at the end of the essay – as commonly seen in periodicals. Like footnotes, endnote numbers should be sequential throughout the essay.

In general, it is best to avoid copious footnotes, as they tend to interrupt the flow of your essay. Try to restrict them to references or brief explanations only. It is not necessary to footnote ideas or assumptions that are or were generally held to be true. For example, it is not necessary to give a source for such statements as ‘By the end of the 18th century in Europe, it was generally accepted that the earth was round’.

There is often confusion about how to refer in footnotes to the same book several times or two or more books by the same author. The following example from the Art History Department is a guide to dealing with a series of references to writings by a single author:

According to Bernard Smith, European artists on Cook’s voyages applied a combination of the pictorial conventions of the topographical and picturesque traditions to their representation of Pacific landscape subjects, which resulted in a new type of landscape which Smith calls the ‘typical landscape’.<sup>1</sup>

Painters like William Hodges saw the New Zealand landscape through the lens of the baroque landscape tradition as practised by painters like Salvator Rosa.<sup>2</sup>

This argument is supported by contemporary written accounts such as that of Johann Forster.<sup>3</sup>

In a later book on the same subject, Smith restated many of his original arguments<sup>4</sup>.

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1 Bernard Smith, *European vision and the South Pacific*, Sydney: Harper and Row (2nd ed), 1984, p 1.

(Make sure you give full publication details including page numbers.)

2 Smith 1984, pp 65-66. (Use the same format for any further references to this particular book by Smith.)

3 *ibid.* (This means that the reader will find the reference in exactly the same place as the immediately preceding footnote – that is, on pp 65-66 of Smith’s *European vision.*)

4 Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: In the wake of Cook’s voyages*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1992, pp 1-5. (If you refer to this book again you must give the date, that is, Smith 1992, pp xx, to distinguish it from the earlier book by the same author.)



## Bibliography

Start your bibliography on a new page at the end of your essay. You should list only those books and articles which you have used. They should be listed alphabetically by surname of main or first author. The bibliography allows your reader to follow up ideas or issues that you raise in your essay. **It should not include standard reference works such as language dictionaries or the Bible. Remember - do not reference lecture notes.**

Your bibliography lists the research literature used for your topic for the benefit of your reader. It should be as comprehensive but also as concise as possible. Unnecessarily long bibliographies annoy rather than impress your reader, especially if they contain obviously irrelevant material. On the other hand, you must include all relevant material you have used, even if you have not quoted from it directly.

There are several different ways of setting out the information in your bibliography. The following style can be used with **either** foot- or endnotes **or** the MLA referencing system (see page 24). In general, the more information you give, the better. Here are some examples of how to reference different types of publications.

### Book with single or multiple authors:

Author/s surname first, followed by first name or initials, first name/initials and surname of subsequent author(s), *Title - italics or underlined* - with only the first word and any subsequent proper nouns capitalised, Place of publication: Publisher (edition used if not the first), date of publication.

De Vido, Alfredo, *House Design: Art and Practice*, New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc, 1996.

Clark, Justine and Paul J. Walker, *Looking for the Local: Architecture and the New Zealand Modern*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2000.

### Book edited by one or more people:

Editor's surname first followed by first name or initials, first name/initials and surname of any subsequent authors (ed/s), *Title - italics or underlined*, Place of publication: Publisher (edition used if not the first), date of publication.

Frascina, Francis and Jonathan Harris (eds), *Art in modern culture: An anthology of critical texts*, London: Phaidon, 1992.

### Essay or chapter by an author who is not the author or editor of the book in which it is published:

Author/s surname first, followed by first name or initials, first name/initials and surname of subsequent author(s), 'Title of chapter or article in inverted commas', Editor's surname first, followed by

first name or initials, first name/initials and surname of any subsequent authors (ed/s), *Title – italics* or underlined, Place of publication: Publisher, date of publication, page numbers. If the essay or chapter was first published elsewhere, give the date of the original essay [in square brackets] after its title.

