

Essay Writing Session

HLTH AGE 2L03/2GG3 October 2017

A brief introduction

hi

Step 1: What is the question asking?

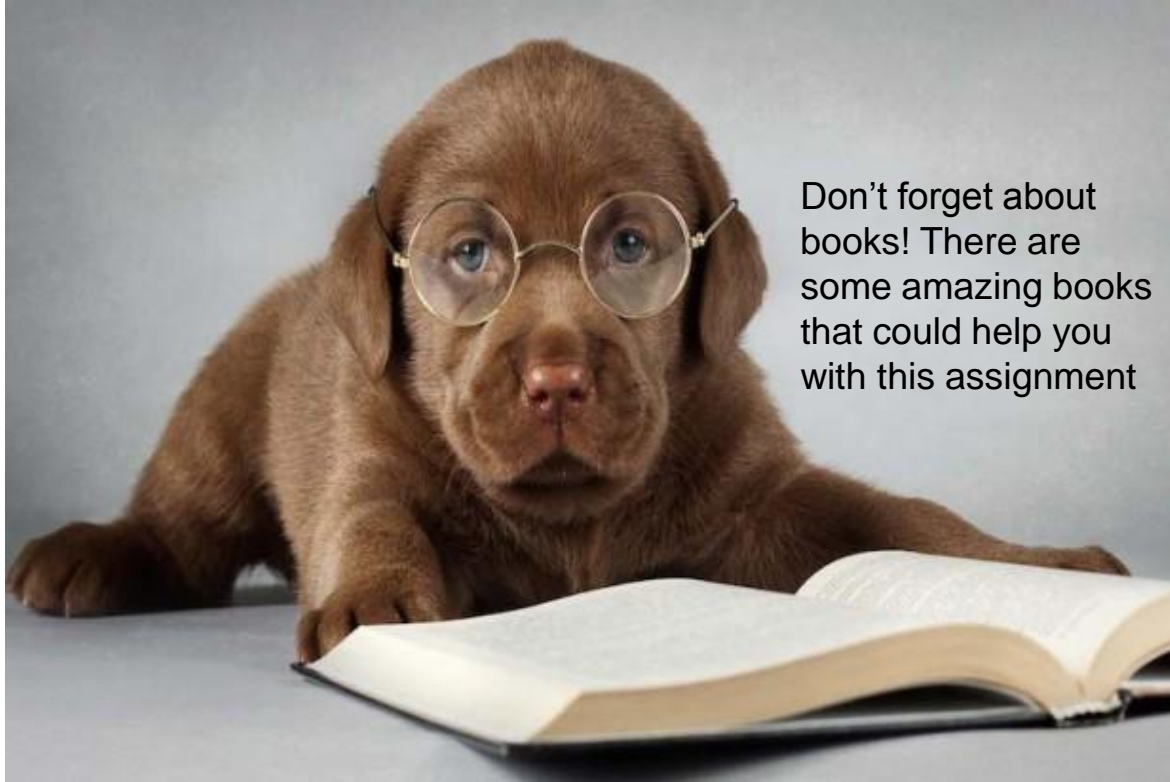
- Complex, nuanced questions - no right/simple answers
- Break the question down:
 - Define and explore key terms
 - Examine all sides
 - Think about the big picture

For example...

Should supervised injection sites be legalized?

- What is a supervised injection site? What does supervised injection mean?
- Who uses these sites? Where are they? How many people go? How do they operate?
- What do supervised injection sites say about substance use?
- What is our current understanding of substance use?
- Who are the key powers involved in making this decision?
- Who benefits from them opening? From preventing them opening?
- What evidence supports their opening? Refutes?
- What role should the government have in regulating substance use?
- Etc.

