27 points to consider when writing an English Language essay (in no particular order)

1. Avoid informal expression, keep it formal. It shouldn’t sound ‘chatty’.

2. Write out numbers into words 1-10 after that you can use numbers.

3. Don’t use etc. or refer to other examples without explaining what they are.

4. Don’t use abbreviations, except those accepted in the study design, for example ‘politically correct’ and ‘Standard Australian English’. Write the full word out first and then use the abbreviation after that.

5. Ideas must be accompanied with specific examples. At least two single word examples per paragraph, except for the introduction and the conclusion. It is better to use 2-3 one word examples rather than the longer 5-10 word quotes. Make sure you fully explain an example when using it, don’t assume the person reading it knows what you mean.

6. Don’t use slashes in between words EG either/or

7. Don’t use V’s

8. Don’t use ‘This quote…’ Quotes need to sound like they are a seamless part of your sentence, don’t stop the flow of traffic to point them out. Use ‘comments’, ‘remarks’ or ‘notes’. Sources don’t need to be acknowledged unless there is some further comment relating to who made the remark that you wish to make (for example if you wanted to talk about the public/private clash of language use that was highlighted by the person on the train where the context of the interaction is important).

9. Always use capitals when they are required.

10. If your handwriting is very messy and difficult to decipher, double space your work.

11. Your work should be detailed and thorough but if it is too long-winded you may run out of time. Avoid repetition and trim back your work in order to finish on time.

12. Use jargon (metalanguage) to describe the concepts and examples you have used. This is technical writing.

13. Analysis; when presenting ideas, follow through with analysis. Ideas and examples are the ‘what’; analysis is the ‘why’. Avoid too much explanation and not enough analysis. Analysis shows your independent expertise and understanding; it is where the marks are. Get to the point, which is your individual expertise and understanding.

14. Avoid waffle, have something to say, and then say it.

15. Avoid making absolute statements, for example ‘every Australian’. Don’t use ‘always’, ‘all’ and ‘never’. Other options are; most, often, some, most likely, attempts to, frequently, few, many. Absolutes must be avoided because they require more length/argument/proof than you have the ability to provide.

16. Check you know the difference between there/their and to/too and new/knew and were/where.

17. Upgrade the words you use, for a more impressive vocabulary. For example ‘putting’ becomes ‘creating’. ‘Gives’ can become ‘establishes’, ‘contributes to’ or ‘creates’. ‘Grown’ can become ‘develops’. ‘Like’ can become ‘such as’.

18. Be clear on what a quote means or don’t use it.

19. Correct spelling is important, especially for key words.

20. Do not leave gaps at the end of sentences which distort the paragraph flow and make their writing seem cluttered and uncontrolled.  Paragraphs need to be not too long (out of control) or too short (insufficiently detailed).

21. Don’t use the words ‘yes’ or ‘no’. ‘I’ should be used sparingly, if not at all.

22. Don’t use ‘I’, ‘our’ or ‘us’ instead use ‘readers’, ‘users’, ‘participants’ or ‘Australians’.

23. Prompts/source material need to be used sparingly and not just copied out

24. One idea per paragraph=100 words. If you change topic, begin a new paragraph. Paragraphs need to be not too long (out of control) or too short (insufficiently detailed). Avoid gaps at the end of a sentence which distort the paragraph flow and make the writing seem cluttered and uncontrolled.

25. If you are using statistics, reference the source of the information. This gives the evidence credibility.

26. Don’t overcomplicate your expression with adjectives. Keep it clear, straightforward and technical.

27. List all of your topics of your paragraphs in your introduction-tell the examiner what to expect.