

Pre session polls

What level of study are you?

- Access
- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3
- Postgraduate

What would you consider is your main area of study?

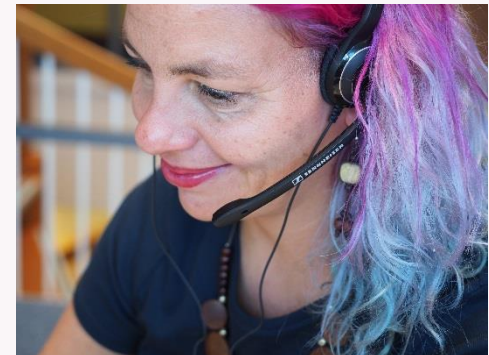
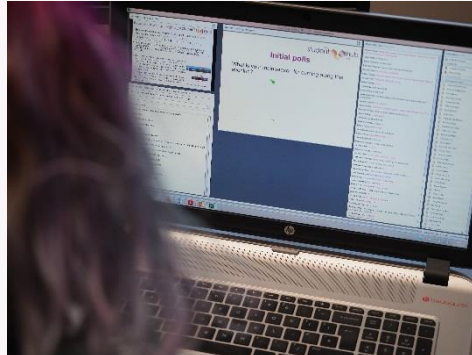
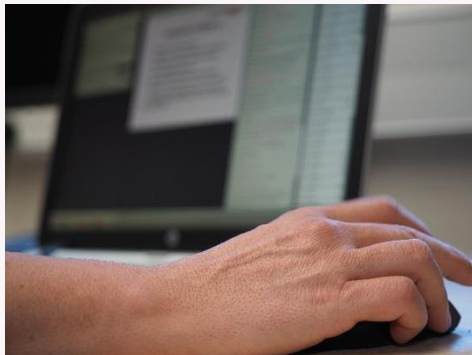
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

Have you been to any student hub live online events before?

- No (I'm brand new!)
- No (but have listened to one or more recordings)
- No (didn't have time)
- No (wasn't aware of before now)
- Yes autumn 2020
- Yes any pre summer 2020
- Yes any 2019 or before

What are student hub live online sessions?

- All student hub live sessions are non modular and focus on skills relevant to study at university level
- Polls are anonymous to other participants but the chat box will have your logged in name associated with your comments during the live session.
- All online sessions are recorded and available to view on catch up on a public facing website.
- Slides are available to download during the session (*not accessible on mobile devices*) and from <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>.



student hub live is the OU's live online interactive platform to support academic community



Isabella Henman is an essay writing aficionado and skills trainer and has been the main student hub live online speaker since 2017. She tutors in science and health sciences at Access to level 2.



Rob Moore works on a range of under-graduate and post-graduate modules for the Open University Business School. Rob's passion is in making live online sessions fun and effective.

Initial polls

What is your main reason for coming along to this session?

(If you are on a mobile device remember you need to tap into the polling option)



To come back to these slides after completing a poll click on the share pod slides icon



Essay writing

This was our advert...

This workshop builds on our essay planning session (although attendance of that workshop is not a requirement) and will cover the drafting and editing process. It's common to struggle to fit everything you want to say within a wordcount, or to feel unclear about the most effective ordering of information. We'll outline key features of strong essays and help you think through how to weave your research into a great essay of your own.

Workshop

- This is going to be a structured workshop to help you get thinking
- We'll look at what is meant by essay writing, including some different styles and methods, as well as key points for what needs to be included
- Then we'll give some tutor advice
- You'll also get the chance to discuss things further

Session purpose

- **Is for:**
- Covering the basics of essay writing
- Give some guidance about ways to write effectively and at an appropriate level
- Provide a space to share ideas and connect with other students
- **Is not for:**
- Telling you what you HAVE to do
- Providing any module specific advice

Please be aware

- These sessions are large scale
- They are very busy
- There is lots of interaction
- They are not the same as other tutorials
- You can maximise slides on your own screen by clicking the icon



Please

- Do NOT share any personal information in the chat pod during the session
- On the recording names will be anonymised to user number
- However if you type anyone's full name or any other personal information in the chat pod it can be seen by everybody and it would also show up on the recording

Planning recap

- A plan is a road map of what you intend to do. It helps you to know what you intend to do and allows you to know whether you have done this
- The format of that road map is up to you
- You can also think of it as a recipe which makes it clear what is going to go into the essay and the order
- Effective essays are planned so that you have a clear idea of what you are going to do and can then know how to achieve that
- Any plan needs to have enough information for you or someone else with a reasonable grasp of the content to pick up and be clear on what is intended

First thoughts

Do you know what a process word is?

