

# ESSAY DECONSTRUCTION, PLANNING & STRUCTURE

## Overview

The aim of this activity is to introduce students to the different types of essay and help students with essay planning – something that many students forget to do in their exam. Students will be provided with two sample essays and have to reduce the essays into two plans, highlight the AO1 (knowledge) and AO3 (evaluation) sections!

### Resources Required

- Two example essays (see attached)
- An essay planning sheet (see attached)

## Teacher Instructions

### Part 1

It's important that the students understand the requirements of this task. Students should work individually or in pairs, to complete this task.

Firstly, students should be introduced to the assessment objectives:

**AO1** = Knowledge and understanding

**AO2** = Application of knowledge and understanding

**AO3** = Analysis, interpretation and evaluation

Once students have been introduced to the assessment objectives, provide each student with a copy of the sample answers. Student should highlight the different learning objectives in three different colours, for example AO1 = **Red**, AO2 = **Green** and AO3 = **Blue**.

Please note: neither of these sample answers contain any AO2.



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## Part 2

The students should re-read essay 1 and turn the essay into a bullet point plan, outlining the key information and assessment objectives. You may wish to model your expectations for this task, for example.

**AO1:** Milgram

**AO1:** Aim

**AO1:** Method (40 male volunteers, deception)

**AO1:** Results (65% to 450 volts, 100% to at least 300)

**AO1:** Conclusion

**AO3:** Lacks ecological validity. Laboratory at Yale University. Unable to generalise to every-day situations of obedience.

**Etc.**

The students should then do the same for essay 2. Once the students have done this for both essays, you should then discuss the structure of these two essays. Students should realise that the first essay has all of the AO1 (knowledge) points, followed by three AO3 (evaluation) points, whereas the second essay has an AO1 (knowledge) point, followed by supporting evidence (AO3), which is replicated three times.

Questions that require students to 'Describe and evaluate research...' typically follow the essay 1 structure, whereas questions that require students to 'Discuss one or more explanations...' typically follow essay 2 structure. Students can then apply their learning on the final task, by deciding which of the two structures would be the most appropriate for the 10 different essays. Suggested answers are included.



# ESSAY DECONSTRUCTION, PLANNING & STRUCTURE ESSAY 1

*Milgram wanted to see if ordinary citizens would obey an unjust order from an authority figure. 40 male volunteers took part in what they thought was an experiment on 'punishment and learning' (although they were deceived). The real participant took on the role of a 'teacher' and was instructed to administer an electric shock to the 'learner' (confederate), every time he gave an incorrect answer. 65% of the participants went to 450 volts and 100% went up to at least 300, suggesting that under the right circumstances, ordinary people will obey unjust orders from an authority figure.*

*One limitation of Milgram's research is that it lacks ecological validity. Milgram's experiment took part in a laboratory at Yale University and the idea of being ordered to give electric shocks during a memory experiment on 'punishment and learning' is an unrealistic situation. Everyday examples of obedience don't usually involve such extreme requests. This matters because we are unable to apply Milgram's results to everyday situations of obedience and do not know if people would demonstrate such high levels of obedience, in more 'normal' situations (e.g. from a police officer).*

*Another criticism of Milgram's study is that he broke the several ethical guidelines. Milgram deceived his participants, he did not give them the right to withdraw (due to the experimenter prods), and he did not protect them from harm. Therefore, he did not respect his participants who may have felt exceptionally anxious during the experiment and very guilty following the experiment, knowing that they could have harmed another human being.*

*A final criticism of Milgram's study is that it lacks population validity. This is because Milgram used a biased sample of 40 male volunteers. Therefore, we are unable to generalise the results to other populations, in particular females, and cannot conclude if female participants would respond in a similar way.*



# ESSAY DECONSTRUCTION, PLANNING & STRUCTURE ESSAY 2

*One explanation of obedience is known as **agentic state**. Here an individual carries out the orders of an authority figure and acts as their 'agent', allowing them to deny personal responsibility. Evidence to support this explanation comes from one of Milgram's variations, where an additional confederate administered the electric shock on behalf of the teacher. In this variation obedience rose from 65% to 92.5% of participants giving the full 450 volts.*

*This supports the **agentic state** explanation, as the teacher was able to shift his responsibility onto the other confederate, allowing him to deny personal responsibility, which made him more likely to obey.*

*Another explanation of obedience is the idea of **legitimate authority**. Here a person is more likely to obey if they believe the authority figure or situation is genuine / real. Evidence to support the idea of legitimate authority comes from one of Milgram's variations, where the experiment was replicated in a run-down building in Connecticut. In this variation obedience levels dropped from 65% to 48%. This supports the idea of **legitimate authority**, as the participants did not believe that the context was a legitimate environment for the experiment to take place and were therefore less likely to obey.*

