

## ESSAY WRITING

### WRITING CRITICALLY

This piece of university writing references the information, but would not impress a lecturer:

“Muscat (1992) says that drugs are great but Jones (1991) says that they are awful.”

In this example, the writer has shown from which authors she obtained the information. This is good. However, there is no critical analysis of these two points of view. To do this, the writer needs to go a step further by pointing out to the reader the weaknesses and the strengths in the authors' arguments or discuss points that are particularly interesting or controversial.

This is the previous example written in a more critical, analytical style (note the referencing):

“According to Muscat (1992) drugs are useful because they can alleviate pain and discomfort. This relief from pain can be demonstrated in a situation where a person is dying and the drug morphine is administered to the patient to provide some relief from pain. However, Jones (1991) argues that drugs are dangerous because people can become dependent on them. She cites cigarettes and alcohol as particular examples of dangerous drugs. Muscat (1992) and Jones (1991) are accurate in their explanations of how some drugs can be used and their effects. However, they both fail to demonstrate both the positive and negative aspects of drugs. They also fail to discuss the complexities of a society that allows consumption of legal drugs in the form of tobacco and alcohol and illegal drugs, for example, heroin.”