**Framework to plan ‘To what extent…?’ essays**

‘To what extent?’ essays can be unsettling as they invite you to make a measured judgement but don’t usually provide a scale or criteria to use. Your first tasks are to work out exactly what you are judging and set broad criteria for these. If some aspects are not straightforward to assess, bring out the issues without getting bogged down in the complexity. Depending on the essay, you might be able to create a position that enables you to draw on the simpler ‘Compare and contrast’ framework. Adapt this template to suit your title.

|  |
| --- |
| ***‘To what extent…?’ essays*** |
| **Title** |  |
| **Define the limits of the question** |  |
| **Options for my position on this** |  |
| **Measurement criteria** |  |
| **My position (thesis)** |  |
| **Critical evaluation of each key point** | **Details, evidence and examples** |
| Summary of first point to consider |  |
| Criteria to judge this? (success criteria) |  |
| Evaluation of how far the criteria are met |  |
| Counter-arguments? |  |
| My position on counter arguments |  |
| Any other considerations? |  |
|  |
| Summary of second point to consider |  |
| Criteria to judge this? (success criteria) |  |
| Evaluation of how far the criteria are met |  |
| Counter-arguments? |  |
| My position on counter arguments |  |
| Any other considerations? |  |
|  |
| Summary of third point to consider |  |
| Criteria to judge this? (success criteria) |  |
| Evaluation of how far the criteria are met |  |
| Counter-arguments? |  |
| My position on counter arguments |  |
| Any other considerations? |  |
|  |
| Summary of fourth point to consider |  |
| Criteria to judge this? (success criteria) |  |
| Evaluation of how far the criteria are met |  |
| Counter-arguments? |  |
| My position on counter arguments |  |
| Any other considerations? |  |
|  |
| Summary of fifth point to consider (if applicable) |  |
| Criteria to judge this? (success criteria) |  |
| Evaluation of how far the criteria are met |  |
| Counter-arguments? |  |
| My position on counter arguments |  |
| Any other considerations? |  |
|  |
| Summary of sixth point to consider (if applicable) |  |
| Criteria to judge this? (success criteria) |  |
| Evaluation of how far the criteria are met |  |
| Counter-arguments? |  |
| My position on counter arguments |  |
| Any other considerations? |  |
|  |
| Summary of seventh point to consider (if applicable) |  |
| Criteria to judge this? (success criteria) |  |
| Evaluation of how far the criteria are met |  |
| Counter-arguments? |  |
| My position on counter arguments |  |
| Any other considerations? |  |
|  |
| **Weighing up the arguments and the evidence** |
|  |
| **Synthesis** |
|  |
| **Conclusions/ ultimate position** |
|  |

***See also:*** *The Study Skills Handbook*, p. 327