

# 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?

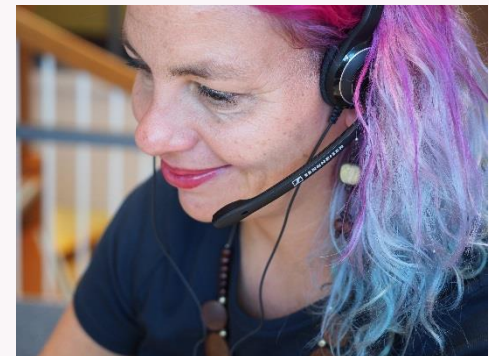
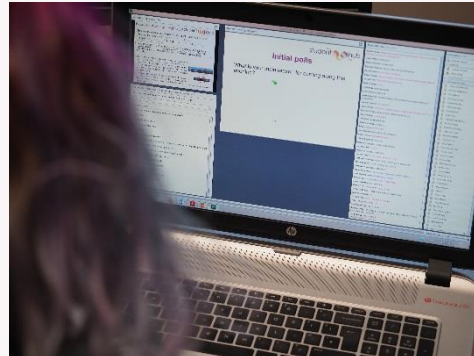
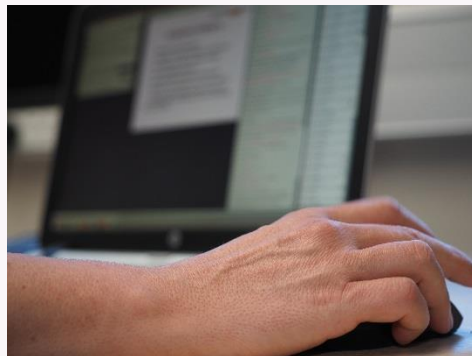
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

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

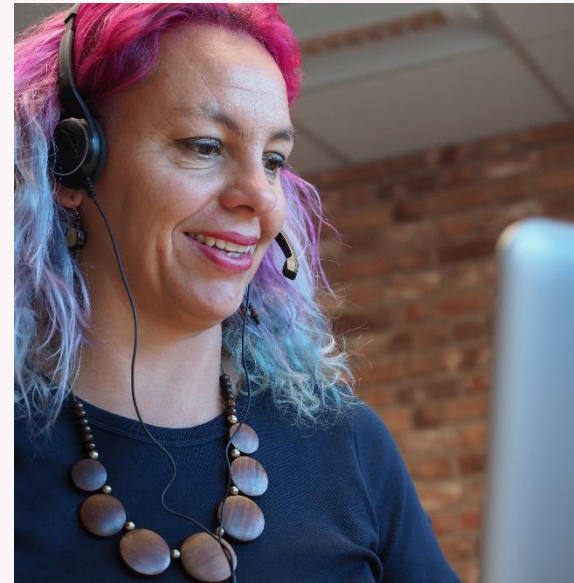
What is your main reason for coming along this evening?

# Critical thinking and writing – going beneath the surface

# 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.



Isabella Henman is an essay writing aficionado and skills trainer. She tutors in science and health sciences.

# This was our advert...

Critical thinking is a key skill in Higher Education and involves evaluating and weighing up information and considering how well it explains a concept or fits its purpose and then writing about this. Developing your critical thinking and writing skills will bring benefits as you'll be able to show *why* you have included something and demonstrated a good level of understanding. We'll explain some of the things that tutors look for to demonstrate that the student had really understood and been critical as well as some of the indicators that this is not being done

# Workshop

- This is going to be a structured workshop to help you getting thinking.
- We're going to start of with an example of everyday critical thinking
- Then we'll give some tutor advice
- You'll get the chance to discuss with others in a small group

# Activity 1

- You have £20 to spend on your best friend's birthday.
- You need to think about what affects how you will spend this money.
- Please use the short answer polls and / or the chat pod to suggest points that are relevant here



# Mindmap!



# Drawing these together

- What is the purpose?
- What is relevant to meet the purpose?
- What is not relevant to that purpose?

# Critical analysis

- This is a higher level skill that gains more marks than anything else.
- It means looking at the information and evaluating it and considering whether it allows you to answer the question fully.
- It is a questioning process – who said what? Does what they say have value? Did they miss something out? Has someone else said something that completely disagrees with them? Have I read something that disagrees with them?

# Critical analysis hints

- It isn't about ripping something to shreds
- It is about evidencing your assertions
- If you ascribe to one person's theory as presented what is it about it that is convincing? Have you looked at what might not be right about it? is there anything missing?
- Is the view / evidence important because of the amount of people that agree or something else?

# Critical evaluation – when and where

Difference between being descriptive and critical. A description or observation could be that a study had a small population or was carried out on rats. Fair enough but so what? Why does that really matter.



# Critical writing

- Objective
- Third person
- Not opinionated
- Weighing up against other point

# Evaluation within a paragraph

The highest levels of critical evaluation will take information and present it in a way that shows the evaluation within the paragraph. So not just presenting and describing but showing why it is important.

# Evaluation between paragraphs

The essay is a coherent overall piece of information. As well as using information within the paragraph on a topic, each separate paragraph needs to link together and support that topic. All work together for the main aim. There is no 'name dropping' or shoe horning in of information, everything is relevant and clearly so.



# Putting it into practice

- With our favourite topic!
- We'll show 2 different ways of approaching a similar set of information. Read carefully and try to make some notes on what the key differences are (we'll have a poll for that after the 2<sup>nd</sup> example)

# Description..

The history of the use of chocolate in religious ceremonies is very interesting as priests used the chocolate drink as part of their ceremonies. Furthermore the drink was brought over to Europe in the 1600s and special chocolatl houses were set up where only the rich people could drink the drink it.

# Evaluation..

Chocolate has been used within religious ceremonies both as a reward and a means of conveying favour upon the recipient. Through the perception of the cocoa bean as a luxury item the association with privilege enhances the idea that religion and its objects are special. This idea is further supported by the history of the chocolatl shops in Europe where the expensive drink was restricted to those able to pay and emphasised the importance of these people within society.

# What's the difference?

- Suggest what the main differences between the 2 examples were (in terms of style and purpose rather than absolute number of words)

# What's the difference?

- Critical analysis looks at why and how and questions the information for its value.

# Keeping up the evaluation

Remember it is not just about describing or listing pieces of factual information. It is evaluating them and showing how they are important and relating them to each other and the overall topic.

# Discussion activity

- Now that you have some ideas about critical thinking from everyday life – how might you apply them to your study? Discuss with your group and please bring back some tips and ideas to share in the main room.

***You will have different modules and topics so this is about how you approach critical thinking overall***

# 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
- There will be 13 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

- Now that you have some ideas about critical thinking from everyday life – how might you apply them to your study? Discuss with your group and please bring back some tips and ideas to share in the main room.

***You will have different modules and topics so this is about how you approach critical thinking overall***

**This session is currently in breakouts  
(small groups).**

**If you have experienced connection  
problems from your breakout room  
then please indicate the room number  
you were in via the chat box and we  
will pop you back.**

**If you are just arriving in this room and  
have missed the main recorded  
session then please log back out of the  
room and view the recording when it is  
available.**

# So....

- What can people share from their sessions?

# 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 (considering a task in more detail)
- Any other aspect (please give details in chat)

Future sessions in our student hub live skills based Adobe Connect session – See the website for more details

Catch up on critical thinking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qF9IOQKxgU0>



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

Visit us at

<http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>

Send us feedback at

[studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk)

View past (live) recordings on

[www.youtube.com/thestudenthublive](http://www.youtube.com/thestudenthublive)

