



# Tips and How To's

## The CTA Written Exam.

I do quite a bit of writing these days - I write a couple of blogs, occasional short articles and of course, I also had the pleasure of discovering quite a few ideas about how to write when I completed my CTA written exam. Here are some of the things I've learnt that I hope you will find helpful.

1. Choosing your client case. The person you choose does not have to be the most complex or difficult of your cases; they do need to be someone that you have worked with long enough to provide sufficient material and someone that you can be happy thinking about and writing about for about the next 12 months.
2. Understand the marking scheme. I think this is essential preparation; it will help you structure your answer and decide on content. Understanding how what you have written is going to be assessed will help you assess your own work. You may find it useful to do this step with your supervisor.
3. Have an overall plan for your writing. Sketch out the content in rough, perhaps with an outline of what key ideas and material you will cover in each of the sections. You can then build on this in the next stage once you have your structure together.
4. Understand that writing is different to editing. Editing as you go along, and before you have all your ideas down in a draft, is likely to make the process much harder than it need be and slow you down. So, once you have your outline structure together start by writing everything you want to cover. It doesn't matter if it doesn't make complete sense, isn't grammatically correct, or if you can't think of a word or reference. At the draft stage my case study was full of notes like "find a word that means", "find a reference for this", "go through tapes/notes to find supporting case material." At the draft stage I think it's important to capture the essence of your thinking and all of your ideas.
5. Once you are happy with your first draft, then you begin to edit. This is where you fill in all those gaps. You find those words that mean, check your references, include the transcripts and the case materials. You polish your text and check for grammar and typos.
6. As part of your editing process read it aloud. This will give you a different sense of your work and can help tremendously.
7. Getting stuck? Small chunk the whole thing and reframe it as series of short essays.
8. Celebrate each 1000 words.
9. I used to contract with myself to write 50 words, if I achieved the 50 words and didn't want to write more, then I would finish. If I did want to continue to write, I would until I felt ready to stop.
10. Have back up copies of everything. You probably won't need them but it will reduce your anxiety that something might go wrong with your equipment.
11. Take sections to supervision and read them out, get feedback along the way.
12. And lastly, have someone else proof read your final document as it's difficult to accurately check something when we are very familiar with it.

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