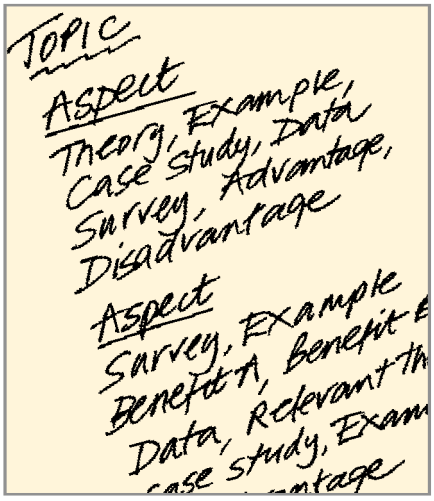
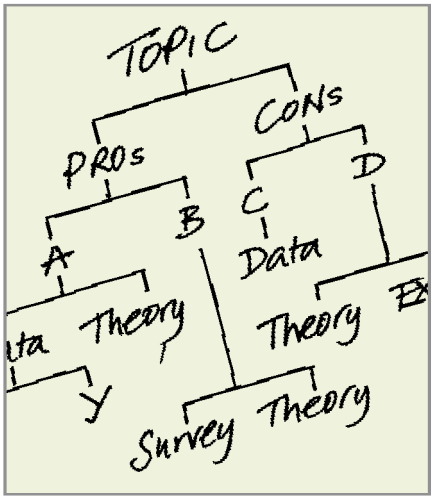
Planning your essay

Different planning methods

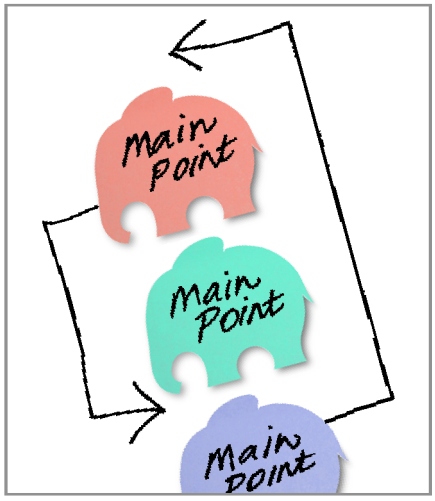
Below are several techniques to help you organise information as you plan your essay. After your reading and research, try different approaches and choose the one that works best for you.



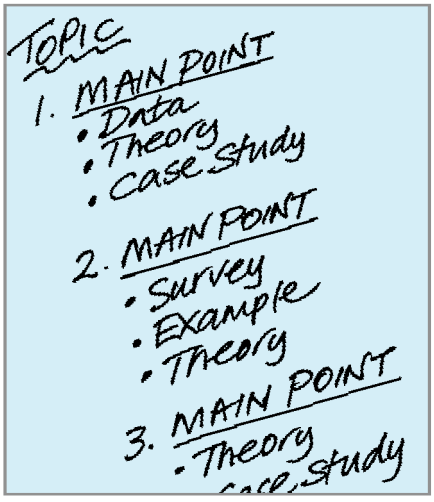
Brainstorming: this is a useful first step in essay planning. Spend a short time jotting down whatever thoughts come to mind about the main themes or arguments.



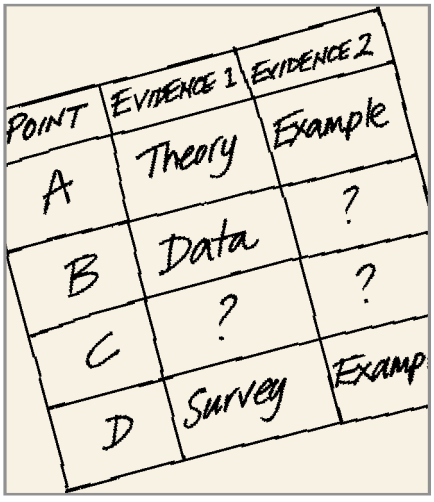
Flow charts and family trees: begin with a main argument and see how it branches off into different aspects as you delve deeper into the topic.



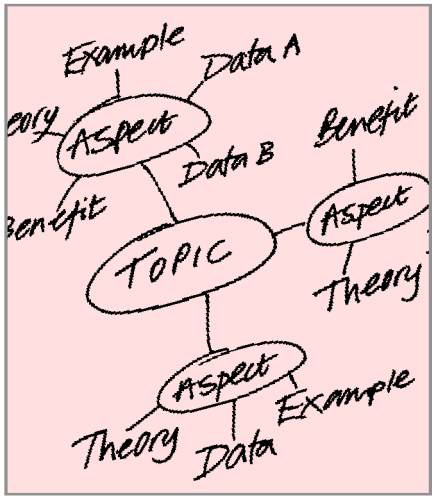
Post-it notes or index cards: write down one main point per card or note, then try rearranging them until you find the best 'flow' for your argument.



Bullet points or linear plans: list key evidence or arguments under each main point you wish to make.



Tables: write down the main points of your argument, with space provided for evidence supporting each one. Blank spaces will indicate what evidence is still needed.



Mind maps or bubble charts: these allow you to identify different aspects of a central argument or topic in a free-flowing way.

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