

Evaluation in essay writing.

- An argument is a conclusion supported by at least one reason. “You should wear a coat because it’s raining outside”.
- A good argument consists of ‘strands of reasoning’. There will be ‘intermediate conclusions’, ‘evidence’, ‘explanations’, and ‘reasons’.
- An intermediate conclusion is both a conclusion and the reason for a subsequent conclusion.
- Having produced an argument, the evaluation consists of determining the strength of the strings of reasoning and the credibility of; evidence, sources and explanation. This is done in essays by using a counter argument and then explaining the extent to which the principle argument is stronger than the counter.
- The above is enough for most purposes.
- The most common criticism of evaluative essays is that the writer has used ‘juxtapositioning’ rather than evaluation; this is the listing of related points which leaves the reader to decide which is the most compelling. Argument needs a conclusion to be propelled.
- More advanced evaluation uses mechanisms like hypothetical reasoning to further analyse structure.

Capital punishment should be re-introduced for those found guilty of child murder. [m.c.]

Because, the deterrent effect would save some children’s lives. [i.c.]

Because, most people will not risk their own lives. [r]

The desire to remain alive is very powerful and overwhelms other needs. [ex]

For example, racing drivers won't pursue their love of high speeds unless protected from crash & fire. [eg]

Although, many claim that C.P. is barbaric. [counter – m.c.]

Because, civilised people don't kill criminals. [r]

For example, we in the West are horrified by public and official beheadings in the Middle East. [e.g]

Western people take this sort of judicial violence to be unacceptable. [ex.]

Even so, our custodial system does not prevent a very unacceptable level of child murders. [r]

It is unreasonable to risk children in order to protect the lives of criminals if deterrence works.[ex/hypothetical]

Thus, C.P. is needed to protect the lives of the innocent. [m.c. restated.]

The STRUCTURE of an evaluative argument being present now permits a detailed critique, for example, we should want to know what relevant similarities there are between 'public and official beheadings in the Middle East.' and what the author is proposing. We should also want to eliminate appeals to emotion, 'civilised people don't kill criminals.'