- Yes
- No

- Can you say what your understanding of one is?
(use the short answer poll provided)

Process words

- These are the instructions that tell you what you need to do:
 - Describe
 - Explain
 - Critically analyse
-
- We strongly recommend the studenthome > study skills resources here - <https://help.open.ac.uk/understanding-the-question>

A journey



- A river starts somewhere
- It goes somewhere
- It has a journey which may be different along the way

An essay journey

- An essay also starts somewhere and it goes somewhere and it will have differences along the way
- You need to let your reader know this so that they know what to expect. Where are the highlights, when can they relax, what should they not miss and how will they know they are approaching that part of the journey?
- The introduction is the best place to make that clear, but you can also signpost along the way

SHL essay example

- Describe your "study buddy" and explain how they help you complete your assignment
- Use the short answer poll to provide some ideas about how you would go about starting this essay and if there is anything important to note. *Hint, don't just restate the title as that doesn't give enough information*

Important points

- The question said **describe** the study buddy and **explain** how they help
- Description may include personal characteristics
- It is traits that help the explanation aspect
 - E.g. may sleep a lot, give comfort
- Description is always relative, not just in and of itself
- This means you need to describe some elements and details but these need to be contextual

Levels will differ

- Bear in mind that the descriptive component, critical analysis and evaluation within an essay will differ according to your level. So some points may be less relevant whereas others will be more relevant
- E.g. a level 1 essay will not expect a high level of analysis, but a level 3 one will.

Poll time

Which of the following aspects of the essay writing process is most important to you personally?

- Identifying the content
- Articulating how the content relates to the point
- Structuring overall
- Referencing correctly
- Editing
- Critical evaluation

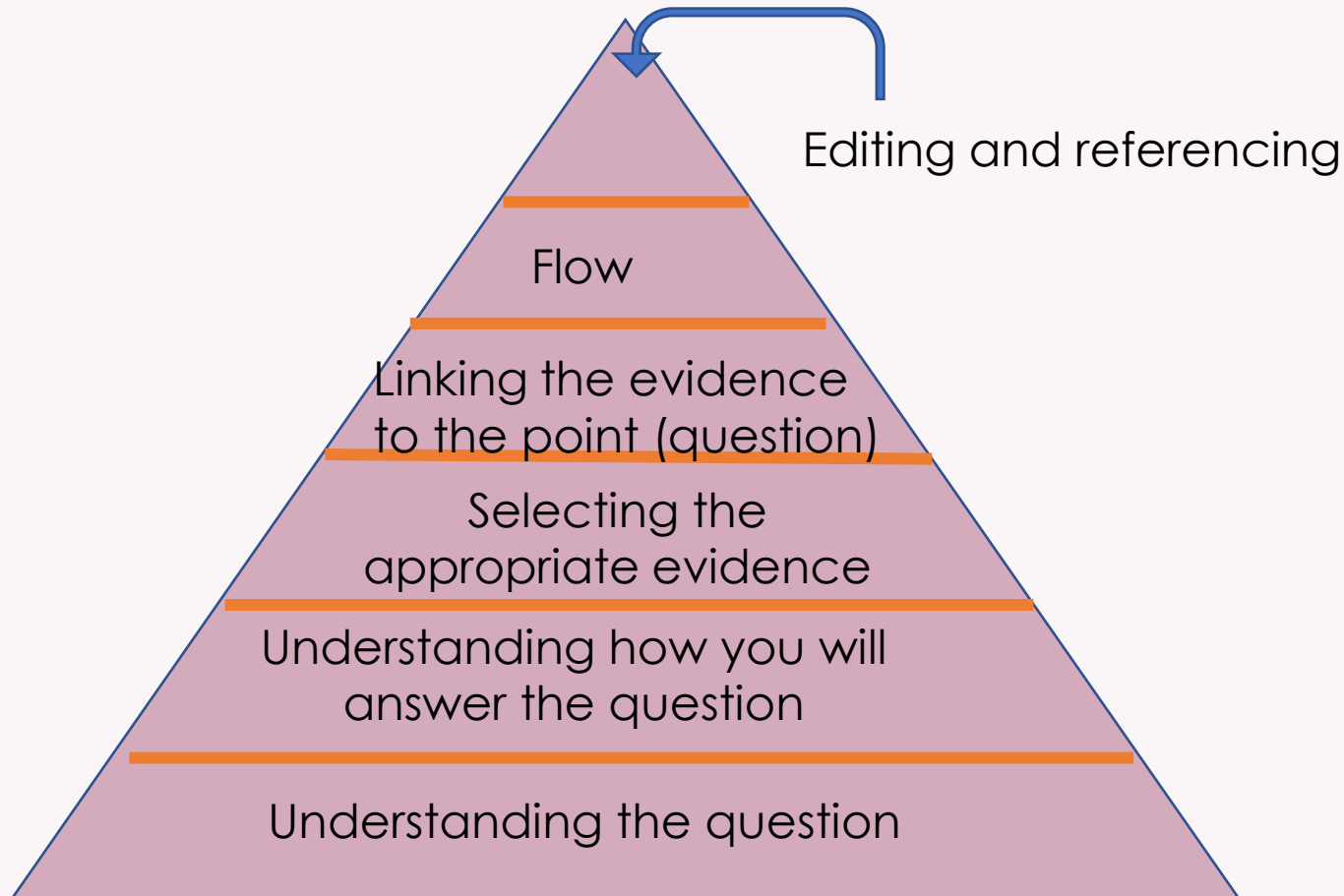
Why did we ask this?

