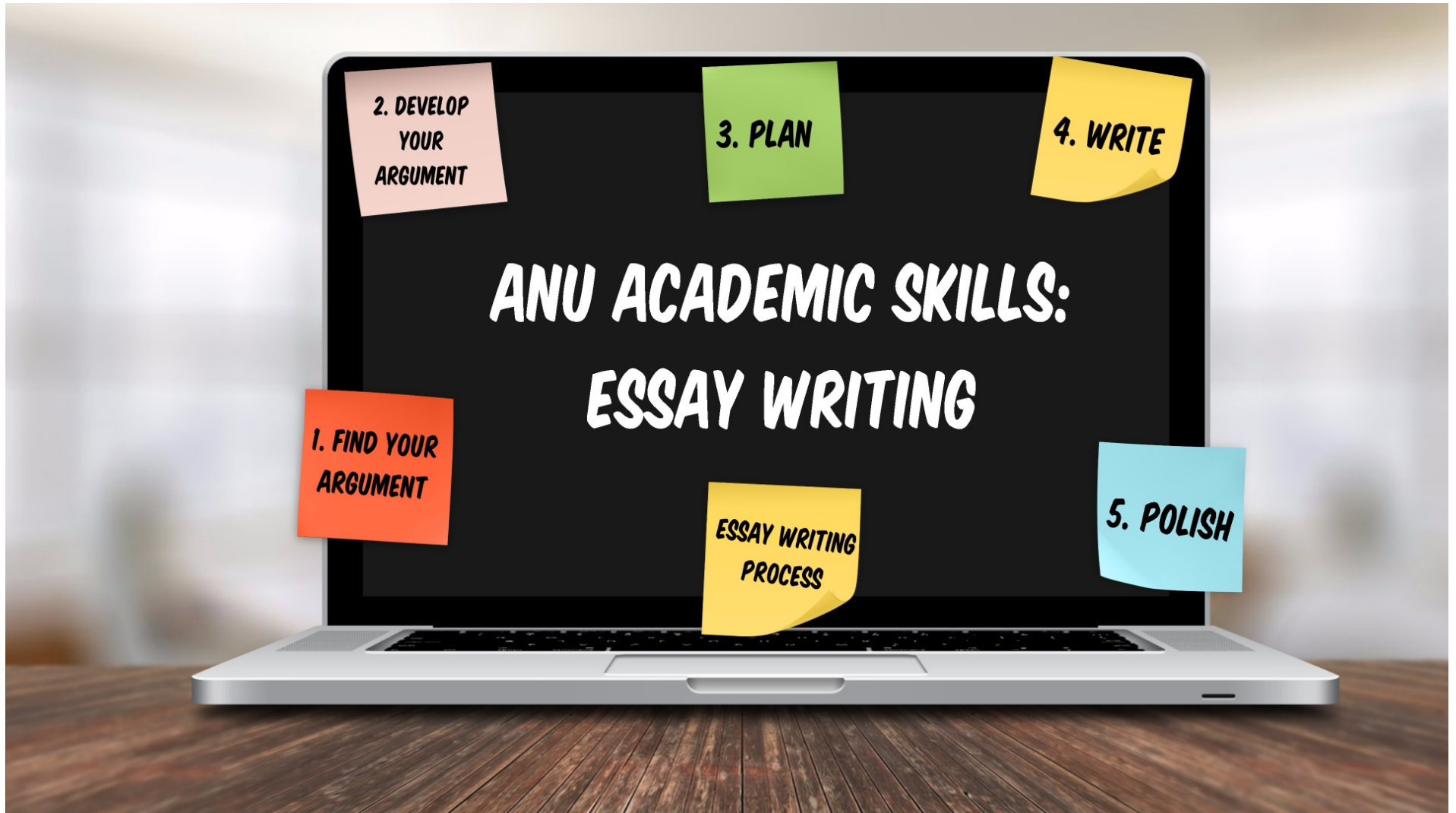


***DISCUSSION: DESCRIBE TO THE PERSON NEXT TO YOU
THE ANSWER TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:***

1. How do you think writing at uni will be different to your previous experiences?
2. What's your current essay writing process, and how do you think that will have to change to meet uni expectations?





FIND YOUR ARGUMENT

Understand the question

- break it down
- what positions could you take?
- be aware: you will be required to take a position



EXAMPLE QUESTION

In Victoria, Indigenous Australians who plead guilty to some offences can choose to be sentenced by the Koori Court rather than the Magistrates Court. The purpose of these Koori Courts is to make the legal system less alienating and more culturally appropriate for Aboriginal communities.

Essay question: Is there a place for programs such as the Koori Court in the Australian legal system? Should there be courts for other groups in our society?



What are some positions you could take?

A STRONG POSITION

- Takes a clear stance
- backed by evidence
- well-reasoned

Always argue:

