

Smaller Homework Assignments, One-Week Assignments, Set Exams - Essays

Chapter 3 from the book:
Lotte Rienecker and Peter Stray Jørgensen
with contributions by Signe Skov

The Good Paper - A Handbook for Writing Papers in Higher Education

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3. Smaller homework assignments, one-week assignments, set exams – essays

This chapter is about smaller papers, which are often assigned during the first year of study and which lead to and prepare the ground for the research paper. Depending on your particular discipline or programme, these papers will be called different things, e.g. essays, 1-week assignments, homework assignments, set exams, popularising papers and academic essays. However, common to all these papers is their aim to train students in some of the skills needed for writing a research paper. In this book we will mainly use the term *essays*.

This chapter presents the common features of this type of paper; the requirements and criteria involved and how these papers can best be written.

Writing papers on the first year of study trains skills for

- documenting knowledge (knowing and using the theories, methods and subject areas of the field)
- focusing and formulating problems within a given topic on your own
- involving and using the sources of the field
- academic text types (describing, summarising, analysing, discussing, evaluating)
- structuring (the paper's structure)
- writing in clear and academic language
- referencing techniques, handling footnotes, etc.

(From Skov, 2008)

What is the purpose of essays in the first year of study?

The first papers you write are often about approaching the subject area, and writing thus functions as a central learning strategy.