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?
• Yes last year
• Yes this year
• Yes other
• No (but have listened to one or more recording)
• No (didn’t have time)
• No (wasn’t aware of before now)
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 at the end of the session and from the main website
Initial polls

What is your main reason for coming along this evening?
student hub live is the OU’s live online interactive platform to support academic community

Karen Foley is a lecturer at the OU, head of student hub live and chairs Y032. She also tutors in social sciences, psychology and science.

Isabell Henman is an essay writing aficionado and skills trainer. She tutors in science and health sciences at Access to level 2.
Developing a good academic argument
Academic argument or line of enquiry is an important skill within most essays but is not about arguing. Identifying your narrative is about how you structure the argument from an essay writing perspective and develop this in a persuasive manner. This interactive workshop would be ideal for those at level 2 and 3, although it is never too early to start developing a good argument.
Workshop

• This is going to be a structured workshop to help give the chance to think about elements that make up an academic argument (for an essay) and how you can start to put this together to clearly convey the points

• We’ll give some tutor advice and links to places where further information may be found

• You’ll also get the chance to discuss things with others in a small group
Arguing Poll

How do you approach arguing in everyday life?

• I’m always up for a chance to debate views
• I like to hear about things but people can get too forceful at times
• Sort of OK but I don’t really like my views being knocked / someone else’s views being forced on me
• I hate arguing and avoid at any cost, I’d rather just quietly agree
What is an academic argument?

• It is not arguing
• It is clearly making a point
• It uses evidence and examples
• It is persuasive
• It shows the reader you know what is important and have carefully put it all together
• It is not personal opinion based
• Meets the parameters of your essay (not anything else you might like to include!)
Supporting an(y) argument

- Use the 2 short answer pods available to give some evidence FOR the existence of Nessie the Loch Ness Monster and AGAINST the existence of Nessie the Loch Ness Monster

The idea here is that evidence can take a variety of forms. It needs to be objective (data, photographs, corroborated sightings) even if the original concept can be considered to be less than sensible.
Weighing up Nessie evidence

Good:

- Common memory / multiple people viewed at the same time and reported findings
- Visual evidence exists
- No active evidence that she does not
- No scientific corroboration
- Poor quality visual evidence
- Questionable motives
Weighing up Nessie evidence

Poor:

• I once saw a photo of it
• Someone told me that it exists
• Everyone knows it is made up
• It’s a silly idea so of course it isn’t true
• People claiming to see her were drunk so obviously didn’t know what they were doing
What’s the difference?

• Evidence can be questionable but can still be presented in a convincing academic manner
• Value laden arguments undermine integrity (even if they are true) – be objective
• It’s about the approach and collating evidence and presenting in an academic fashion (almost regardless of what that evidence is – within reason)
Planning

• First and foremost – Plan, think about what you need to do and collect everything together
  • Do you need to define anything?
  • Do you need to research some factual points? (e.g. do you understand what the information actually says?)
  • Do you have a limited pool to look for information (e.g. specific book / topic / section)?
• Planning takes time but it saves time – if you have an idea of what you need to do then you will know if you have done it
Poll

• Suggest in the short answer poll pod how you might start to work out what your argument might be for an essay – do you have any strategies?
Strategies to make an argument

• PEE
  • Point
  • Evidence
  • Explain

• You can also cover all of the for then all the against, or theme your evidence
Illustrations of PEE

- (P) Dark chocolate is best
- (E) My preference
- (E) Developed over much careful testing

- The best film each year is up to the public
- Blackkklansman and Black Panther both took at least 10 x the amount of Green book
- Oscar winning films are not necessarily those that are viewed by the public
Activity

• Using the short answer poll available suggest what you think is not being done so well in the piece of text below (think about the PEE suggestions & what is clear or not):

Green Book won the 2019 Oscar and Spike Lee was cross as he didn’t think this was right. It’s viewers that should count, critics aren’t as important. Black Panther took $700million which should count for something.
Some points

Green Book won the 2019 Oscar and Spike Lee was cross as he didn’t think this was right. It’s viewers that should count, critics aren’t as important. Black Panther took $700 million which should count for something.

• Who is Spike Lee?
• Why give numerical amount for one film and not all?
• Style of writing – ‘being cross’ isn’t academically rigorous
Clear links

• All the points must relate to the argument
• Just because they are interesting or you spent ages finding them out doesn’t mean they are relevant and will give marks
• Repeating doesn’t help the point (it just uses up words)
• Avoid circular arguments
Structuring

• The best argument can be let down by a higgledy-piggledy order
• Don’t switch back and forth
• Each paragraph should be a mini topic in itself
• Avoid single sentence paragraphs or massive sentences
Poll

Which of the following is true of how you write an academic essay?

• I just sit down and write and hand in what I do
• I just sit down and write but then edit carefully based on instructions
• I plan carefully, write a draft and then edit several times
• I plan carefully and then write based on that plan but don’t edit
• I plan carefully, write a draft and check it over once
Why edit?

• Editing allows you to focus and make absolutely sure you have addressed the argument and it is clear
• It takes out repetition and checks for any holes
• It gives a more professional overall result
**Discussion activity**

- Discuss as a group your experiences of developing an argument within an essay. You may like to cover whether you have used PEE or another approach, how easy you found it to know what the argument was and whether you were successful.

- Please bring back a few points that you can share with the rest of the group.
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.

• Remember to activate your microphone to speak as per the instructions given.

• Breakout groups work best if people engage and contribute and discuss.

• There will be 15 minutes for the breakouts overall – we’ll send regular reminders to let you know how long you have got left.
Breakout activity

• Discuss as a group your experiences of developing an argument within an essay. You may like to cover whether you have used PEE or another approach, how easy you found it to know what the argument was and whether you were successful.

• Please bring back a few points that you can share with the rest of the group.
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 this evening.
So....

- What can people share from their sessions?
Take home message

• Plan carefully so you know what the argument needs to be, then check what you have written to make sure this has been done in a coherent way that covers all sides

• You do need to understand the topic to be able to recognise what the argument is
Final polls

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

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

Which of the following elements of tonight's session did you find useful?

- Tutor led explanation
- Opportunity to chat in text chat box
- Opportunity to suggest ideas in polls
- Breakout room (discussion with / learning from other students)
- Breakout activity (reflecting on the concepts in more detail)
- Any other aspect (please give details in chat)
Future sessions in our student hub live skills based Adobe Connect series – See the website for more details
8/5/19 EMA workshop
22/5/19 Exam workshop

Tonight’s slides are available to download from the link provided. Click on the words essay planning then download file and it will download to wherever downloads go on your own computer.

Past student hub live online sessions here
Visit us at http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/
Send us feedback at studenthub@open.ac.uk
View past (live) recordings on www.youtube.com/thestudenthublive
If you've received an email inviting you to respond to this year's NSS

- Please do!
- Your feedback is invaluable in helping the OU shape what we do and how we do it
- From the quality of our course materials, to tutor performance, to how well represented you feel by the OU Students Association;
- The NSS is your opportunity to have your say

Got questions? national-student-survey-coordinator@open.ac.uk

NSS landing page: https://community.open.ac.uk/your-voice