



Essay writing workshop  
20.30-21.30  
Isabella Henman and Karen  
Foley



# Session 1 - Unpacking the question and considering material

# What do we mean by unpacking?

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It's:

reading the question

Noting the key words

Understanding what the question is actually asking

# Reading the question

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Reading and answering the actual question is crucial when tackling any essay.

Read out loud

Underline key words

Make the title into a question.

# Making a question - poll

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What question could you make out of each of these titles?

Title 1 – write an essay on the history of chocolate.

Title 2 – write an essay about walking a dog.

# Don't change the topic question



If you do phrase as a question to help you understand make sure you aren't changing the overall topic.

# Poll about reading the question

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If you are asked to discuss the history of chocolate making select which of the following should not be done:

- Say where chocolate comes from
- Say who invented chocolate
- Say how chocolate is made
- Say where cocoa is grown

# Did anyone miss the not?

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Whilst the intention is never to trick or catch people out it is very important that you read ALL the words there and don't assume you have read what it says correctly.



# Poll about reading the details

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If you are asked to write an essay with a maximum of 500 words select which of the following should be done:

- Write 200 words
- Write 470 words
- Write 700 words

# Process words

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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>

# Considering material

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What information are you going to need to find out? What does the question assume in terms of knowledge?

- Think definitions
- Think facts
- Think what might need to be included

Back to our history of chocolate question!

# Question poll

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What kinds of information do you think you will need to find out to answer the question write an essay on the history of chocolate?

# Our ideas:

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What is chocolate

Does everyone mean the same thing by 'chocolate'

When was it first produced / made

Are there key dates to mention?

Are there key people to mention?

# Don't worry!

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Unpacking the question involves coming up with things that you might need to find out and then considering the material is what that might be.

You aren't expected to know everything before you even start!

# Next sessions



- Tuesday October 24<sup>th</sup> – planning and structuring
  - **19.00-20.00 Access and level 1**
  - **20.30-21.30 All other levels**
- Wednesday November 8<sup>th</sup> - writing, editing and referencing.
  - 20.00-21.00

# Thanks!

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Thanks for coming.