

There is lots of information out there about how to write introductions, conclusions, plan essays, research, and so forth. In fact, you will find many resources on the **IADT Learning Support Service** webpage for your essay writing.

Nonetheless, we should always be aware of what *should not* be in our essays.

► **Don't give a massive, irrelevant history lesson**

If the title asks for an analysis of a series of works or an exhibit, don't overdo the historical stuff.

Steve Jobs (born as Steven Paul Jobs /'dʒɒbz/; February 24, 1955 – October 5, 2011) was an American entrepreneur, businessman, inventor, and industrial designer.

Jobs was the chairman, and the chief executive officer (CEO), and a co-founder of Apple Inc.; CEO and majority shareholder of Pixar; a member of The Walt Disney Company's board of directors following its acquisition of Pixar; and founder, chairman, and CEO of NeXT. Jobs and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak are widely recognized as pioneers of the microcomputer revolution of the 1970s and 1980s.

Wikipedia (NB: Wikipedia is not a suitable source for essays or research)

The above makes sense for a Wikipedia entry, but if you are writing about entrepreneurship or technology, for example, the history lesson is irrelevant.

► **Don't give a personal account of your research journey**

“I was amazed to discover that I was interested in this topic / “This topic interests me because” / “I feel like the author meant” etc.

(An undergraduate student)

The journey through research is great, but examiners don't want to know about yours.

► **Don't let your dictionary be your talisman**

Homer: “Now what is a wedding? Well, Webster's dictionary describes a wedding as: the process of removing weeds from one's garden.”

(The Simpsons, “Secrets of a Successful Marriage,” 1994)

Literature is defined as “Written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit” (*OED online*).

(a student introduction)

NB: The dictionary approach can actually work really well **if** you challenge the dictionary definition, or point out that it leaves an opening for a new approach that critics have missed.

► **Don't rely on a thesaurus**

The thesaurus can be useful, but context is everything!

Monica: All right, what was this sentence, originally?

Joey: Oh. “They're warm, nice people with big hearts.”

Chandler: And that became, “They're humid, pre-possessing homo-sapiens with full-sized aortic pumps?”

(Friends, “The One Where Rachel's Sister Baby-sits,” 2003)

For more information on this topic or to book a learning support session, email learningsupport@iadt.ie