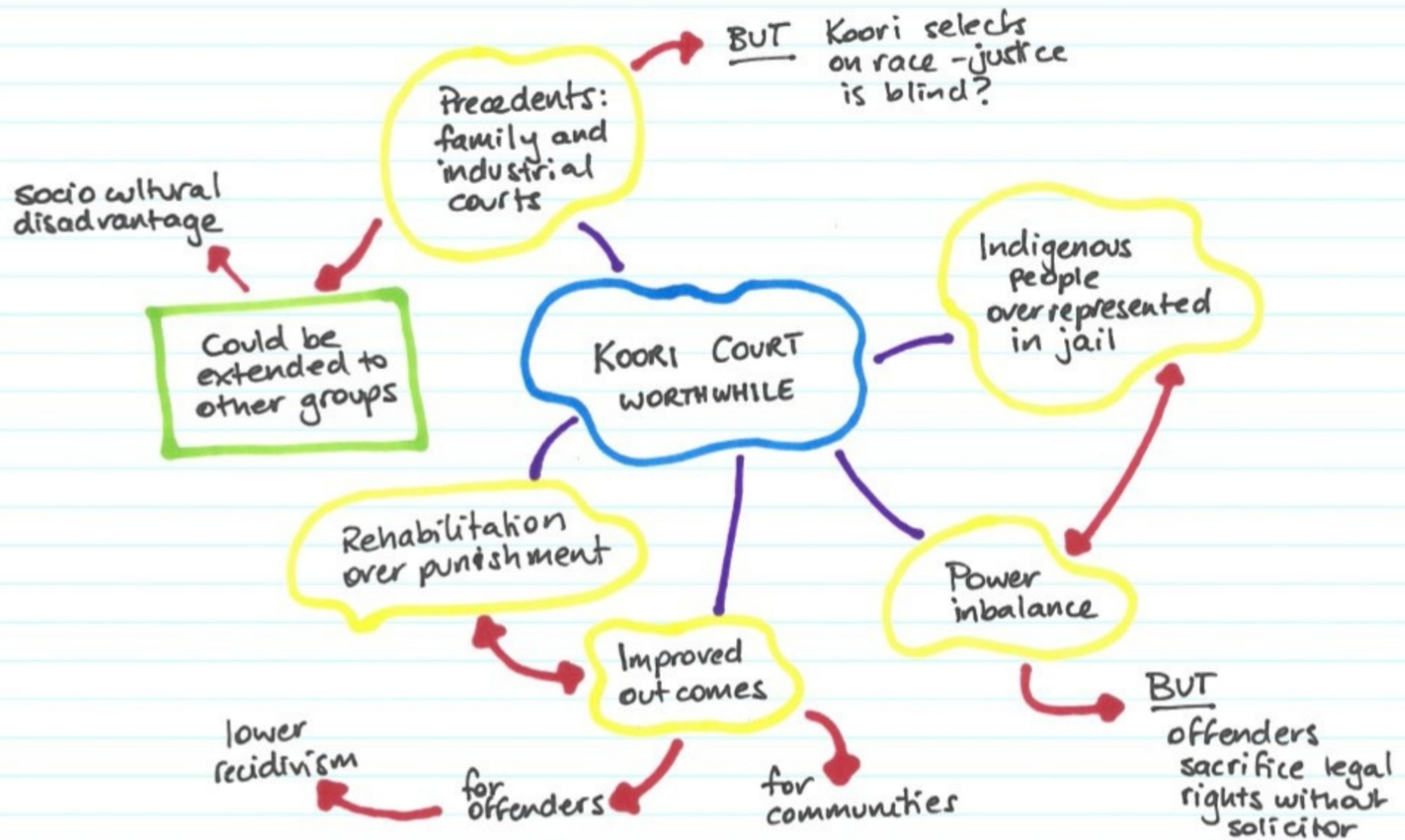
Describe, analyse, examine, to what extent, explore, critically review, discuss, compare and contrast

UNDERSTAND THE DEBATE

Research strategies:

- read with a purpose
- skim for evidence that supports all sides of the debate
- have a look at our resources on **Researching and Finding Sources, Reading and Note-taking Strategies, and Using Sources**

What are the **pros** and **cons** of the Koori Court? In what ways have scholars shown that it does have a place in the Australian legal system? In what ways have scholars shown that it doesn't have a place?