*One explanation of obedience is the idea of **uniform**. According to this explanation, we are more likely to obey a person if they are wearing a uniform, as this suggests that they are a **legitimate source of authority**. Evidence to support the idea of uniform comes from one of Milgram's variations. In one of the variations the professor was replaced by another 'participant' in ordinary clothes who came up with the idea of increasing the electric shocks. In this variation, obedience dropped from 65% to 20%. This supports the explanation that **uniform** makes people more likely to obey, as more participants obeyed the professor (in a lab coat) in comparison to another person in ordinary clothes.*



# ESSAY DECONSTRUCTION, PLANNING & STRUCTURE STUDENT WORKSHEET

## Essay 1: Describe and evaluate one or more studies of obedience (12 marks)

Read essay 1 and turn the essay into a bullet point plan, using the space below.

## Essay 2: Discuss one or more explanations of obedience (12 marks)

Read essay 2 and turn the essay into a bullet point plan, using the space below.

# ESSAY DECONSTRUCTION, PLANNING & STRUCTURE STUDENT WORKSHEET

Decide which structure the following essays should use:

- **Essay 1 Structure** = A01 followed by 3-5 A03 points
- **Essay 2 Structure** = A01/3 repeated.

- 1 Outline and evaluate the multi-store model of memory (12/16 marks)
- 2 Outline and evaluate different types of long-term memory (12/16 marks)
- 3 Discuss research on the effect of misleading information on eyewitness testimony (12/16 marks)
- 4 Describe and evaluate the learning explanation of attachment (12/16 marks)
- 5 Outline and evaluate research into group size, unanimity, and task difficulty as variables affecting conformity (12/16 marks)
- 6 Discuss conformity to social roles as investigated by Zimbardo (12/16 marks)
- 7 Discuss two or more situational variables that affect obedience (e.g. proximity, location, uniform) (12/16 marks)
- 8 Outline the functions of the endocrine system and discuss the role of the endocrine system in behaviour (12/16 marks)
- 9 Outline and evaluate research into lateralisation and/or the split brain (12/16 marks)
- 10 Outline and evaluate two ways of defining abnormality (12/16 marks)



# ESSAY DECONSTRUCTION, PLANNING & STRUCTURE ANSWER SHEET

Decide which structure the following essays should use:

- **Essay 1 Structure** = A01 followed by 3-5 A03 points
- **Essay 2 Structure** = A01/3 repeated.

- 1 Outline and evaluate the multi-store model of memory** (12/16 marks)  
*Essay 1 Structure – Outline the MSM, followed by 3-5 A03 points*
- 2 Outline and evaluate different types of long-term memory** (12/16 marks)  
*Essay 2 Structure – Outline one type of LTM (e.g. episodic) and then bring in supporting evidence. Then repeat this process for the other types of LTM (e.g. procedural and semantic)*
- 3 Discuss research on the effect of misleading information on eyewitness testimony** (12/16 marks)  
*Essay 1 Structure – Outline one study (e.g. Loftus and Palmer) followed by 3-5 A03 points*
- 4 Describe and evaluate the learning explanation of attachment** (12/16 marks)  
*Essay 1 Structure – Outline one learning theory of attachment, followed by 3-5 A03 points*
- 5 Outline and evaluate research into group size, unanimity, and task difficulty as variables affecting conformity** (12/16 marks)  
*Essay 2 Structure – Outline group size and then bring in supporting evidence (e.g. variations of Asch). Then repeat this process for the other factors.*
- 6 Discuss conformity to social roles as investigated by Zimbardo** (12/16 marks)  
*Essay 1 Structure – Outline Zimbardo's research followed by 3-5 A03 points, making specific reference to conformity to social roles*
- 7 Discuss two or more situational variables that affect obedience (e.g. proximity, location, uniform)** (12/16 marks)  
*Essay 2 Structure – Outline one situational variable (e.g. proximity) and then bring in supporting evidence (e.g. variations of Milgram). Then repeat this process for two other factors*
- 8 Outline the functions of the endocrine system and discuss the role of the endocrine system in behaviour** (12/16 marks)  
*Essay 2 Structure – Outline one function of the endocrine system and then bring in supporting evidence. Then repeat this process for other functions*
- 9 Outline and evaluate research into lateralisation and/or the split brain** (12/16 marks)  
*Essay 1 Structure – Outline one study (e.g. Sperry and Gazzaniga) followed by 3-5 A03 points*
- 10 Outline and evaluate two ways of defining abnormality** (12/16 marks)  
*Essay 2 Structure – Outline one definition of abnormality (e.g. deviation from social norm) and then bring in supporting evidence. Then repeat this process for one other factor*