- If you don't know what you want to say you can't expect to say it well!
- What you need to do at level 1 will be different to what you need to do at level 2, level 3 postgraduate etc
- You may be working on developing a specific skill

Hierarchy of essay needs

- Understanding the question
- Understanding **how** you will answer the question
- Selecting the appropriate evidence
- Linking the evidence to the points you are making (to address the question)
- Flow
- Editing and referencing

Hierarchy of essay needs



Structure ideas - PEE

- PEE
 - Point – make it
 - Evidence – support it with facts
 - Explain – why the evidence is supportive and it is relevant

Structure ideas - PESELS

- PESELS
 - Point - make the point for this paragraph
 - Explain - what do you mean by this point
 - Support - provide evidence from studies and research
 - Evaluate - what is there about this point that is for/against
 - Link - to the essay task
 - Signpost - to the next paragraph

Pace and flow

- Look back to our river example...
- The essay must continuously progress, or you are in the doldrums
- But a ride over lots of rapids without any sense of direction can leave the reader confused
- At times the pace can be fast, and at other times it can be slower (when you need a lot of detail)

Think about question

- Do you know what the question / task is?
- You need to!
- You will get marks for answering the question and addressing the task, not for going off on a tangent
- Check the learning outcomes

Main argument

- You need to be clear what your main argument is
- Check the instructions, including process words
- Ideally, a clear central theme or tenet will run through your essay to make that main argument clear

