

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. Not running over time that impacts 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 5th Year → → → → → → → → → End of 6th Year

1. Handwriting: Quality & Speed	Working on computer (SEN or preference)	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 & FAST hand-written essays in Blue or Black pen, getting used to writing in the booklet	Writing essays as fast as you can (sacrificing a degree of legibility for volume of content)
2. Full-Length Essays	Start by focussing on clear ‘ Thesis Statements ’ that address the question, considering stimulus material & command words		Develop paragraph structure with evidence consistently through all paragraphs	Include Introduction and 4-5 well-structured paragraphs per essay (including a ‘counter-narrative’ paragraph)	Intro, paragraphs, and succinct conclusion that addresses the Question throughout
3. Quality Content (starting from a limited level of knowledge)	Write with all available resources to hand (text, revision notes, class notes, textbook, websites, etc.)	Write with just your own revision notes and texts to hand	Write with just text/textbook to hand	Write with just a limited number of Key Quotes and Key Data available	Write without any supports to hand, relying solely on memory
4. Appropriate time frame	One week to write each essay/assignment	One week for essay, but preparing and writing one detailed paragraph per night	One week preparing one paragraph per night , but not writing it until the all components are done at the end of the week in 150% of time	One week to prepare one SEEN essay title and write it all up in 125% of the time available in the exam	Responding to one UNSEEN essay title with all elements completed in 125% of time available in exam

Start of 5th 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.