

Solve the academic puzzle

Motivation

“Your level of motivation can have an effect on your success. Even if you love your subject and want to finish college, sometimes you don't want to study or you think about doing something else. When this happens, you need strong motivation to keep going.”

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How motivated are you?

Mark the sentences below about your own motivation.

I know my reasons for studying.

1 2 3 4 5

I set myself targets for completing tasks.

1 2 3 4 5

I can start work quickly when I sit down to study.

1 2 3 4 5

I stay focused once I sit down to study.

1 2 3 4 5

I can find the time I need to complete tasks well.

1 2 3 4 5

Total score out of 25

Tips to increase your motivation

BUILD A ROUTINE



Making a schedule helps you stick to study tasks even if you are feeling a lack of motivation.

VISUALISE SUCCESS



Picture the desired outcome at the end of your studies. This can help to bring back some motivation.

TAKE A BREAK



Going for a short walk, or a social event can actually help you be more productive afterwards.

BREAK DOWN TASKS



When faced with a big and difficult task, break it down into smaller goals that you can achieve.

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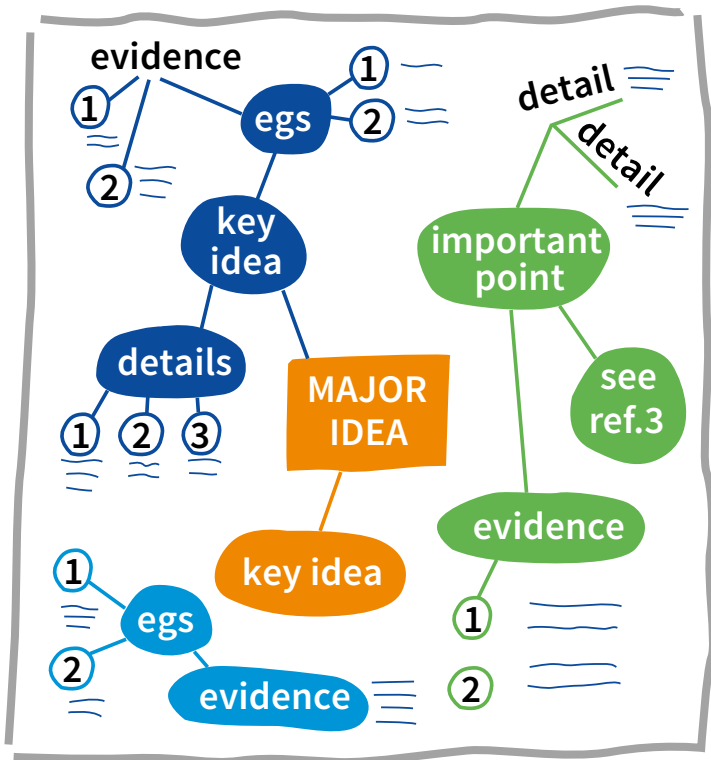
Smart Reading

ARE YOU A SMART READER?

- Do you question what you're reading?
- Do you look for answers to your questions?
- Do you make notes of the important points, and ideas triggered by what you read?
- Do you challenge the assumptions of the writer, the logic of the arguments, and the validity of the conclusions?
- Do you map out ideas so that you can see how everything fits together?

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Map the main ideas as you read



What is a mind map?

It's a graphical tool that can incorporate words, images, numbers, and colour, so it can be more memorable and enjoyable to create and review.

Why should you use them?

- Combines words and pictures which makes information easier to remember.
- Links and groups concepts together through natural associations.
- Provides an overview of a large subject area.
- Organises your thoughts in an intuitive rather than linear way.

Tips to increase your reading speed



TRACK WITH YOUR FINGER

Move your finger down the page, directly from top to bottom, to train your eye to move quickly down the text.



KNOW WHEN TO READ ALOUD

Some people read aloud from habit, or because they can understand a text better if they hear the words. Reading silently can speed up reading.



READ LARGER CHUNKS

Allow your eyes to take in larger chunks of text as you read. Try holding the text farther away from your eyes so you can take in more at once.



BUILD UP TO MORE DIFFICULT TEXTS

If a text on a topic looks too hard, try reading something simple on the topic, or reading the easiest parts first. Return to the more difficult parts later.

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Argumentative Writing

“Understanding how to express a rationale in any format is really vital, no matter what topic you're working on.”

Mariette DiChristina
Editor-in-Chief of Scientific American

Key steps to express a rationale in an argumentative essay

An **argument** is an opinion or claim supported by evidence. An **argumentative essay** aims to organise and present your conclusions with supporting evidence in order to persuade your audience.

When writing an argumentative essay:

- Your thesis statement should clearly state your opinion
- In the main body it is logical to present the opposing view first
- The conclusion of the essay should sum up all that the reader has read, restate the topic, and its important

Structure:

Introduction

Thesis statement, clearly state your views

Paragraph 2

Opposing or alternative views

Paragraph 3

Evidence or reasons supporting your views

Conclusion

Summary of both arguments and paraphrase of the thesis

Hints

Stating your point of view:

“It is my belief that...”
“This essay will argue that...”

Stating an alternative view:

“Another viewpoint is...”
“Others have argued that...”
“It can be argued that...”

Using evidence from another source:

“According to Smith (1995: 28),...”
“Smith (1995: 28) asserts that...”

Stating your concluding argument:

“In conclusion...”
“To sum up...”

Tips to build a strong argument

Any evidence you include should clearly strengthen your argument.

Avoid information that could potentially weaken your position.

References are a must for argumentative essay-writing as it adds authority to your arguments.

Avoid evidence that is related to the general topic but doesn't strengthen your argument.

Tips to use quotations in essays

Make sure the quotation integrates well with the content around it.

If you want to omit words from a quotation use an ellipsis (...)

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Effective Presentation

“We have different strengths as speakers. It is useful to reflect on these skills and also identify areas we could improve.”

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How effective are you in giving presentations?

Read the checklist below and rate how effective you are at giving a talk. Then use the space to make notes on how to improve in each aspect.

How good was your opening?

1 2 3 4 5

Did you begin with a brief outline?

1 2 3 4 5

Did you stick to your outline?

1 2 3 4 5

Was your main argument clear?

1 2 3 4 5

How well did you finish?

1 2 3 4 5

Tips to engage and persuade audiences

Use these rhetorical devices in your presentations.

Metaphors link new ideas to a known concept to help understanding and promote familiarity.

Anaphora means repeating the same word or phrase at the start of successive sentences or clauses.

Rhetorical questions engage the listener but are answered for them.

Parallel structures have the same grammatical pattern in both parts.

Tips for overcoming nerves



PLAN

Prepare carefully – be confident about what you are going to say, and how you are going to say it.



RELAX

Make a conscious effort to relax before the talk.



MEMORISE

Memorise the opening—this will give you a strong start and make you confident.



SMILE

Be in the room before everybody else if possible. Smile and greet your audience members as they arrive.