In order to write successfully at university level it is important to complete a range of tasks which include:

- understanding your question
- researching relevant information
- writing an essay outline
- writing an introduction, body and conclusion
- connecting paragraphs to each other in a logical order
- editing / proofreading.

In many cases the tone of your assignment should be impersonal, avoiding the pronouns ‘I’, ‘we’ and ‘you’. However, in some disciplines it is acceptable to use these personal pronouns. Ask your subject lecturer to clarify this point. There should be one key idea and one topic sentence in each paragraph and paragraphs should link to each other. Your assignment should not answer the question in the first sentence, but build your response to the question in a logical manner that leads to a strong conclusion. Your argument should be convincing and your key ideas should be supported with referenced evidence.

Effective academic writing can be seen as an ongoing process as demonstrated below:

1. 
   - Do you understand the question?
   - Have you researched the topic?
   - Have you made notes and recorded your references?

2. 
   - Mind map / brainstorm
   - Essay outline
   - Edit essay outline into a logical structure
   - Write your essay
   - Link your paragraphs
   - Write introduction / conclusion

3. 
   - Edit your essay
   - Check your sentences
   - Are your paragraphs clear?
   - Does your essay respond to the question?
   - Proofread
Below is a chart showing some of the elements involved at each stage of the assignment writing process. Giving careful attention to each stage will ensure that you are doing the best job possible with your assignments. Note: This is not always a linear process. Sometimes you may need to return to an earlier stage to successfully complete your assignment.

1. **Receive your assignment details**
   - Mark the due date in your wall planner/diary. Note the word length.

2. **Consider the type of assignment**
   - Is it a report, an essay, an article review, a summary, or another type?

3. **Analyze the topic**
   - Analyse the key words and the task words. Consider any questions or limits that may have been given.

4. **Plan / Write the outline**
   - Create a mind map. Write the main points / sections. Brainstorm ideas.

5. **Research**
   - Use your library research skills. Do the required reading. Make brief, handwritten notes as you go along. Frequently refer back to the question/topic.

6. **Write first draft**
   - Keep in mind the structure of your assignment. Insert references using the correct referencing style. Clearly identify the introduction / body / conclusion.

7. **Revise / Edit**
   - Check your references. Is the question answered? Does the assignment follow a logical structure? Check the paragraphs: topic sentences / linking words, etc.

8. **Proofread**
   - Check your punctuation, grammar and spelling. Have you followed the guidelines?

9. **Submit**
   - Complete the assignment cover sheet.

10. **Note feedback**
    - Implement feedback into your next assignment.

The SLC offers a range of study guides that expand on the information outlined above. These can be picked up from the Learning Lounge. Other resources available to develop your study skills are:

- Learning Lounge in the Central & Sturt Libraries for one-on-one academic support
- SLC resources online
- Lunchtime seminars in the Central Library.

For more information go to: [http://www.flinders.edu.au/SLC](http://www.flinders.edu.au/SLC)