Advice for A2 Essays *(from the examiner’s reports)*

**Candidates…**

* **MUST** ‘*use’* methodological research evaluations to say whether or not it is reliable/valid, strong/weak evidence in support of theory (top and tailing) or they get **no** credit.
* E.g. ***However, this study was conducted in a laboratory. The behaviours exhibited are therefore unlikely to reflect real-life relationships. The study can therefore be considered to have low ecological validity, meaning the results are difficult to generalise to other situations outside of the laboratory. Similarly, the sample size of 12 couples is small. This means that the sample is unlikely to representative of the wider population, and therefore the results lack population validity, meaning the results can be considered difficult to generalise to the wider population. These problems mean that the study provides only very weak support for the social exchange theory.***
* If they get the ecological/settings sample size/population bit muddled - no credit. If they don’t give detail into their evaluations e.g. explaining WHY something has low E.V. – no credit. If they say ‘cannot’ generalise – no credit (must be ‘difficult’).
* They can’t get credit for the same thing twice. E.g. if they criticised a piece of research for one thing, they can’t use that criticism again. (e.g. a whole essay of gender bias and ecological valdidity!)
* Their IDA must be detailed and ‘integrated’ for good bands.
* Their IDA must demonstrate **both sides** if it is a ‘debate’. (and ethical issues in animal research is a debate – so need to say some people view the gains to outweigh the issues etc.)
* If they don’t include an IDA they can’t get above a D.
* Weaker candidates give a list of evaluation points. Better ones give discussion and evaluation.
* Should refer to other studies and research.

**An idea for structure:**

***Discuss research into the breakdown of romantic relationships***

**(AO1: 8, AO2/3: 16)**

4 points about the research (@2 marks each)  
  
2 positive evaluation points (@4 marks each)  
  
2 negative evaluation points (@4 marks each)   
  
Evaluation will include **at least one IDA**  
  
Each paragraph will use the PEEEL structure