

AICE Long Essay Structures

Evaluating a Claim	
Essay Element	Description
Introduction	Identify the subject Identify and clarify key terms Highlight Major Debates Summarize your approach Thesis Statement: Take a Position
Argument in Favor of the Claim	P: Make a single point E: Provide Evidence (Theory, Data and/or Reason) E: Evaluation (Strengths and Weaknesses L: Link to the question
Argument Against the Claim	P: Make a single point E: Provide Evidence (Theory, Data and/or Reason) E: Evaluation (Strengths and Weaknesses L: Link to the question
Conclusion	Overview of what was examined Summary of Possible Conclusions Offer the strongest conclusion and explain Alternative directions not explored

Evaluating a Theory

Element	Description
Introduction	Identify the Key Terms Explain the major sociological debates behind the theory Strengths and Weaknesses Summarize your Approach Thesis Statement: Take a Position
Characteristics of the Theory	Assumptions or approaches to studying Principles of the Theory Focus
Examples of Application	Studies using and confirming the theory Major writers and theorists Evidence
Positive Evaluation	Positive contributions of the theory Areas that the theory explains well Validity, Reliability Generalizability
Critical Evaluation	Weaknesses of the theory Areas where the theory falls short Limitations
Conclusion	Overview of what was examined Summary of Possible Conclusions Offer the strongest conclusion and explain Alternative directions not explored

Evaluating Multiple Theories

Element	Description
Introduction	Define the theories: Offer specifics Identify Key Terms Identify Key Difference between the Theories <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Components• Focus Summarize your Approach Thesis Statement: Take a Position
Evaluation 1:	Identify supporting arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence Identify arguments against <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence
Evaluation 2:	Identify supporting arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence Identify arguments against <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence
Evaluation 3:	Identify supporting arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence Identify arguments against <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence
Conclusion	Overview of what was examined Summary of Possible Conclusions Offer the strongest conclusion and explain Alternative directions not explored

Evaluating Sociological Explanations

Element	Description
Introduction	Define the theories: Offer specifics Identify Key Terms Identify Key Difference between the Theories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Components ● Focus Summarize your Approach Thesis Statement: Take a Position
Sociological Explanation 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the main arguments set out by a theory and the evidence which appears to support it. ● Note the evidence against this theory.
Sociological Explanation 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the main arguments set out by a theory and the evidence which appears to support it. ● Note the evidence against this theory.
Sociological Explanation 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the main arguments set out by a theory and the evidence which appears to support it. ● Note the evidence against this theory.
Conclusion	Overview of what was examined Summary of Possible Conclusions Offer the strongest conclusion and explain Alternative directions not explored

Six Golden Rules



1. Answer the question: Stay on track. Do not chase the rabbit.
2. Write in your own words. (avoid 1st “I think...” and 2nd “You see...” Person)
3. Provide Theory and Evidence to support your statements: Andoscia’s Rule of Three
4. Ask Critical Questions as you write: Does this make sense? What is my best argument?
5. Structure your essays. (write well)
6. Keep your eye on the clock. Again, leave that rabbit alone

Andoscia’s Rule of Three

For every statement you make, you should have at least three factual, theoretical and/or logical supports.

What are you talking about “rabbits?”

The rabbit is a really cool and fluffy idea, often inspired by your prompt or essay question, that you want to chase and catch. Rabbits are awesome when you are brainstorming ideas for research papers or story lines and such. However, they are distracting and destructive on timed essays. Chasing a rabbit often leads you into dense conceptual forests, which may be exciting, but are far removed from the actual prompt you are tasked with addressing. Chase rabbits all you want on your free time. For your timed exams, however, leave the rabbit alone.



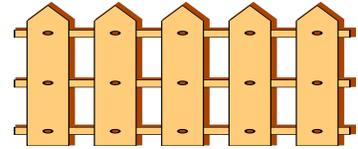
Andoscia’s Maxim on Essays

A long essay is not necessarily a good essay, but a short essay is probably a bad essay.

Don’t Straddle the Fence

Straddling the fence happens when you analyze polar arguments as if they were of equal value. This avoids the whole having to take a position thing and maybe hurt someone’s feelings. It also leads to squishy thinking. After all, if you approach two opposing ideas as if they are of equal value, you don’t have to argue any one position well. You will have a stronger argument if you take and support a position over all others. Ask yourself, what is the strongest argument and

why. You bring up other arguments as a way of being honest about the limits of your position, however, you favor one argument over another. Think of how ridiculous it sounds to write something like the following..."The Holocaust had both positive and negative consequences." Um...no. The holocaust was clearly negative, even if the Holocaust had some benefits for different groups within Germany at the time, the negative consequences clearly take precedent. Your writing will be stronger if you take a position.



The Prompt Wants to be Addressed: No More, No Less

Be careful in reading the prompt. There are two rules:

1. Read the prompt fully. If the prompt has two elements, you must address both elements. Eg. The family is a necessary institution for the successful functioning of the state. Assess and Evaluate. Here you want to talk about the family as an institution as well as the functioning of the state and how they are related. If you only talk about family, you are not addressing the prompt. Another related problem is to address any specifics in the prompt. If the prompt asks about a Conflict analysis with regard to schools, you must address the Conflict perspective, the role of schools and how they are related.
2. Don't read more into the prompt than is there. Eg. Assess the view that the family is a basic unit of society. If you spend your whole essay talking about nuclear families, then you are giving a more specific answer than the prompt requires.

Just because "some may say" something, doesn't mean you should write about them

One of the best things you can do to improve your writing is to eliminate the phrase "some may say" or any variation of this theme. As you know from surfing the net, some people may say just about anything. That doesn't mean you should include them in your essay. Some people may say that a pocket full of Guinea Pig pellets in your pocket will ward away smallpox. Are you sure you want to write about them? No.

A good rule for yourself: If you are inclined to write some variation of "some may say" into your essay, specify who is saying it. For instance, take a look at the two excerpts and identify which is the strongest:

1. Some may say that capitalism is the best way to organize a market, but others say that capitalism is exploitative...
2. Functionalists hold that capitalism is a functional way to meet the needs of society, but Marxists claim that capitalism is inherently exploitative...