

Some (gratuitous) advice to students about how to get better marks for your assignments without working any harder...

...and this applies as much to exams as it does to assignments.

1. Answer the question you were asked

- don't write anything until you really understand the question
- read and re-read the assignment questions or topics until you are confident that you grasp what is being asked
- check that understanding with colleagues in your class or group or confirm with your lecturer
- only then start writing

2. Use your word allocation carefully

- most assignments have a fixed word limit
- really minimise using words that eat into your word limit but which won't add to your score, e.g. restating the question or writing a one-page summary of the case you are scored for commenting on are not going to increase your score
- find out how your work will be marked and allocate the words and your time (broadly) accordingly, i.e. a perfect score for half the work won't offset the low mark of an underdeveloped other half for you to do well
- stay on the topic – its easy to write interesting things that are entirely true but which have nothing to do with the assignment task so cannot be scored to your benefit so save the time and the words

3. Make it easy for the person scoring your work to understand your logic and to give you a high score

- create a heading structure to define your work that reflects the task you were set, with enough headings to easily navigate the paper and demonstrate the logic of your assignment
- it can be good to (sparingly) use bullet points and other visual devices to break up long slabs of text
- double (or 1½) spacing can make it easier to read
- make sure you put your name on the paper!!