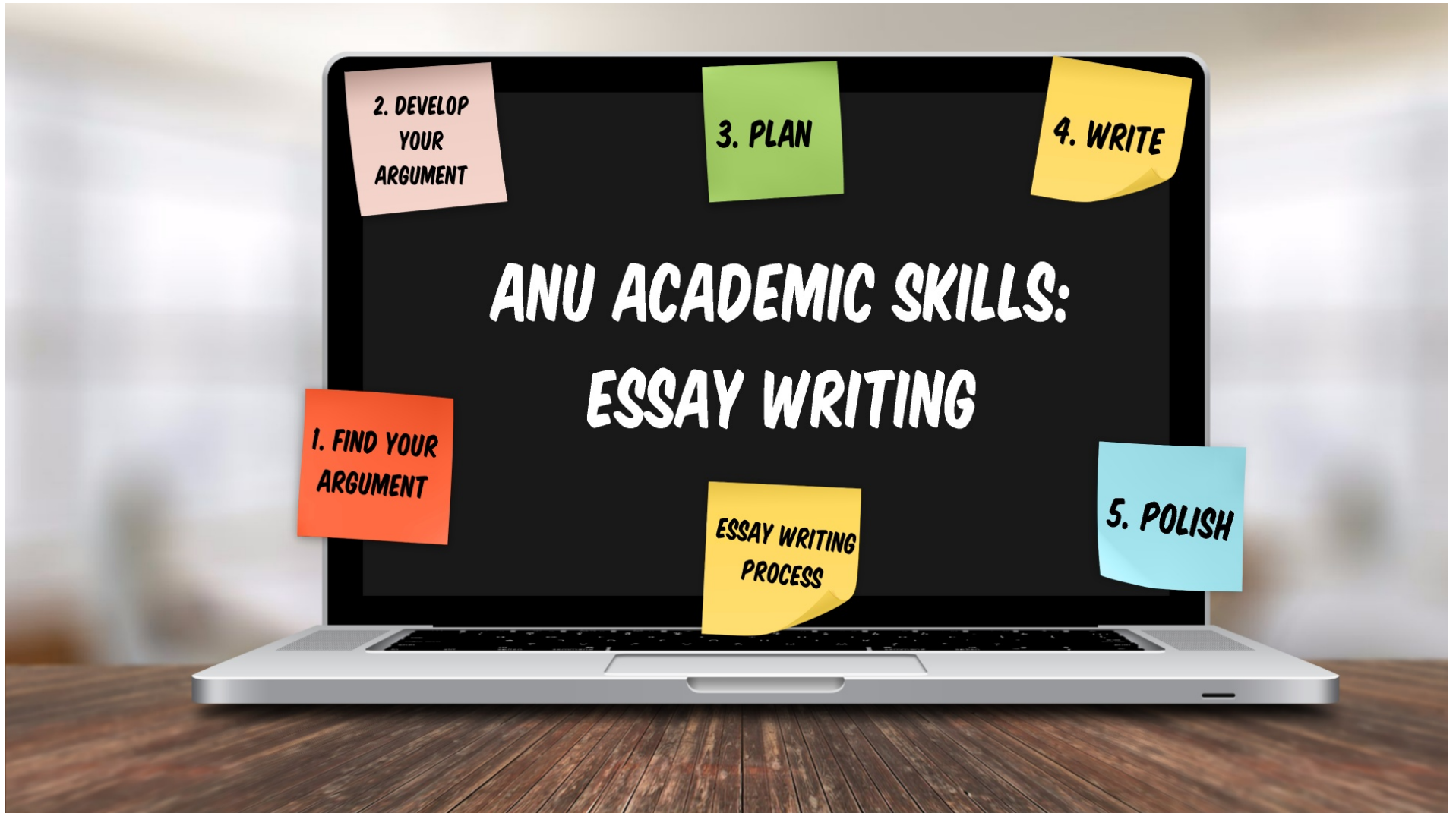


PROS (ARGUMENTS FOR)

- Urgent need to address Indigenous Australians' disadvantage
- KC addresses power imbalance between legal system and Indigenous Australians
- KC provides improved outcomes for both the offenders and the community, such as:
 1. lower recidivism
 2. more effective involvement of Elders
 3. underlying problems addressed through rehabilitation
 4. greater acceptance by the Aboriginal community

CONS (ARGUMENTS AGAINST)

- The sacrifice of rights by offenders further disadvantages Indigenous Australians because:
 1. Role of the offender's solicitor is marginalised
 2. Move from formal processes may threaten the impartiality of outcomes
 - KC undermines 'justice is blind' and all people are equal because:
 1. Other special courts are potentially open to all
 2. Court is not the place to address inequality



DEVELOP YOUR ARGUMENT

- Weigh up all the points of view
- Decide your position
- Write a **thesis statement**

THESIS STATEMENT

- a concise summary of your position and its supporting argument(s)
- Every essay must have one
- 1-3 sentences
- Often signals the counterarguments and rebuttals



EXAMPLE THESIS STATEMENT

There is a place for such programs because, while creating a separate court appears culturally divisive, Indigenous Australians are **the most disadvantaged group** and there is an urgent need to address this imbalance. There are numerous **precedents for special courts** in Australia which addresses the argument for special pleading. Although the Koori Court has its **limitations, its successes provide a model for the broader Australian legal system.**

MAIN POINTS

Indigenous people are disadvantaged and this must be addressed

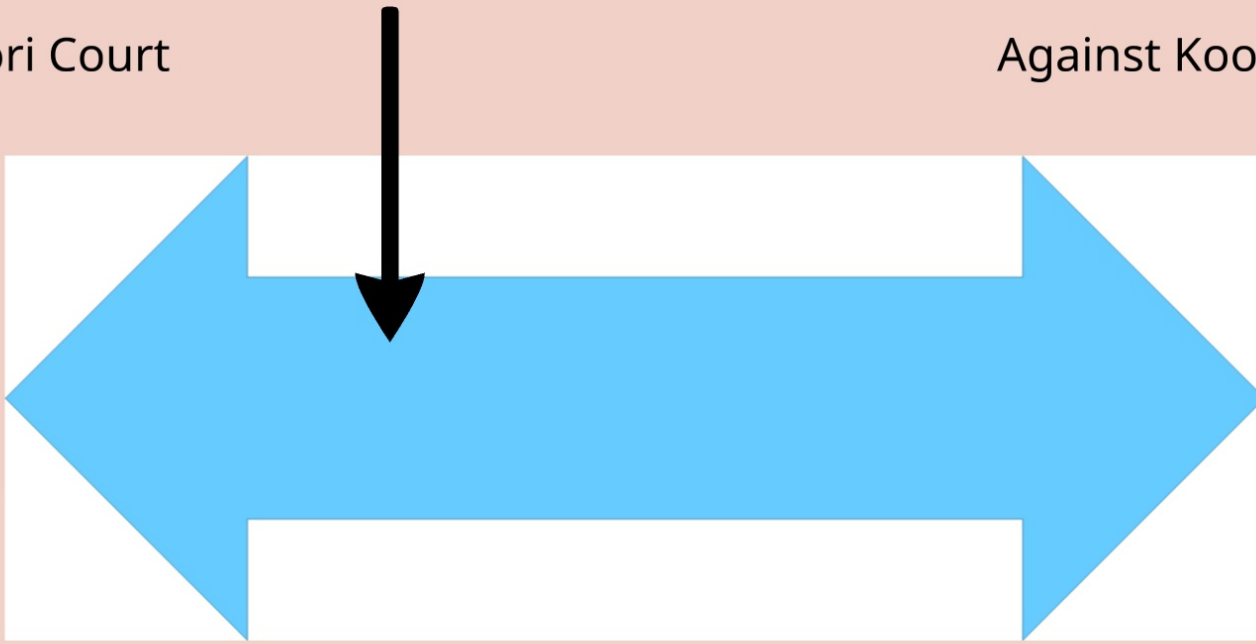
Other specialist courts already exist, providing precedent for the Koori Court model