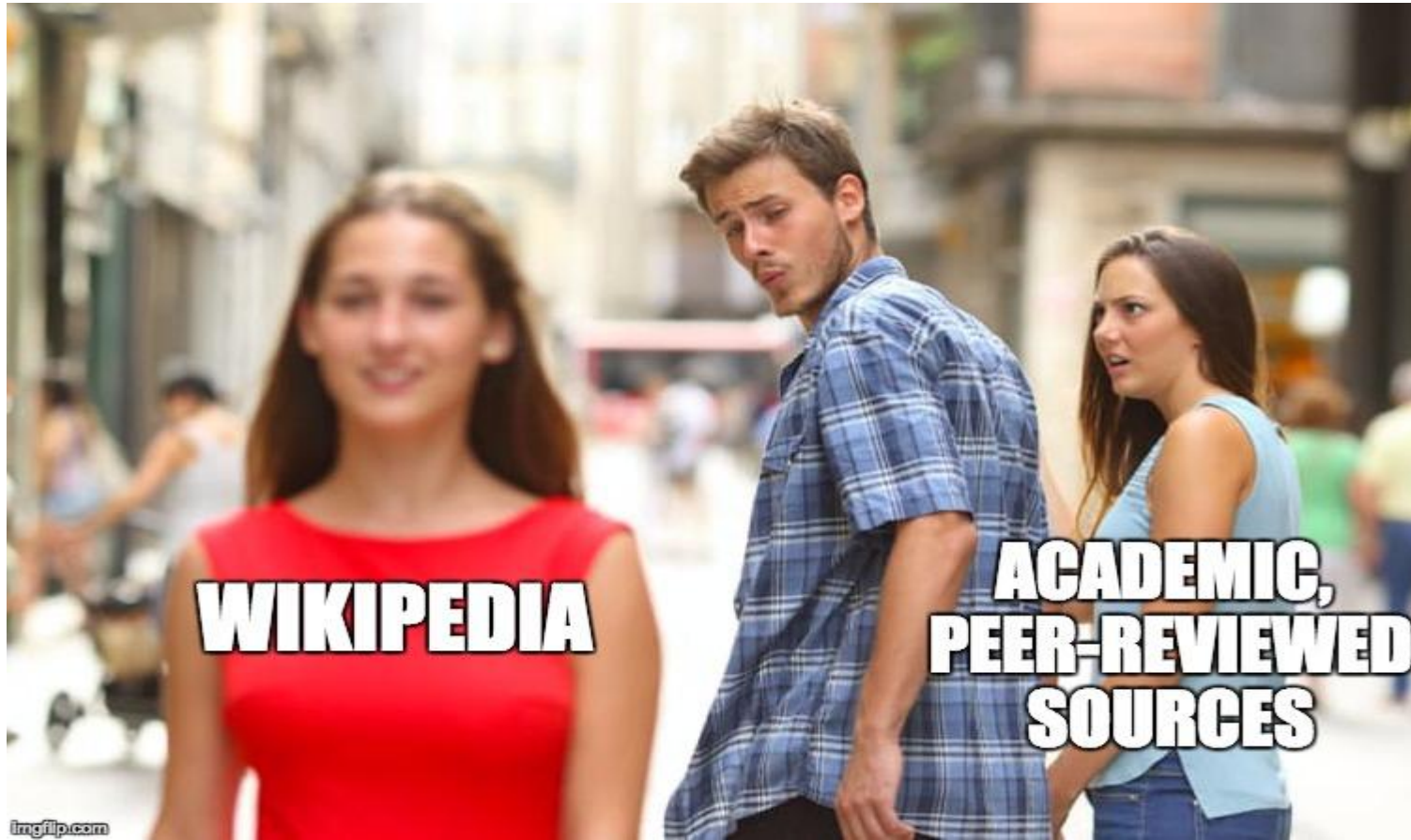
Step 2: Research!



Don't forget about books! There are some amazing books that could help you with this assignment

Some good resources include JStor, Social Sciences Abstracts, History of Science and Medicine, etc.

Proper Sources



The following sources are NOT academic*:

- Wikipedia
- BuzzFeed
- Huffington Post
- News, generally: CBC, National Post, Hamilton Spec, NYTimes, etc.
- Blogs, some websites (psychologytoday, WebMD, dictionary.com)
- Personal or anecdotal experience
- Works of fiction

*That being said...

- Some of the aforementioned sources (especially recent news articles) can be used as SUPPLEMENTARY support for some claims you make (i.e. as examples of how the news depicts a certain condition).
- An argument should never rest fully on one of these sources for support, but can help nicely round out your argument in some circumstances (e.g. local examples or upcoming studies)
- **NEVER use Wikipedia or Buzzfeed. Ever.**

Step 3: Thesis

Have a clearly outlined thesis argument somewhere in your introduction (usually in the concluding sentence)

Definitively argue for an answer to the question

Breaking your argument into smaller sub-arguments is helpful. These will become the essay body

Theses: Continued

Don't be afraid to think beyond the obvious! Your voice as an academic is valid and necessary.



