**How do I know I’ve answered the question?**

**From Coleman – Polish Your Academic Writing**

Work out your answer to the question, create a short, sharp statement of your answer, and ensure you include it in your work as early as possible.

Now split the question into a checklist of sub-questions requiring answers and evidence for support. Reading through your work, tick off each sub-question answer and evidence as you arrive at it.

Key point to remember: When reading each sub-question answer, honestly ask yourself if it’s still relating to the actual question you have been set - or have you deviated to writing about a question you would rather have answered. If you have deviated then get rid of it. Don’t keep something just because you like the sound of it.

**Steps to making sure you answer the question:**

* Understand the question
* Decide on your answer
* Formulate a simple and short statement to answer the question
* Split your question into sub-questions
* Decide on answers for each sub-question
* Check your sub-question answers link back to the actual question and answer
* Find supporting and opposing evidence for each of your answers
* Create an evidence checklist
* Formulate a simple and short restatement to answer the question
* Create a simple and short concluding round-up statement to answer the question.

**Task 1:** Choose an exam question to work with. Write below a statement – what is the question actually asking you?

**Task 2:** Complete the table below with 5 sub-questions and 5 possible answers. Keep asking yourself if your sub-questions link back to the actual question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sub-questions** | **Answers** |
|  | 1. |
|  | 2. |
|  | 3. |
|  | 4. |
|  | 5. |

**Task 3:** Don’t forget you’ll need a supporting piece of evidence and an opposing piece of evidence for each sub-question answer.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Supporting your answer** | **Opposing your answer** |
|  | 1. |
|  | 2. |
|  | 3. |
|  | 4. |
|  | 5. |

**Task 4:** Have a go at creating a concise restatement to answer the question. Don’t use fewer than 10 words, but equally don’t use more than 25.

**Task 5:** How could you restate your original statement as a concluding round-up statement? Have a go at creating a concluding round-up statement with the same word limit.