

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?

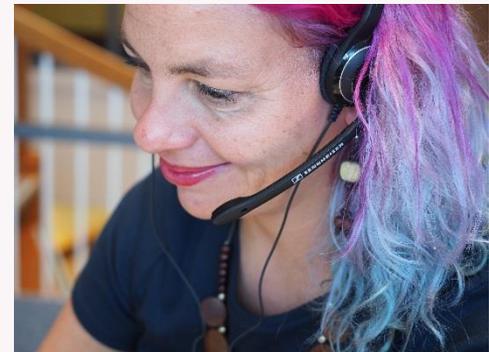
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

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

- Yes last year (any 2018)
- Yes this year (any 2019)
- 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



Become a SHL ambassador:

SHL ambassadors are advocates of SHL, sharing their experiences and telling others about events and opportunities to get involved. The role of ambassador is tailor-made for each person. You can do something small like send in a quote that we could use about how you have experienced events, a picture of you or your space (and study buddies/cake supply) attending a SHL event. You could tell other students about it on social media, and even come up to Milton Keynes and be involved in livestream events either on or off camera. This could involve sharing your advice for other students, doing the quiz, or taking part in a particular session. We are able to pay travel expenses if you travel to Milton Keynes. In return we would look to offer you something of use which may be attending an event on campus or facilitating connections, for example.

To register your interest, email studenthub@open.ac.uk and let us know how you would like to get involved

Initial polls

What is your main reason for coming along this evening?

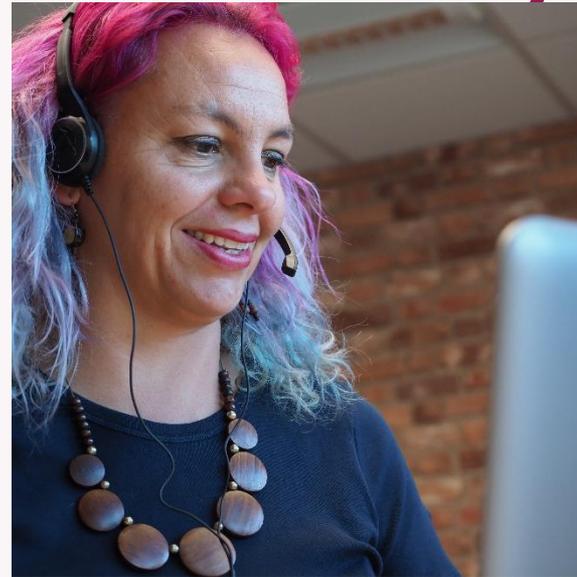
Are you currently...? (please choose the one that is closest)

- part way through a module that began earlier this year (2019) (e.g. February, May)
- on a summer break with next module due to start in October 2019
- going to start first module in October

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 at Access to level 2.

Storytelling or argument: creating an argument in your writing

This was our advert...

As a student you are told to be objective, but you are also expected to write in your own words using critical skills to create your own argument. In this session we will provide guidance and ideas on how to deliver a coherent and cohesive piece of writing. This workshop focuses on the narrative part of an essay, and complements the other essay writing workshops in this summer series as well as those planned for the autumn.

Workshop

- This is going to be a structured workshop covering how to develop a clear argument within your writing
- We'll give some tutor advice and suggestions on areas to work on to develop the objectivity
- You'll also get the chance to discuss things with others in a small group

Session purpose

- **Is for:**
- Covering how to recognise and develop a theme in your writing
- Give some guidance about how to be a storyteller without telling a story
- 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

Types of story?

- Please give your ideas about what types of story exist and if you have any favourite ones
- Please use the short answer poll available

Types of story

- Fairytale
- Science fiction
- Action
- Thriller
- Romance
-

Language and structure

- The type of story very much governs the language used and the structure adopted
- Most stories have chapters, some have sections as well
- Thrillers and action often adopt cliff hangers
- Some use alternate timelines
- Some authors (Terry Pratchett) use footnotes
- Often very personalised (can be first person) and opinionated

Appropriate language and structure

- Possibly chapters and sections depending on length (unlikely at undergraduate level)
- Clear paragraphs
- No cliff hangers
- No alternate timelines
- No personal views or first person

Academic third person

- This means no I, we, you

So rather than

- in this essay I am going to be presenting evidence for why dark chocolate is better than milk chocolate
- This essay will present evidence for why dark chocolate is better than milk chocolate
- It is the essay that is presenting the evidence rather than you
- You as a writer (I / we) are **not** writing to the reader 'you'

Exceptions

- If referring to a specific person who undertook research or presented a theory then he / she / they can be used
- *Foley presented evidence that attendance at studenthublive events aided understanding of skills. She was able to show a clear link based on data analysis.*

What does this say to you?

Please use the short answer polling pod each time to give your answer of the type of story this first line section suggests to you (you can overwrite your previous answer by typing in again and pressing return)

- Once upon a time...
- Her heart beat madly in her chest...
- Footsore and weary...

Context or theme

- The context of a line can change the meaning so be careful that you stay in context but also don't stray off on tangents
- This also applies to adding lots of description which can make it very difficult to follow a theme

Picking out a theme

- On the next slide is a piece of text as a mini story. Please use the free text poll to say what you think is the main theme of the story i.e what is happening.

Our story

Once upon a time a small girl whose braces hurt they were fitted by a horrible dentist who charged ever such a lot of money she heard people say but had a nice set of games in the waiting room. Her pigtailed often got stuck on the tree in the end of the lane near the waiting room next to the ducks and the blackberry bushes that the birds often ate before she got the chance to eat them and the birds really smell at times and the postie says they make a lot of mess was making a card for her aunt's birthday which was going to have a nice party and maybe a bouncy castle and jelly and some puppies to play with and she might get to play with her cousin who she hasn't seen since they played with the holly that formed the place decoration on Christmas day

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Beware...

- Excessive description
- Tangents – just because it is interesting / true doesn't mean it is relevant to the academic writing
- Train of thought style writing
- Disguising the key information amongst 'fluff'

Objectivity

- Can anyone remember any of the points we made about objectivity in the academic writing session?
- Please use the short answer poll to give your ideas (or if you didn't attend / watch the recording, what your understanding of objectivity within an academic argument is)

Objectivity

- The main element we spoke about was adding value laden comments, e.g. adverbs which influence the reader / listener
- Extremely, awfully etc

Signposting

- This is where the reader gets a clear idea of the theme and where the narrative is going
- It is not the same as stating I am going to tell you what this essay is about. This essay is about chocolate. I am going to tell you the history of it through examples then write a conclusion.
- The signposting is from the order and theme of the words

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)

Strategies to make an argument

- PEE
 - Point
 - Evidence
 - Explain
- PESELS
 - Point
 - Explain
 - Support
 - Evaluate
 - Link
 - Signpost

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

Information polls

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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 ~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 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

- You can give a narrow critical argument or a wider balanced argument
- You need to know your topic to work out what an appropriate argument is and ensure you support it and clearly communicate it to the reader without tangents.

Autumn sessions

- There will be sessions on essay planning and writing, critical thinking and writing, learning from feedback and assessment as well as other communication skills
- Keep an eye on <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/> for dates and times

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)

Online Room summer skills series (Thursdays at 20.00):

1/8 – Preparing for the end before you begin

Autumn online events begin in October and there will also be live studio events to help get you focused

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

