



## School Certificate Exam Preparation Writing Critical Essays

### Introduction

The introduction **states the situation**.

In other words, it **gives a clear definition** of what **each theory** is.

It also **states the main purpose** of the essay. This can vary according to the writer's objective, whether it be only to **evaluate each theory without taking a stance** OR to **determine which is more credible or logical**.

### Main Body

- The main function of the summary is to give **the main points** by paraphrasing.
- A brief **explanation of the organization** of the text should be given.
- In this case, **each theory** should be **defined** with its **strengths** and **weaknesses**.
- This component of the essay should be **brief**, leaving detailed **analysis** for the **main body**.
- The main body is the **discussion** based on **specific criteria** (point of evaluation).
- Discussing means **evaluating** the **strengths** and **weaknesses** of point.
- When a theory is being critiqued, the **supporting ideas** (which have been stated explicitly), the **implied ideas** and the **assumptions** (i.e. what the reader is believed to know) should all be taken into consideration.

### Conclusion

The conclusion gives an overview of the essay by doing **one of two things**:

**Discussing** each theory **without taking a stance**.

**OR**

**Discussing** each theory, but **taking a stance**, **explaining why** one is more credible or reasonable than the other.

### Some Useful Language to Use in Critical Essays

#### **To introduce or prove a point/theory/approach:**

It is important to recognize that...

It has been shown that...

It can be seen that...

As many researchers have found...

Much of the evidence suggests that...

This is supported by...

The data confirms/reveals/illustrates that...

#### **To disagree with or contradict a point/theory/approach:**

This is a good point; however...

While this may be true...

Whereas there are...

Although this argument is certainly valid in the given context, it fails to answer the following questions...

Despite the claims of its supporters, this theory neglects...

### **Variety in evaluative sentence structures:**

This theory has its shortcomings in that it ignores...  
The strengths of the theory are that it provides ...  
Theory X is limited because ...  
Yet, questions remain as to the validity of the ...  
There are weaknesses in the classification of ...  
This theory also presents/exhibits disadvantages/weaknesses.  
The value of this approach goes beyond ...  
This method is criticized for its focus on ...  
Theory X raises as many questions as it answers

### Criteria for Assessment

Although evaluation relies heavily on the instructor's expectations, the criteria generally includes:

A detailed and thorough **response**  
A clear and organized **writing style**  
A precise and careful **analysis** of the issue  
Appropriate and correct **referencing**