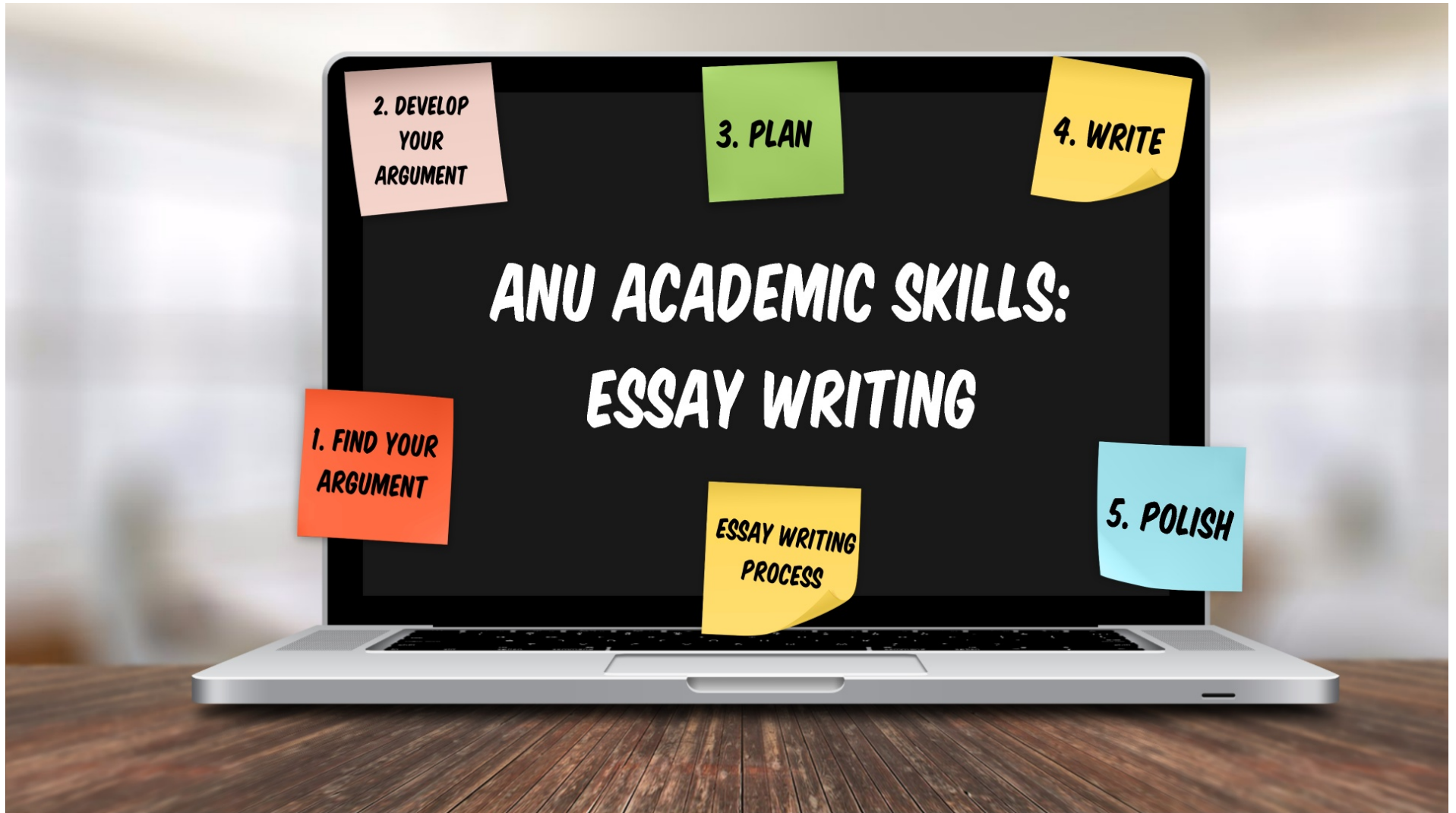
Despite limitations, the Koori Court provides better outcomes for offenders and a model for good legal practice

POSITION SPECTRUM

For Koori Court

Against Koori Court





DISCUSSION:

Do you use essay plans? How extensive are they? Do you think they work well for you, or you might change your approach?

PLAN

You can't have a plan without an argument.

You can't have a focused argument without a plan.



STEP 1

“Outlining is writing, not a prelude to ‘real writing.’ Writers who complain about ‘writer’s block’ are writers who don’t outline. After trying to write blindly, they feel frustrated and complain about how hard it is to generate words. No surprise—you can’t write an article [essay, report, critical review, etc.] if you don’t know what to write.” (Silvia 2007:79)

create a rough outline

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS ROUGH ESSAY PLAN?

Intro: Koori Court

Point 1: Specialist courts in the Australian legal system

Point 2: Indigenous and non Indigenous offenders

Point 3: Royal Commission into Aboriginal Australian Deaths in Custody and Bringing Them Home Report

GOOD EXAMPLE ROUGH OUTLINE

Introduction: There is a place for the Koori Court.

Point 1: Indigenous people are disadvantaged and this must be addressed.

Point 2: Other specialist courts already exist, providing precedent for the Koori Court model.

Point 3: The Koori Court of Victoria has limitations but provides better outcomes for offenders.

Point 4: Extending the Koori Court model can improve justice for all Australians.

Conclusion

- How many words?
- How many points? What order?
- How many paragraphs per point?

1500 word essay

150 words for the Intro paragraph

150 words for the Conclusion paragraph

That leaves 1200 words for the body paragraphs, which is about 6-8 paragraphs. How will you distribute those paragraphs? What kind of weight do each of your main points need?

Introduction

- Broad introduction to the context
- Indication of debate or issue
- Your argument
- Signposting of the logical structure of your argument

Point 1 –

- Only if needed →
- Sub point 1
 - Sub point 2
 - Sub point 3

Point 2 –

- Sub point 1
- Sub point 2
- Sub point 3

Point 3 –

- Sub point 1
- Sub point 2
- Sub point 3

Point 4 –

- Sub point 1
- Sub point 2
- Sub point 3

Conclusion

- Summarise the main points/findings from the essay and reemphasise the argument in the light of these points.
- Indication of the implications of your argument (but don't introduce new ideas).

STEP 2

The more specific planning you do, the better.

THE KOORI COURT

Essay plan

The following plan is for a 1500 word essay divided into nine paragraphs.

The first section makes the argument that the legal system needs to adapt to overcome disadvantage. The second section goes on to argue that this has worked with other specialist courts and does not undermine the Australian legal system, despite some counter examples. The third section highlights the improved outcomes from the Koori Court, and then acknowledges that there are limitations that have to be carefully managed. Finally, the essay concludes by saying that the Koori Court model should be extended to other groups.

Notice how counterarguments and sources are included in this essay plan.

