

Feeling a bit lost
in all the
information?

So much to
read?

How NOT to write an essay.

For religion and theology
students lost in the “ologies”

Struggling to
articulate your
thoughts?

Feeling at odds
with the
literature?

by E.P. Louis (PhD)

L.I.T.O.
LOST IN THE OLOGIES

START

Break down the question and be very clear about what you're supposed to be doing: topic and approach/method.

Clarify what you KNOW about the topic and what you do not.

Make a note of what you *believe* (which is different to *what you know*), your initial responses to the question, and park them (for now).

Go back to the question and [plan your essay.](#)

The Plan

Do the recommended reading and get to know the topic: key thinkers, key literature, key moments in the development of the topic. Get your background understanding solid.

Make notes while you're reading -with references.

Look around for alternative approaches to the topic that may add challenge, nuance and interest to the essay. Keep it academic unless you have space in the essay to justify your inclusion of an unorthodox source.

Make a note of anything you feel is missing, undeveloped or overlooked in the recommended reading.

Hello!

Welcome to 'How Not to Write an Essay,' where you get to see a REAL essay that needs some work.

I've provided some pointers that will translate to your own essay writing.

There are clickable links to other resources that provide more help and guidance.

Don't worry -no essay writers have been hurt or embarrassed in the composing of this resource!

Initial questions:

- What do you know about the topic already?
- Have you done all the recommended reading?
- Have you noted the key thinkers and the methods used to approach this topic?
- What is your personal theology on this and why?
- Is there a perspective you feel may be missing from the recommended reading?

Observing the Sabbath and its relevance one's to spiritual journey.

This essay will critically evaluating the practice of Sabbath keeping and it's relevance to one's spiritual journey. As this subject came under the broader topic of community worship in the module I will be approaching it in this light, as I want to suggest that Sabbath keeping is a communal practice and though there are benefits individually, the community as a whole can benefit greatly from observing it together. **There is much contribution to the discussion of the Sabbath as it is a key observance of the Jewish and Christian faith; there are also conflicts within the faith regarding the nature of Sabbath keeping. When growing in faith and paying close attention to ones spirituality, observing the Sabbath is one of the key elements that can bring order and rhythm to spiritual growth. As we shall see later in the paper the Sabbath is a very unique event.** The first part of the essay will define what the Sabbath is, engaging in discussion from various intellectuals and theologians including those from the Seventh Day Adventist denomination. We will explore the biblical scriptures and examine three basic facets of The Sabbath; a Theo-centric approach, the simpler life style and the eschatological encounter(1). These will be explored along with the Seventh Day and Lord's Day viewpoint. The Second part of this essay will discuss how the Sabbath is relevant to ones spiritual journey. Using the framework by L.M. Hartman(2) I explore the correlation of the theo-centric approach with Holiness, the simpler life with rest and the eschatological facet with revelation. I will discuss these as necessities for spiritual growth. Finally I shall conclude with some thoughts on the benefits of observing the Sabbath as a community. As a Minster's child and now a lay minister, my experience of Sabbath observing has been one of serving the church, a family meal and few extra hours of rest in the early evening, providing there are no evening services. Exploring the history, context and importance of the Sabbath has made me question **our current approaches to the way in which we keep our Sabbaths and to consider my priorities.** Though one may feel they can justify the important family meals and serving the church as priests served in the tabernacle, in what way are we allowing the Sabbath to serve us; experiencing rest, growing in holiness and receiving revelation?

Don't wait until the end to sort footnotes/in-text references - use the reference-making tool or type it out manually as you go. You won't regret staying on top of this - make sure it's in the correct format for your institution.

¹ L.M Hartman
² article reference here!!

Watch out for generalisations - who is 'we', 'us'? Your experiences are few among billions. The details of a community help to deepen and focus your work. You could use yourself as an example to show nuance. This section would be better in the conclusion; it's a collection of assumptions that have not been justified...yet.

1

The title is very important - stick to the topic and instructions. If you are writing your own title, make sure it explains what the academic exercise is. Are you examining? Analysing? Discussing? [CLICK HERE](#) for 'Essay instruction words.'

Don't ramble - use the introduction to define the central topic, contextualise it (what does it look like in the world), provide a glimpse into your background knowledge, state your hypothesis and then how you will complete the academic exercise.

You don't need to lead with your belief or personal theology - but the literature. You are showing the marker your knowledge on the topic; you are not preaching or teaching.

There is time later to contribute to the discussion. When doing so, be sure to define your position as best you can - what are the building blocks - a religious tradition, a cultural particularity? For example, are you a vegan, Jamaican-born Pentecostal attending a white majority Baptist church in rural England? How do these factors shape your theology and religious imagination?

Proofread

Tip. 1

If you have writer's block, use the time to proofread what you've got so far and check your references. Students are often pressed for time and feel rushed. You will find that the simplest errors can transform a sentence into something you did not mean to say (or it just doesn't make sense!).

**BLACK, BRITISH &
DE-CHURCHED:** E. P. LOUIS
MESSAGE TO THE MAINSTREAM



L.I.T.O. is a study support platform for those studying the Bible, Black religion, and Christian theology - whether it be self-study, for ministry or formal education. Here you can find resources for Bible study, home/family education, youth and small groups, study skills, and discussions about methods and methodologies for students writing essays and dissertations.



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