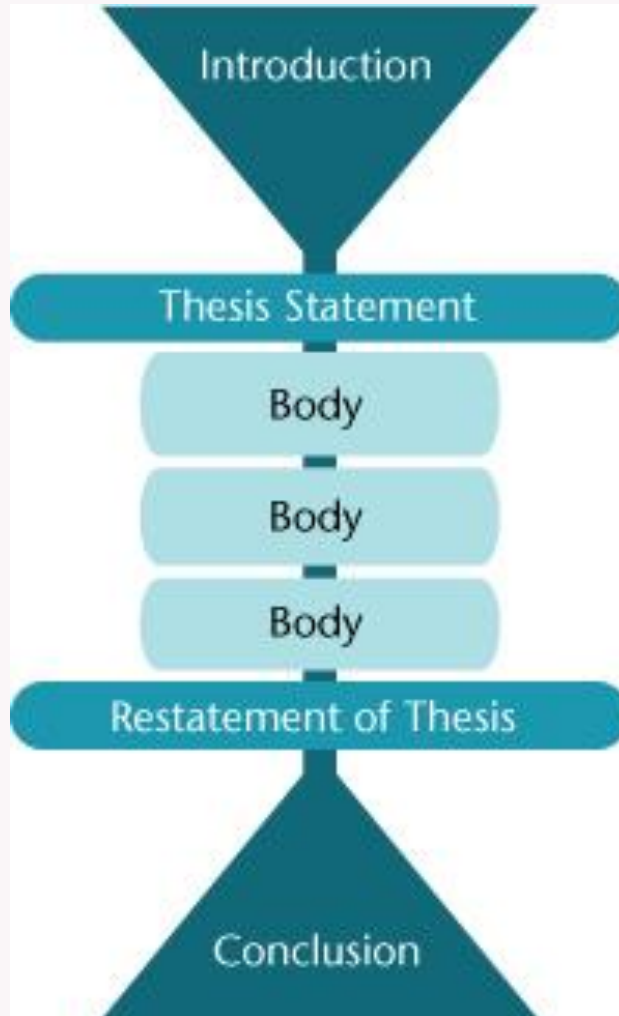
Process / stages...

- Your TMA could go through these stages:
 - Understanding the question
 - Doing your research and identifying what *you could* use
 - Go back to the question and think about what is *best* to use to most effectively answer the question
 - Think – does it make sense? Can you explain your answer to your cat, dog or a friend?
 - **Write your assignment.**
 - Go back to the module material and check that you have conveyed it as you understand it
 - Put your assignment away for a night.
 - Read it again. Read it out loud. Make any corrections.
 - Submit it

Planning & scoping material

- We covered planning in the separate session but this leads to scoping material
- Scoping means identifying the material and content that needs to go in
- You must work out what is going to be relevant and equally ignore what is not relevant *regardless of how interesting it is!*

Structure



The thesis statement is what you aim to deliver in the essay and is a concise summary of this – usually one sentence

Structure

- You can adopt a structure like this if you wish but the key is to ensuring that the essay funnels in important information.
 - So the introduction frames what is needed
 - then the information is covered before..
 - the funnel moves back out to summarise
- All words apart from the main content and argument should be framing and shaping essay

Zigzag approach

- There are different ways to structure essays
- The zig zag approach is useful when you have more than one thing to do (describe and explain for example)
- Define a point and then give the details within each paragraph
 - E.g. this is feature 1 of study buddy and why is useful
 - Then move on to this is feature 2..
- Many points could be a generalised aspect e.g. dog gets me out and helps me exercise.

Block approach

- Where you want to separate clear sections e.g. describe and explain
- Cover all of one style of information first then move on to the next
- This may be dependent on instructions, e.g. you may be told what to cover in each paragraph
- However make sure that you are relating information overall to topic rather than relying on the reader recalling what you had covered and assuming the link (that you haven't actually given). Consider linking sentences also

