

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 (watched livestream freshers session)
- Yes any online workshops

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
- All online sessions are recorded and available to view on catch up on a public facing website. *Small group discussions are not recorded.*
- Slides are available to download during the session (*not accessible on mobile devices*) and from <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>.



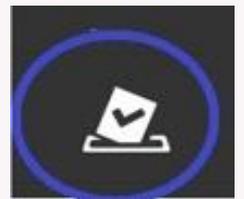
Initial polls

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

Are you currently...? (please choose the one that is closest)

- Brand new to OU study
- Have done at least one previous OU module (in last few years)
- Have done at least one previous OU module (many years ago)

If you are on a mobile device you will need to tap into the poll option



(remember to come back to the main slides when you are done)



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.

Developing your academic writing

This was our advert...

One of the most important skills in Higher Education is using an academic voice. In this session we will discuss how to effectively employ tone, tense, voice and structure to enhance your writing style. This workshop covers being objective and presenting your arguments with evidence, it complements the essay writing workshops that will be run in the autumn.

Workshop

- This is going to be a structured workshop covering what is meant by academic writing as well as some of the key features
- We'll give some tutor advice and suggestions on areas that are commonly tricky
- Note due to the size of the session there are no microphones available to participants
- You'll also get the chance to discuss things with others in a small group (dependent on numbers)

Session purpose

- **Is for:**
- Covering the basics of academic writing
- Give some guidance about the different features of academic writing and what these mean
- 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



Don't worry!

- Most participants here today are new. You don't have to know all the answers already, the idea is to help you start thinking carefully about some key points
- No one will force you to answer any of the questions we pose but they are a great chance to add thoughts and we pick up on some to help everyone
- The slides are available to download and the session is recorded, but you can take any notes you want to help you

First thoughts

- Which style of writing do you use the most in your every day life? Please select from the poll pod available
 - Casual e.g. texts and social media
 - Semi formal e.g. emails and letters
 - Formal e.g. business reports and presentations
 - School style e.g. helping children / others to learn
 - Academic writing

What is academic writing?

- Next suggest what makes academic writing different from other types of writing like writing to a friend using the other short answer poll available
- *Remember to look at other answers to see what others suggest and see if you agree / disagree / hadn't thought of (you may need to scroll to see all answers)*

Academic writing is...

- factual and to the point
- objective (not opinionated or subjective)
- not flowery (unless creative writing!)
- acknowledging sources
- appropriately planned and structured
- specific to the question you are answering
- convincing the reader that you know and understand that question and are answering it accurately

Academic English

- This is more formal than everyday English.
- Look for specific module guidance as some modules have prepared primers & pre-module guides or part of their module or faculty guide which covers expectations for academic English.
- Studenthome study skills section
<https://help.open.ac.uk/developing-academic-english>

Discussion activity

- Shortly we will move over to a different screen appearance with 2 parallel discussions
- The idea is that you think about what kinds of things might already be in your skills repertoire and what you may need to work on
- For the duration of this activity there will be no general chat but we will pick up suggestions and ideas to expand further
- If you are on a mobile device you will have to tap into the chat and then select the chat with the relevant question

Discussion activity

- What language skills do you already have that will help you with your academic writing?
- What language skills will you need to develop to help you with your academic writing?

Some aspects of academic writing

- Narrative voice
- Language and structure
- Academic third person
- Tone
- Referencing

Narrative voice

- A narrative voice is the theme and presentation of the writing and is the way that the language is used
- You can also compare text to how I speak.
- In SHL we are discussing skills and showcasing how to use them, but in a narrative fashion – writing a narrative is not the same as a narrative voice

Language and structure

- ‘Big word bingo’ is not appropriate
- Be careful about using a thesaurus as it may not give appropriate words for the academic context
- Sentences have ~10-15 words
- Paragraphs have 100-300 words but should always be focused on a single topic each
- Most modules require academic third person not personalised first person (e.g. no I, we, you, this author)

These are not hard and fast rules but broad guidelines as a starting point

Academic third person

- Try rewriting the advert excerpt below in academic third person. Please use the short answer poll provided

In this interactive SHL session we will look at some of the key features of academic writing and explain how to develop your academic writing skills.

