

## A Level English Language

### ESSAY FORMATTING GUIDELINES

#### Style Guidelines

- **Think carefully about the ways in which you use quotations.** Either integrate them into your sentence, like this:

*The writer uses the attributive adjectives 'malevolent' and 'malicious' to suggest that Iago's motives are not benign.*

Or pop them at the end of your point after a colon or comma, like this:

*The writer uses a range of pre-modifying attributive adjectives to suggest that Iago's motives are not benign: 'malevolent', 'malicious'.*

For more help with this, have a look at the document *How to Format Quotations*.

- **Refer to writers by their last names:** *Shovlin makes frequent use of the second person possessive pronoun 'yours'...*
- **Avoid waffle.** Before writing, ask yourself – what is it I'm trying to say? Once you know, ask – how can I express this economically? After you've finished each point, check what you've written. Is it insightful? Is it succinct? If not, *delete it* and try again.
- **Plan your work carefully.** You should have a clear idea of what you intend to say, and how you intend to say it, long before you start writing your essay. The index card method is one of the most successful planning techniques.
- **Check your work thoroughly.** Mistakes cost marks. Do not just rely on Word's red and green squiggles to do it for you. That won't pick up homophone confusion, for example.
- **Write in Standard English.** Avoid informal expressions, contractions and such like. The examiner is not your friend, and you are not on 'the Bebo'.
- **Avoid using the first person unless it is absolutely necessary.** There is rarely a need for, *I think that...* It's your essay. *Of course* it's what you think! And there is nothing worse than reading: *In this essay, I will...* Don't tell me what you're going to do. Do it!

## Technical Guidelines

- **Put the essay title at the top of your first page.** It should be either underlined or *italicised*, but not *both*.
- **Use a sensible font.** That means no *Comic Sans*, and *certainly* no Word Art. Stick with font size 12. We're rather partial to Calibri, Myriad Pro, Times New Roman, Garamond and Tahoma.
- **Set your line spacing to 1.5.** This allows us to annotate your work when we mark it.
- **Include your name and English group code at the top of each page.** The easiest way to do this is by adding a header.
- **Page numbers should be centred at the bottom of every page.**
- **Use paragraphs.** The safest option is to avoid indenting new paragraphs; instead, leave a line between them.
- ***Italicise* titles of texts and the names of publications.**
- **Include a word count** at the end of your essay. (You can 'tweak' this by not including quotations.)