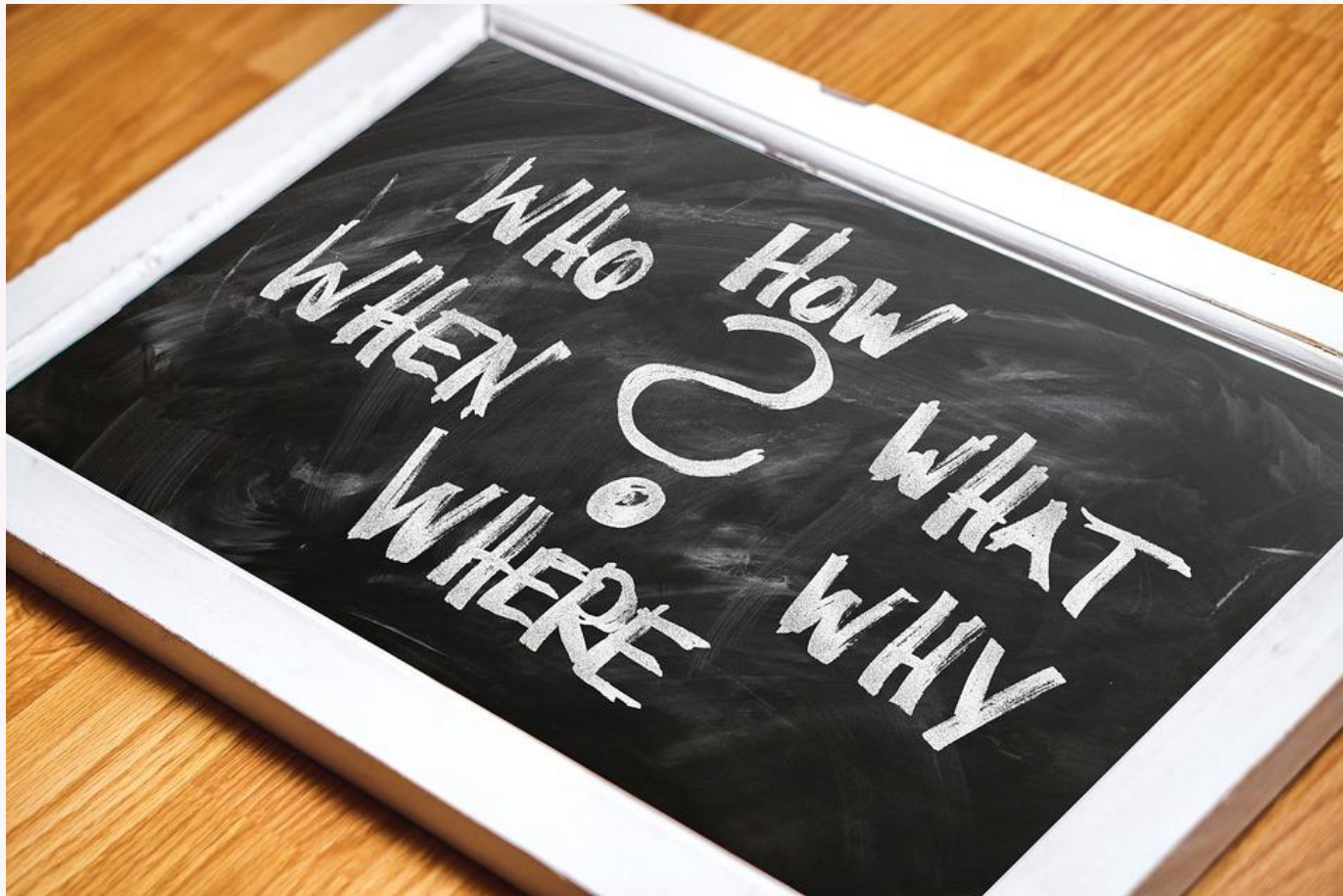
Editing

- This is the point at which all the ideas are neatened up and made as good as possible
- There are stages

Fresh Eyes



The task is clear



Structure



Position



Presentation

I HOPE THE GUY WHO
INVENTED AUTOCORRECT BURNS
IN HELLO!

Editing summary

- Use fresh eyes
- Ensure the task that is being addressed **is** being addressed and it is clear
- Check structure is effective
- Have alternative viewpoints been covered as needed?
- Is the presentation what it needs to be?

Discussion activity

- There will be 2 specific questions in chat pods for you to explore some of the elements we have discussed further.
- *Things I do well in my essay writing are....*
- *Things I would like to do better in my essay writing are...*
- You are welcome to add your thoughts and we will then pick up some of the themes and talk through them.
- Chat does have names on but the recording will be anonymised so you will appear as 'user number'

Take home message

- Essay writing is a process and takes practice
- An essay is a story that communicates a topic in a structured way and all paragraphs relate to that topic, even though they may have their own mini topic

Final polls

What do you feel is the main thing you will take away from this session?

1st Dec 7pm Time management

16th Dec 11am / 7pm Critical thinking and writing

16th Feb 12pm Effective academic communication

24th Feb 7pm Essay planning

Details and booking information from
<http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>

Past student hub live online study skills sessions [here](#)

Visit us at <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/> and subscribe for events as they are announced. Send us feedback at studenthub@open.ac.uk

