Planning your essay: Visual mapping

Keep the title to a few major words. This acts to remind you of the particular focus of your Essay.

Include the purpose of the Essay, the context, and also a logical plan setting out in order the development of the argument, ideas, sections, issues. May include background & short definitions, scope or limitations (see marking rubric). Should include your premise/thesis.

These boxes represent the specific areas under investigation, or the major sections of your essay. Planning helps to logically structure your response and develop a well-reasoned and integrated argument. Only use headings and subheadings if directed by your lecturer.

The dot points in the boxes could represent the major points for each new paragraph, in logical order.

Use paragraph structure (topic sentence, referenced evidence from the literature to support your argument and concluding sentence) to critically analyse and evaluate or make judgments about the literature.

The lines underneath can be used to list specific authors that you will reference and help you identify where further investigation and research may be required.

Numbers can be assigned to indicate the order of your sections once you decide what argument is most important to your argument. You can decide on approximate word counts for each section, referring to your marking criteria.

Finally, check back to the question and the marking criteria to ensure all sections of your question are covered.

Summary of the major points made, to provide an overview of your argument and come to specific conclusions as required by the task.

Provide an alphabetically ordered list of references on a separate page using the referencing system designated by your lecturer (e.g. APA, Harvard, etc.).
Methods to incorporate citations:

To include another person’s ideas:
Brown (2003) claims that… argues that… points out that… reports that… proposes that… suggests that… states that… maintains that… implies that…

To make comments about individual studies:
The study comprised/consisted of … focused on… has undertaken/attempted…
The findings were reported as… Brown’s (2001) study has shown that/found that…
Jones (1999) has indicated that… develops a theoretical perspective that…
…is part of a growing body of work that… redefines the traditional notion/idea of…
…elaborates on the theory that… has undertaken/attempted a…
Brown (2001) raises… proposes… defends… substantiates… justifies the idea notion/proposition…

To make comments about a number of studies:
Research (e.g. Brown, 2003; Smith, 2000) has shown that…
Studies (e.g. Brown, 2003; Smith, 2000) have indicated that…
Studies (e.g. Brown, 2003; Smith, 2000) generally agree/ confirm/disagree/refute…
There is a common view that… The general finding is that…
Traditional theories/ ideas are reworked as…

To give your opinion when you are making a suggestion:
Brown’s (2003) claim seems to be that… suggests that… could be interpreted as… appears as though… It would seem that further investigations are needed to…

To make comparisons between studies/ideas:
Whereas previous studies… this study seeks to… While this study… other studies…
Unlike previous studies, this study/article… concludes that that…
Similarly, in comparison, in contrast, likewise, conversely, on the other hand, as was evidenced in previous studies, the findings/idea put forward in this study/article…
The research has tended to focus on… rather than on…
Although considerable research effort has been given to… less attention has been paid to…
These studies have emphasised… as opposed to…

To make critical comments (strengths, weaknesses, limitations):
The study was well presented and documented… assumes that… is predicated on the assumption that… Other differences were noted… however…
Even so, many questions were left unanswered.
The problem with these studies… The study does not… There is some contradictory evidence…
The… were questionable/debatable… It is unclear how…
The limitations of the… There are concerns with the…

Methods to introduce a new idea or topic (e.g. in an essay):
Recently there has been a strong interest in… The development of… is a problem…
The… has become a favoured topic because…
The central issue is…
The relationship between… and… has been investigated by…
Many studies have focussed on…