Introduction

Para. 1	Includes the thesis statement: <i>There is a place for such programs because, while creating a separate court appears culturally divisive, Indigenous Australians are the most disadvantaged group and there is an urgent need to address this imbalance. There are numerous precedents for special courts in Australia which addresses the argument for special pleading. Although the Koori Court has its limitations, its successes provide a model for the broader Australian legal system.</i>
---------	--

Body

SECTION 1	Indigenous Australians are the most disadvantaged group and there is an urgent need to address this imbalance
Para. 2	Australia's first people are one of the most disadvantaged in the country <i>Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody</i> <i>Bringing them Home</i> report
Para. 3	Need to address the power imbalance between the legal system and Indigenous Australians <i>Reports listed above; Smith and Crowe (2012)</i>
SECTION 2	Other specialist courts already exist and do not undermine the justice system
Para. 4	Other specialist courts provide precedent for the Koori Court model <i>Family Court: jurisdiction on basis of kin relations</i> <i>Industrial Relations Commission: on basis of common interest</i>
Para. 5	Even though Koori Court selects on race, it does not undermine the impartiality of justice as the legal system already discriminates <i>Legal system discriminates against low education and income</i>
SECTION 3	The Koori Court of Victoria has limitations but provides better outcomes for offenders
Para. 6	Provides better outcomes as it addresses underlying problems <i>Lower rates of recidivism</i> <i>Shaming offenders by Elders is more effective than prison</i> <i>Encourages the offender to deal with underlying problems through rehabilitation</i> <i>Greater acceptance by the Aboriginal community</i>
Para. 7	Constant review is needed to ensure that offenders are not disenfranchised <i>Limit the marginalisation of the offender's solicitor</i> <i>Be careful that the move from formal processes does not threaten impartiality of outcomes</i>
SECTION 4	Extending the Koori Court model can improve justice for all Australians
Para. 8	It can be extended to other disadvantaged groups who are suffering from imbalance of power <i>For example, other groups facing social or cultural disadvantage</i>

Conclusion

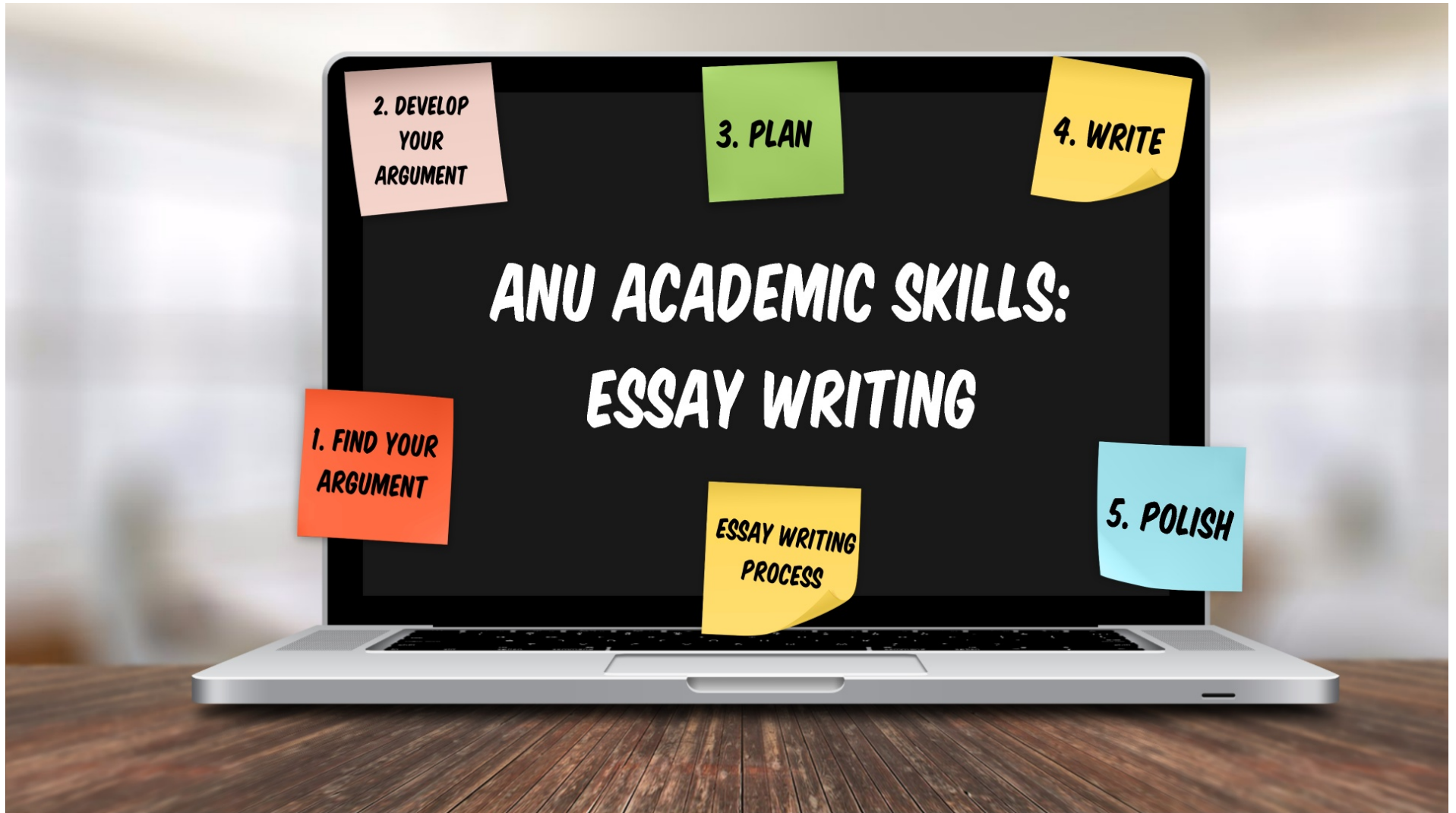
Para. 9	Wrap up the essay
---------	-------------------

