How to write an RS essay

Before you begin writing:

1. Consider the statement and decide whether you agree or disagree. This will affect how you structure your answer.

2. Decide what your main reason is for your view. This will be your conclusion (5th paragraph).

3. Regardless of your conclusion, think of two different arguments for agreeing, and two arguments for disagreeing.

We can now plan what order to put forward the arguments.

Paragraph 1

You should begin with an argument against YOUR view. For example, if you agree with the statement, you should begin with

“Some people would disagree with this statement because…”

If you disagree with the statement, you should begin with:

“Some people would agree with this statement because…”

Paragraph 2

Here you should say that you don’t think that the argument in paragraph one is very convincing and give an argument for your view which you think is stronger.

“However, this is not a very convincing argument because…”

OR

“However, a much stronger argument is…”

Paragraph three and four

You should then follow the same structure as paragraphs one and two.

Paragraph 3: “Another reason for agreeing/disagreeing (whichever YOU DON’T think) with the statement is...”

Paragraph 4: “However, this is a weak argument because…”

Paragraph 5

“Overall it is clear that the arguments for/against the statement are stronger. As well as the ones explained above, the strongest reason to agree/disagree is…”

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| --- | --- |
| IF YOU AGREE:  P1: Some people would DISAGREE because:  P2: Agree  P3: Disagree  P4: Agree  P5: Conclusion - Agree | IF YOU DISAGREE:  P1: Some people would AGREE because:  P2: Disagree  P3: Agree  P4: Disagree  P5: Conclusion - Disagree |

**Mark scheme**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Level | Criteria | Marks |
| 4 | * All points are made as clear arguments (not just descriptive) * Clear, consistent line of argument is present throughout   + Paragraphs 2 & 4 make clear evaluative judgements and rebut previous paragraph   + Conclusion follows logically from the body of the essay * All points are supported with evidence/examples   + Evidence/examples are ***used*** and explained effectively | 13-15 |
| 3 | * All points are made as clear arguments (not just descriptive) * Line of argument is consistent with judgements made about better/worse arguments though the arguments are just juxtaposed rather than properly evaluated. * Evidence and examples are used to support points made | 9-12 |
| 2 | * Points are made on both sides but are not developed into arguments * Some examples/evidence may be present but are not used as part of the argument * Note: answers which only discuss one side of the argument cannot gain more than 6 marks | 5-8 |
| 1 | * Some simple points made | 1-4 |
| 0 | Nothing worthy of credit | 0 |