Said, Edward, 'Orientalism' [1978], in Frascina, Francis and Jonathan Harris (eds), *Art in modern culture: An anthology of critical texts*, London: Phaidon, 1992, pp 136-144.

**Periodical or journal article:**

Author/s, 'Title of article', *Title of periodical – italics* or underlined, volume number (issue or part), year of publication: page numbers.

Osterhaus, Werner and Michael Donn, 'Is the Obvious Not Obvious Enough?', *Lighting Quarterly*, 14, 1999, pp 31-34.

**Dictionary or other reference book entry:**

Author(s) of the entry, 'Title of the entry', *Title of dictionary – italics* or underlined, Editor's name, Place of publication: Publisher, date of publication, volume number, page numbers.

Phillips, Antonia and Richard Wollheim, 'Representation', in *The dictionary of art*, Turner, Jane (ed), London and New York: Macmillan, 1996, vol 26, pp 221-226.

**Internet references:**

Surname, first name or initials/Organisation, 'Title of item', year of publication. Internet address

All-Wright Site, 'Frank Lloyd Wright Building Guide', 1996.  
<http://www.geocities.com/Soho/1469/flwbuild.html>

**Conference papers:**

Published papers follow the conventions for the relevant type of publication. Unpublished conference papers can be referenced as follows:

Surname, first name or initials, first name or initials and surname of any subsequent authors, 'Title of paper', paper presented at the Conference Title, Conference location, month and year of presentation,

Brown, Charlie, 'What Peanuts never knew', paper presented at the Tenth International Conference of Psychoanalysis, Anaheim, California, March 1985.

**Television/Radio programme:**

*Programme – italics* or underlined, Television Network or Radio Station, full date.

*Backch@t*, TVNZ Television One, 31 October 1998.

**Personal Communication:**

Surname, first name or initials, type of communication, place, date.

Drawbridge, John, letter to/ interview with author, Wellington, 21  
May 1998.

**Good writing checklist**

WORDS:	<p>precise – the right choice?          appropriate – the right register? (not too colloquial or journalistic)          concise – all needed?          idiomatic – used and combined in accepted ways?          organised into good sentences?</p>
SENTENCES:	<p>correct – grammatical? make sense?          effective – easy to follow?          varied – differ in length and pattern?          organised into logical paragraphs?</p>
PARAGRAPHS:	<p>one per topic?          topic sentence?          everything on the topic?          internal organisation logical?          links to other paragraphs logical?</p>
STRUCTURE:	<p>thesis statement?          paragraphs all relate to thesis?          paragraphs in logical order?          paragraphs linked to one another?          paragraphs lead logically to conclusion?          conclusion confirms thesis?</p>
EVIDENCE:	<p>relevant?          appropriate?          accurate?          sufficient?</p>
CONVENTIONS:	<p>spelling, punctuation correct?          bibliography complete and accurate?          quotations properly acknowledged?          footnotes clear and accurate?</p>

**DO'S**

formulate and present your own argument based on research

check word count

allow plenty of research time

ask for help if you are stuck

check with your tutor that you are on the right track

edit your writing

keep a copy of your essays and learn from past mistakes

word-process where possible

answer the question

plan your structure carefully

reference correctly and fully

learn from feedback on essays

**DON'TS**

list facts and descriptions from books

exceed word limit

ask for an extension after due date

panic

keep writing if you are unclear about the question

leave no time for 'tidying up'

throw essays away without reading the marker's comments

forget to staple the pages

waffle

leave out your conclusions

forget the bibliography

ignore tutor's advice

## 5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achtert, Walter S and Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA style manual*, New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1985.
- Barnet, Sylvan, *A short guide to writing about art*, Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman & Co (3rd ed), 1989.
- Gagne, R, *The conditions of learning*, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965.
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- McKernan, John, *The writer's handbook*, Orlando, Florida: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1988.
- Wallace, Derek and Janet Hughes, *Style book: A guide for New Zealand writers and editors*, Wellington: GP Publications, 1995.
- Holgate, Alan, *The art in structural design; An introduction and sourcebook*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986