STEP 3

Check your plan:

a plan should consist of reasons, not just topics

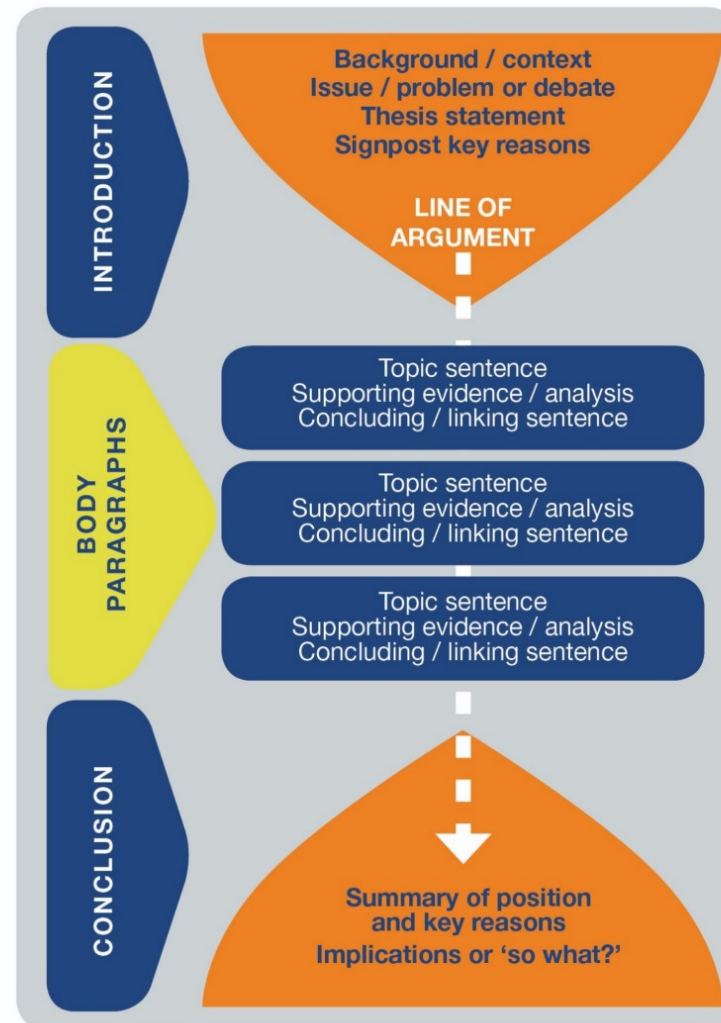
- Is it argumentative?
- Is it persuasive?
- Are your reasons clearly connected to your thesis statement?
- Does the plan only consist of factual information?
- If you gave it to someone else to look at, would it be really hard to follow?

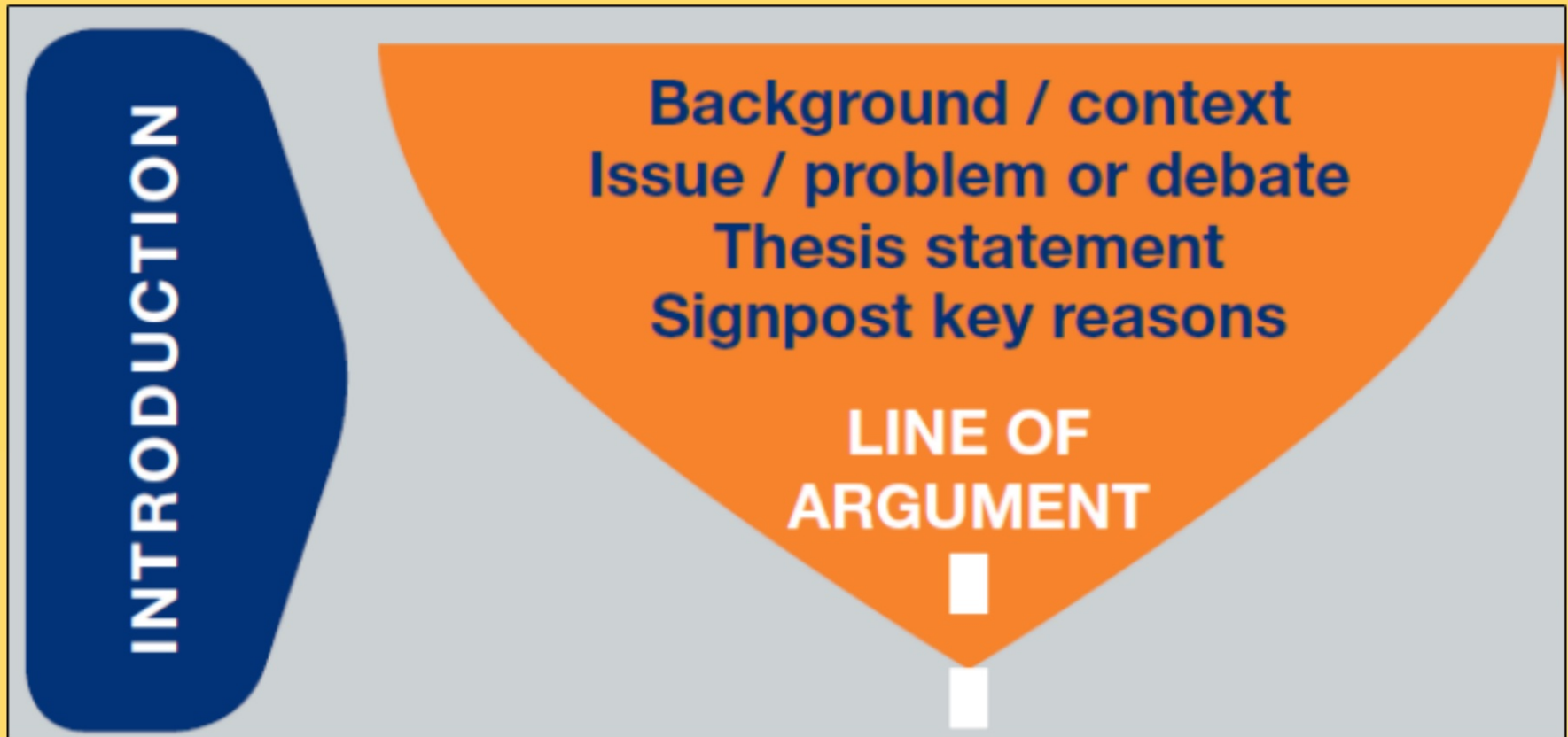


DISCUSSION:

What were the conventions of writing an essay in your previous experiences, and how do you think academic writing conventions at the uni level might be different?