Tone

- Academic writing has a specific type of tone and you need to think carefully about who it is that you are aiming at or writing to and for
- Your tone will be different from the one you use for nearly everything else

Tense

- In general this is presented 'as is'
- If anything it is past tense e.g. *Henman presented the theory that attending studenthublive sessions provided valuable support for student skills*
- Not *Henman was presenting her theory that attending studenthublive sessions will be providing valuable support for student skills*

Referencing poll

- Suggest what the purpose of referencing is using the short answer poll available
- It is to show where information comes from, showing it was not made up or an original idea of your own
- It also shows you have read the appropriate information

What is referencing?

- Referencing has 2 parts – an in text citation and the full reference details.
- The in text citation indicates that a piece of information, idea or fact just before or after than citation has been drawn from a specific named source.
- The reference details give the full details of what that source is and where it can be found.
- *The actual format of this does differ according to module and subject which reflects the requirements of the overall academic world.*

Useful resources

- The library runs excellent sessions on referencing
- <http://www.open.ac.uk/library/training-and-events/the-why-and-how-of-referencing>
- Live sessions are advertised on <http://www.open.ac.uk/library/>

Discussion activity

- Discuss as a group your best tips for writing effectively academically. If you are new then you may like to think of questions or say which of the aspects presented today have been most useful in helping you think about what is important
- Please bring back a few points that you can share with the rest of the group
- We can then try and discuss some of the common points
- You do not have to speak on mic if you don't want to but please do interact with your group using the chat option

Useful points for breakouts

- We suggest you use the first couple of minutes to introduce yourselves and get used to the room. Choose a volunteer to keep the discussion on track and feed back to the main room
- If you want to speak you will need to activate your microphone *once in the room and you see the option available*



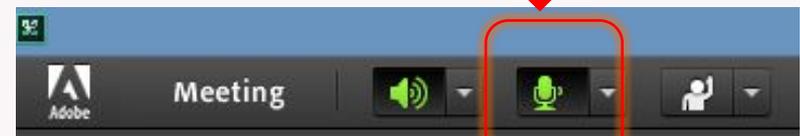
- Breakout groups work best if people engage and contribute and discuss
- There will be ~10 minutes for the breakouts overall – we'll send regular reminders to let you know how long you have got left

*Remember to check the number of the room you are in (shows at top of chat pod as “chat x **BREAKOUT** y”) in case of connection issues and for bringing back information.*



Breakout activity

- Discuss as a group your best tips for writing effectively academically. If you are new then you may like to think of questions or say which of the aspects presented today have been most useful in helping you think about what is important
- Please bring back a few points that you can share with the rest of the group.
- You do not have to speak on mic if you don't want to but please do interact with your group using the chat option



This session is currently in breakouts (small groups).

If you are part of this group and have had connection issues please let us know your room number in the chat box

If you are only just arriving in this room then unfortunately you have missed the main session. Please log back out and watch the recording which will be available later today

So....

- What can people share from their sessions?

Alternative discussion activity

- There will be 2 specific questions in chat pods for you to explore some of the elements we have discussed further.
- *The things I have heard today that I think will be most useful for my academic writing are...*
- *I intend to work on my academic writing by...*
- 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

- Academic writing has a specific focus and style and takes some work to get used to but is straightforward in purpose
- It conveys information in an objective balanced way without personal viewpoints or inflection and sticks to the point

Final polls

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

What are you going to do as a result of this session?

Which of the following elements of this session did you find useful?

- Tutor led explanation
- Opportunity to chat in text chat box
- Opportunity to suggest ideas in polls
- Opportunity to read ideas suggested in polls
- Breakout room or alternative (discussion with / learning from other students)
- Breakout activity or alternative (reflecting on the concepts in more detail)
- The chance to reflect more deeply on own experiences / skills



13th Oct 7pm Effective academic communication

21st Oct 11am / 8pm Academic writing skills

10th Nov 12 / 7pm Essay planning

17th Nov 7pm Essay writing

1st Dec 7pm Time management

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

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

