WHAT ARE ACADEMICS LOOKING FOR?

When you write an essay the marker will want to see that:

✓ The essay question has been answered

✓ There is reasoned argument and adequate supporting evidence

✓ The essay contains relevant information and has an appropriate focus

✓ The essay is well structured and has a logical organisation

✓ There is adequate analysis and commentary

✓ Sources have been referred to and cited in the appropriate way, and the essay has a reference list or bibliography
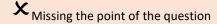
✓ The essay is well-written in a clear style suitable for the paper or course

✓ Academics also look for: Original ideas or approach
   Evidence of wide reading
   Neat presentation

Common Faults

✗ Missing the point of the question

✗ Failure to deal with part of a question, or limited coverage of an important issue

✗ Too much narrative at the expense of analysis

✗ Poor organisation or argument

✗ Insufficient supporting evidence

✗ Irrelevant material

✗ Conflicting ideas or evidence poorly explained

✗ Plagiarism

✗ Heavy dependence on quotes - the "cut and paste" essay

✗ Other faults include: waffle, padding, generalisations, oversimplification, complex sentences that lose the reader, jargon, clichés.