WRITE





10% of the total word count

EXAMPLE INTRODUCTION

The Koori Court is a Victorian initiative that seeks more appropriate legal processes and outcomes for Indigenous people. Poor legal outcomes are reflected in the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the Australian prison system. The Koori Court redresses this imbalance through a more culturally sensitive approach to sentencing. The Koori Court's model appears to some to undermine Australia's universal justice system (see Kahler 2012). However, there is a place for such programs because, while creating a separate court appears culturally divisive, Indigenous Australians are the most disadvantaged group and there is an urgent need to address this imbalance. Numerous precedents for special courts exist which addresses the argument for special pleading. Although the Koori Court has its limitations, its successes provide a model for the broader legal system.

**BODY
PARAGRAPHS**

Topic sentence
Supporting evidence / analysis
Concluding / linking sentence

Topic sentence
Supporting evidence / analysis
Concluding / linking sentence

Topic sentence
Supporting evidence / analysis
Concluding / linking sentence

Address ONE main idea: 150-200 words

TOPIC SENTENCES

- not only factual
- states a reason in relation to your thesis statement

Bad example: Indigenous Australians are over-represented in the prison system.

Good example: Indigenous Australians are the most disadvantaged group and there is an urgent need to address this imbalance.

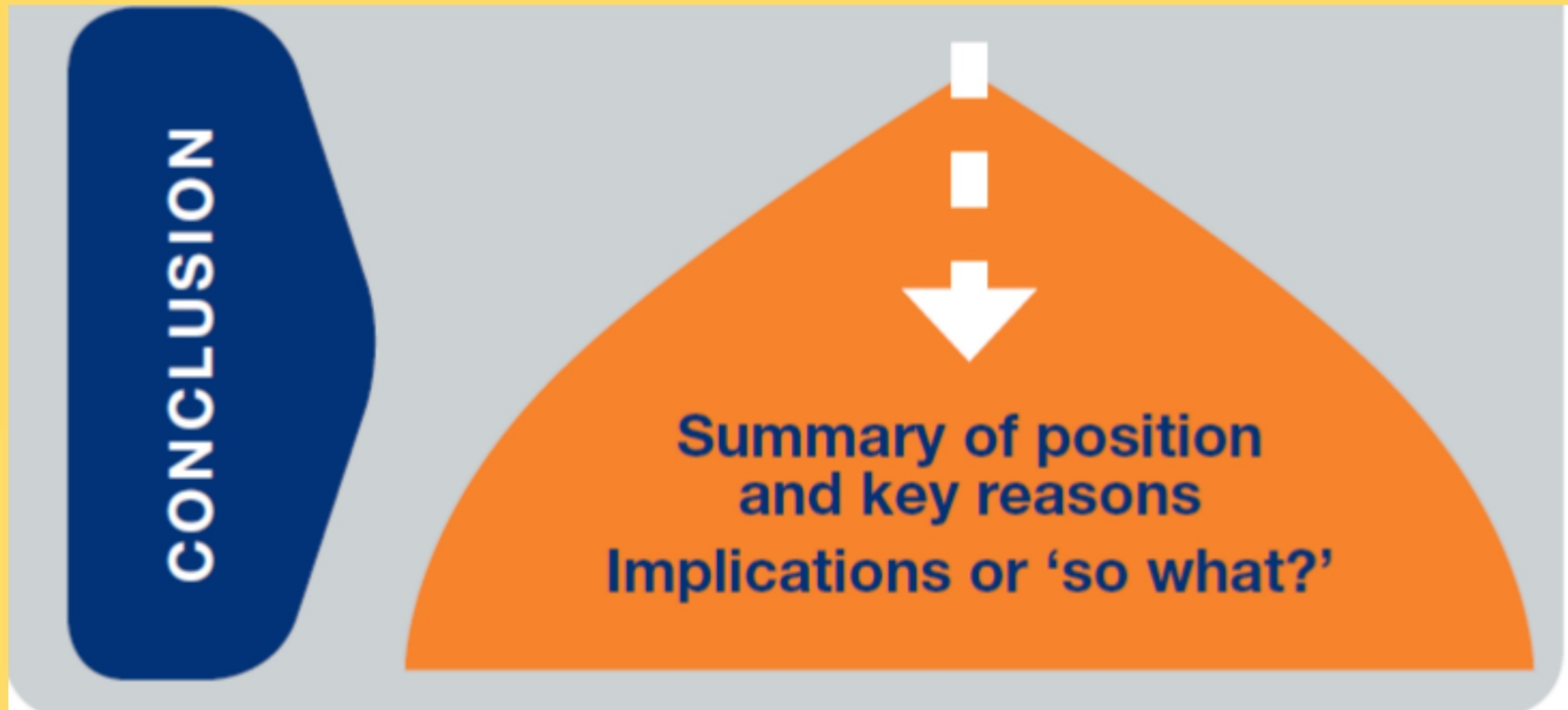
SUPPORTING EVIDENCE / ANALYSIS

Go to **Using Sources** workshop, and study our online resources on **Using Sources** to learn more about integrating evidence and analysis into your body paragraphs.



