A discursive essay will normally contain an introduction followed by a series of paragraphs which gradually, through the main body of the essay, build a cohesive argument leading to a concluding statement of the writer’s own position on the topic under discussion. This conclusion should be natural, convincing and, at best, inescapable.

**Introduction**

This section will generally provide a clearly stated, balanced and contextualised outline of the topic to be discussed.

**The main body**

This section consists of several paragraphs each of which may present evidence subjected to analysis and evaluation, and building cohesively towards the final position which the writer may take on the topic.

**Conclusion**

Here the writer states his/her final position on the topic and demonstrates how the position s/he is taking is derived from the previous arguments / points, is convincingly and comprehensively justified by them, and may even provide a new perception or perspective, or, at least, a deepening of understanding. No new information – arguments / points are presented in the conclusion.
# MARKING GUIDANCE FOR A DISCURSIVE ESSAY – HIGHER LEVEL

**NOTE:** AS THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO WRITING A DISCURSIVE ESSAY THE INDICATIVE CONTENT BELOW IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARKS</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>INDICATIVE CONTENT (MAY DRAW ON THESE PROMPTS AS APPROPRIATE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **INTRODUCTION** | 10 MARKS | **STRUCTURE**  
CLRIFICATION  
KEY TERMS / RELEVANT BACKGROUND  
CONTEXTUALISE THE ISSUE  
OUTLINE OF APPROACH |
| **MAIN BODY** | 55 MARKS |  
**KNOWLEDGE**  
RELEVANT FACTS / CONCEPTS, LINKS TO THEORY / THINKERS / WRITERS  
A BROAD RANGE OF RELEVANT SOURCES WHICH MAY INCLUDE REFERENCE TO CREDIBLE DATA — FACTS / FIGURES / THEORIES / THINKERS / CASE STUDIES — APPROPRIATE RESEARCH, RELIABLE / AUTHORITATIVE INFORMATION, OBSERVATIONS, EXPERIENCES — RECALL OF LISTS OF DATA IS NOT REQUIRED  
**EVIDENCE / SOURCES**  
ANALYSE / COMPARE / CONTRAST / CRITICISE / EXAMINE / EXPLAIN / INTERROGATE  
EVIDENCE BASED CRITICAL ARGUMENTS - EXPLICIT CONNECTIONS ARE MADE BETWEEN THE ARGUMENTS / POINTS MADE AND THE EVIDENCE  
**ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS**  
| **CONCLUSION** | 35 MARKS |  
**EVALUATION**  
COMPARATIVE VIEWPOINTS  
FORMATION OF JUDGEMENTS / INDEPENDENT CONCLUSIONS  
JUSTIFICATION OF OWN OPINION / POSITION  
**COHESION**  
ORGANISATION, MANAGEMENT AND SUMMARY OF A RANGE OF VIEWS OR OPINIONS  
CLARITY / CONTINUITY / FOCUS  
EXTENT TO WHICH THE RESPONSE EXPLICITLY ADDRESSES THE QUESTION |
## MARKING GUIDANCE FOR A DISCURSIVE ESSAY – ORDINARY LEVEL

**NOTE:** AS THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO WRITING A DISCURSIVE ESSAY THE INDICATIVE CONTENT BELOW IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARKS</th>
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<th>INDICATIVE CONTENT (MAY DRAW ON THESE PROMPTS AS APPROPRIATE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **INTRODUCTION** | 20 MARKS | STRUCTURE | CLARIFICATION  
KEY TERMS / RELEVANT BACKGROUND  
CONTEXTUALISE THE ISSUE  
OUTLINE OF APPROACH |
| **MAIN BODY** | 50 MARKS | KNOWLEDGE | RELEVANT FACTS / CONCEPTS  
A BROAD RANGE OF RELEVANT SOURCES WHICH MAY INCLUDE REFERENCE TO CREDIBLE DATA — FACTS / FIGURES / CASE STUDIES — APPROPRIATE RESEARCH, RELIABLE / AUTHORITATIVE INFORMATION, OBSERVATIONS, EXPERIENCES — **RECALL OF LISTS OF DATA IS NOT REQUIRED** |
| | | EVIDENCE / SOURCES | |
| | | ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS | ANALYSE / COMPARE / CONTRAST / CRITICISE / EXAMINE / EXPLAIN / INTERROGATE  
EVIDENCE BASED CRITICAL ARGUMENTS - EXPLICIT CONNECTIONS ARE MADE BETWEEN THE ARGUMENTS / POINTS MADE AND THE EVIDENCE |
| **CONCLUSION** | 30 MARKS | EVALUATION | COMPARATIVE VIEWPOINTS  
FORMATION OF JUDGEMENTS / INDEPENDENT CONCLUSIONS  
JUSTIFICATION OF OWN OPINION / POSITION |
| | | COHESION | ORGANISATION, MANAGEMENT AND SUMMARY OF A RANGE OF VIEWS OR OPINIONS  
CLARITY / CONTINUITY / FOCUS  
EXTENT TO WHICH THE RESPONSE EXPLICITLY ADDRESSES THE QUESTION |