Step 4a: Writing Structure

- Relate all points to each other and back to your thesis
- **Explain ALL evidence and avoid ending paragraphs with a citation. We can't read your mind, so tell us why you included this fact**
- Make every sentence count
- Make your point clear and don't bury it
- Don't put spaces between paragraphs or use unnecessary subtitles to eat up your page limit. We know you're doing this.
- Extra strength: Take the strongest counter-argument you can think of. Refute it.

Writing Structure (cont)

Paragraphs, simplified:

- Intro of what you'll be discussing in the upcoming paragraph (an overview of your argument). Be sure to avoid broad statements ("since the beginning of time" or "Oxford dictionary defines")
 - Points and evidence to support your thesis
- Explain how your evidence supports your points and your argument broadly
- How this relates back to your overarching thesis statement

Hamburger model/ Point, Proof, Explain?

Can be helpful, but don't feel constrained!



Step 4b: Writing Style

- Include page numbers, please!!!!
- Avoid contractions, slang, passive voice, and first person language
- Clear writing > “academic” language or complicated words (e.g....)
- Oxford commas are best
- Avoid using style for emphasis (don’t rely on italics, capitals, bolding, etc.)

Step 4c: Some helpful argumentation structures (if you want them)

- If A then B. A, therefore B (e.g. All men are mortal. Socrates is a man, therefore he is mortal)
- If A then B. Not A, therefore Not B (e.g. The most popular cookies are cookies that are sold most often. Oatmeal cookies are not sold that often so they are not the most popular cookies)

Step 5: Citing

- Cite EVERYTHING that's not your voice as a writer - generally, if it's not common knowledge it needs a citation in a proper citation style
- Even (especially) if you paraphrase

*use your own words, don't just copy from the textbook"

book: he died in 1987

me: 1987 was when he died.



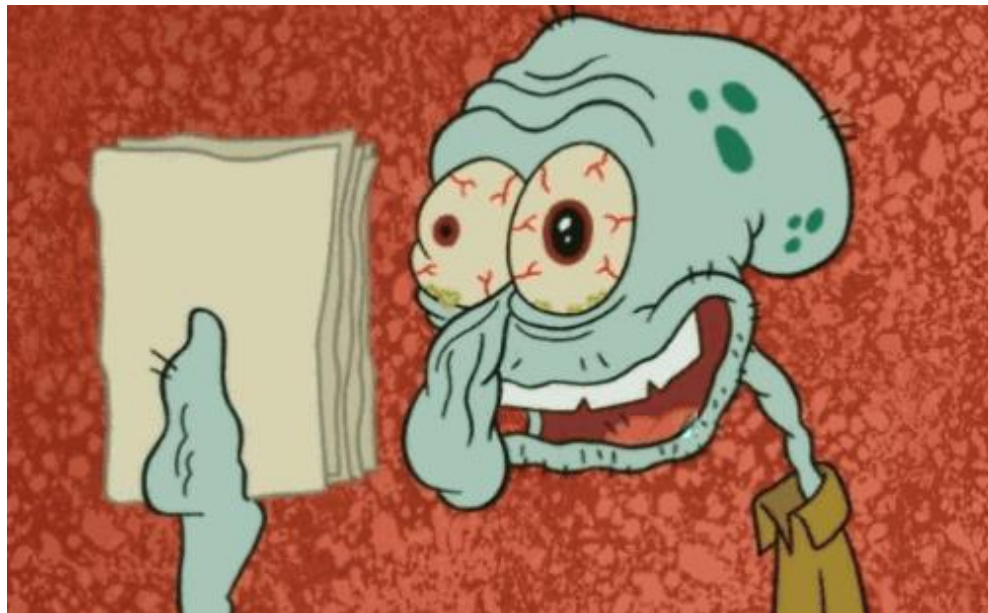
Step 6: PROOFREAD.

- Finish your paper a few days early, if you can. Leave it alone. Edit it after a mental break.
- Get a friend to read it over
- Read it aloud to yourself

Any questions?



Good luck! :)



TA

When your teacher puts memes
in their lecture



Drop-in Essay help! Come with
questions! (But no drafts!)
Yahoo!

2L03: Wednesday Nov 8 1:30-
2:30, this class room

2GG3: Wed. Nov 8 5:30-6:30,
this class room

Hey look over
here!

And don't be shy - riccimm@mcmaster.ca (Mel)
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