

# Study Technique for Politics & Society

## Section C: Discursive Essay writing

As with ANY planning exercise, ask yourself:  
**“What’s my goal?”**

Once you know your goal, break it down into its component parts & **work on each separately**

By June of my Leaving Certificate, I want to be able to:  
**“Write a Full ‘H1’ Essay in Exam Conditions”**

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**“Full”**  
 You need to be able to write a detailed response that provides it’s structured as an argument in favour or against the proposition of the **stimulus material**. Your response has to address all of the required question elements.

**“H1”**  
 You need to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the **key concepts & key thinkers** and use that knowledge to address the specific question presented in the exam. You must have high-quality content & use that content appropriately.

**“Essay”**  
 You need to demonstrate a mastery of structure. You must demonstrate that you have a grasp of **paragraph structure**, can write an **introduction**, and can succinctly draw relevant **conclusions** based on your evidence.

**“Exam Conditions”**  
 There’s no point being able to do it at home with all the normal supports. You have to be able to do it timed in an exam setting, with **no external help**. No running over time that will impact other questions you will be attempting.

Start by Assessing your starting position in each category. Then decide to try and **INCREMENTALLY** move up the ladder in each category. What needs most work????

Start of 5<sup>th</sup> Year → → → → → → → → → End of 6<sup>th</sup> Year

<b>1. Handwriting: Quality &amp; Speed</b>	Working on computer (SEN or preference) as most TY students do...	Clear hand-written essays in your own copy/A4 Sheets	Clear, hand-written essays with essay planning (in the sample box before the essay space on the sample booklet)	Clear & <b>FAST</b> hand-written essays in <b>Blue</b> or <b>Black</b> pen, getting used to writing in the booklet	Writing essays as fast as you can (sacrificing a <b>degree of legibility</b> for content/volume). No calligraphy needed.
<b>2. Full-Length Essays</b>	Start by focussing on clear ‘ <b>Thesis Statements</b> ’ that address the question, considering stimulus material & command words		Develop <b>paragraph structure with evidence</b> consistently through all paragraphs	Include <b>Introduction</b> and 4-5 <b>well-structured paragraphs</b> per essay (including a ‘counter-narrative’ paragraph)	<b>Intro, paragraphs</b> , and succinct <b>conclusion</b> that addresses the Question throughout
<b>3. Quality Content (starting from a limited level of knowledge)</b>	Write with <b>all available resources</b> to hand (text, revision notes, class notes, textbook, websites, etc.)	Write with just your own <b>revision notes</b> and <b>texts</b> to hand	Write with just <b>text/textbook</b> to hand	Write with just a limited number of <b>Key Quotes and Key Data</b> available	Write <b>without any supports</b> to hand, relying solely on memory
<b>4. Appropriate time frame</b>	<b>One week</b> to write each essay/assignment	One week for essay, but preparing and <b>writing one detailed paragraph per night</b>	One week <b>preparing one paragraph per night</b> , but not writing it until the all components are done at the <b>end of the week</b> in <b>150%</b> of time	One week to prepare one <b>SEEN</b> essay title and write it all up in <b>125%</b> of the time available in the exam	Responding to one <b>UNSEEN</b> essay title with all elements completed in <b>125%</b> of time available in exam

Start of 5<sup>th</sup> Year → → → → → → → → → Do LC Pol Soc exam!

Throughout this process, you should be gathering **DATA** that you can use to improve the quality of your discursive essay writing. The best way to do this is to compile a **DATA DIARY** that you add to during the two years of Pol-Soc Study. This can include Qualitative and Quantitative evidence, relevant Indices, Government Reports, NGO data, etc. Apply them throughout.