CONCLUDING SENTENCE

- The beginnings and ends of paragraphs should ideally not have a citation or reference, but be your own assertion (in the topic sentence) and then be your own summary and / or transition sentence (at the end)
- Concluding sentences should not end on a small detail
- Ideally, concluding sentences should link that paragraph's argument back to the main point of that larger section, or the essay as a whole



10% of the word count

WRITING PROCESS

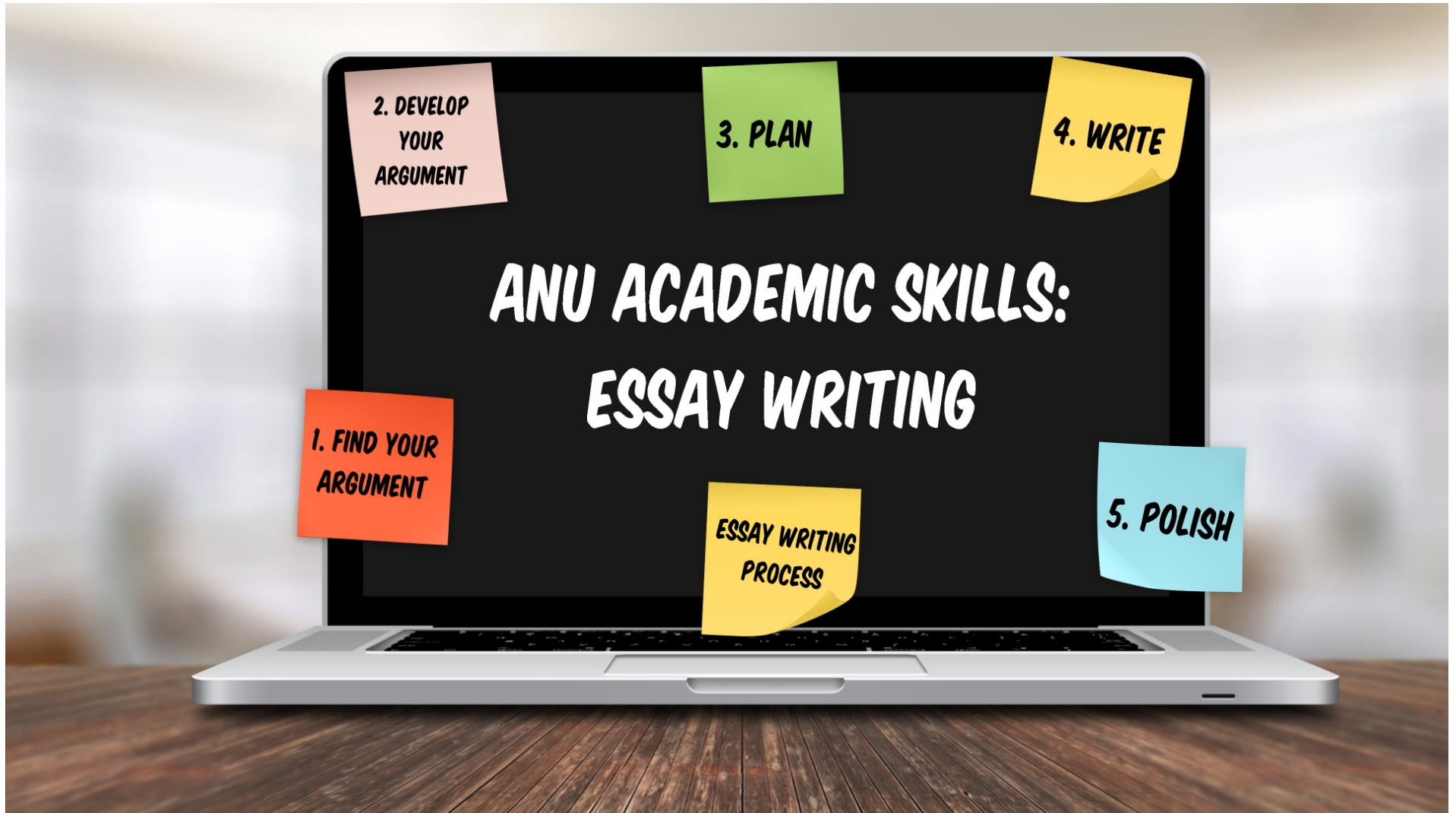
Develop

what works for you?

Reflect

what can change?





4 STEPS TO POLISH YOUR ESSAY

ARGUMENT

Is your thesis statement clear?
Does it take a position and outline your supporting argument?
Does it answer the essay question?
Are your key reasons signposted in the introduction?
Are they summarised in the conclusion?

STRUCTURE

Is your argument sustained through the essay body?
Do your topic sentences contribute to your argument?
Are your paragraphs in a logical order?
Does the order of your reasons in the introduction match the order of your paragraphs in the body?

PARAGRAPHING

Does each paragraph have a topic sentence and one main idea?
Do your paragraphs have too much evidence and analysis? If so, should they be split?
Are your quotations accurate?
Is the evidence you use correctly cited?

EXPRESSION

Do your sentences flow together?
Are there any long sentences that could be shortened?
Are there any redundant phrases or areas of repetition that could be cut?
Have you used synonyms to create variety in your writing?
Have you eliminated spelling and grammatical errors?
Is the essay formatted according to the course requirements?

ARGUMENT

Is your thesis statement clear?
Does it take a position and outline your supporting argument?
Does it answer the essay question?
Are your key reasons signposted in the introduction?
Are they summarised in the conclusion?



STRUCTURE

Is your argument sustained through the essay body?

Do your topic sentences contribute to your argument?

Are your paragraphs in a logical order?

Does the order of your reasons in the introduction match the order of your paragraphs in the body?



PARAGRAPHING

Does each paragraph have a topic sentence and one main idea?
Do your paragraphs have too much evidence and analysis? If so, should they be split?
Are your quotations accurate?
Is the evidence you use correctly cited?



EXPRESSION

Do your sentences flow together?
Are there any long sentences that could be shortened?
Are there any redundant phrases or areas of repetition that could be cut?
Have you used synonyms to create variety in your writing?
Have you eliminated spelling and grammatical errors?
Is the essay formatted according to the course requirements?



ANU Academic Skills: Helping you achieve academic success



Peer Writers

Have a quick question?
Peer Writers are here for you!

- 10-15 minute drop ins
- face-to-face and online
- Monday - Friday, 11am to 1pm
- during semester



Writing Coaches

Are you on the right track?
Check in with a Writing Coach!

- 30 minute booked appointments
- via Zoom
- written feedback also offered
- Monday - Friday, 10am to 4pm
- during semester



Learning Advisers

Do you want to excel in your research writing?
Meet with a Learning Adviser!

- 45 minute booked appointments
- face-to-face and via Zoom
- written feedback also offered
- Monday - Friday 10am to 5pm
- throughout the year

