

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?

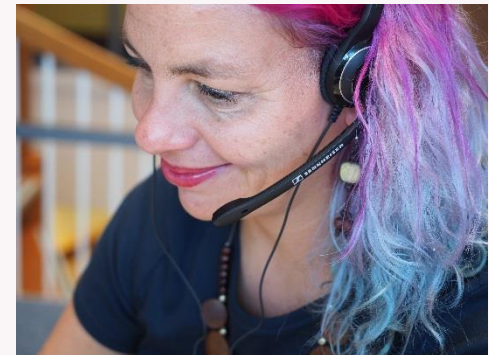
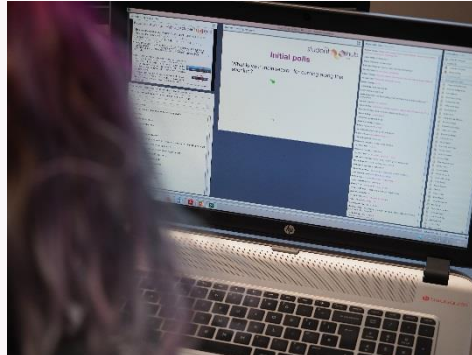
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

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 (didn't have time)
- No (wasn't aware of before now)
- Yes any 2020
- Yes any 2021

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



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.

Workshop

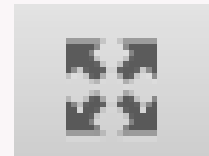
- This is going to be a structured workshop to help you get thinking
- We'll look at what is meant by essay planning, including some different styles and methods, as well as key points for what needs to be included
- Then we'll give some tutor advice
- You'll also get the chance to discuss things with others in a small group

Session purpose

- **Is for:**
- Covering essay planning for people who have planned before
- Give some guidance about ways to plan effectively
- 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



Essay planning advanced

Initial polls

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

(If you are on a mobile device remember you need to tap into the polling option)



To come back to these slides after completing a poll click on the share pod slides icon



This was our advert...

This essay planning workshop focuses on formulating the best argument to address a set question. Aimed at students on Level 2 or 3 modules, it will focus on how to structure your argument and set out your points coherently. We will discuss the elevation of introductions, framing arguments and exploring effective conclusions that reveal how all the points you have made address the question. The workshop will also look at how to tackle more complex essays, such as comparisons and critical evaluations.

First thoughts

What part of the planning process do you most want to improve?

- Please use the short answer poll provided to say your ideas

Possible themes

- Planning the introduction and conclusion as well as the main body
- Structuring the paragraphs effectively
- Establishing a clear focus for each paragraph
- Understanding weight and that all weights are not equal
- Actually planning (not just pretending)!

Planning introductions

- Not just restating the question and instructions
- Start with a brief account of the main issue
- Make it clear HOW you plan to answer the question
- Be clear about what is in (and perhaps out of) scope – give some details about what's included
- Consider if there are any key terms/definitions that will be required
- Don't be afraid to give away key clues, you want your reader to have a clear idea about what is coming. This is not the same as repeating details

Planning conclusions

- Not just restating content but summing it up and relating back to the topic
- Making it clear **how** the content you have covered has been relevant in answering the question and the contribution that each paragraph has added
- Not covering new information or suggesting future ideas (*unless specifically asked to*)
- This is not an opportunity to be profound or overly dismissive as you launch into another tangent

Length

- This may come within the plan itself but it is important to think carefully about how you will allocate words within the essay
- The word count you have will affect how much you can include, and this will shape the breadth vs depth you can consider
- Broadly speaking the allocation is as follows:
 - Introduction is ~10-15% of words
 - Content (body) is ~75-80%
 - Conclusion is ~10-15%

Paragraph structure ideas

- PEE
 - Point – make it
 - Evidence – support it with facts
 - Explain – why the evidence is supportive and it is relevant

Or

- PESELS
 - Point - make the point for this paragraph
 - Explain - what do you mean by this point
 - Support - provide evidence from studies and research
 - Evaluate - what is there about this point that is for/against
 - Link - to the essay task
 - Signpost - to the next paragraph

Weighting

- Not all paragraphs are of equal importance
- Not all sources of evidence are of equal proportion
- For your reader to interact with these things you can prepare them for the lift!



Focus for each paragraph

- Each paragraph should have a clear focus and include one key topic
- There could be a variety of sources of evidence but the theme should be singular
- The beginning line of each paragraph, if read alone, should be the spine of the essay. The beginning sentence should be a point which is about what will be covered and why that is important in answering the question
- Paragraphs need to contain different voices: the theorist/evidence source, perhaps the author of the text and your own objective interpretation of the value of that evidence in answering the question

Remember

- Essay writing is objective and not personalized so the plan may be 'your' plan but needs to make it clear how the essay will be objectively written with the required evidence
- This is why referencing is important and it is good to be clear about who owns which opinion – but do not write in the first person (unless explicitly asked to)

Another way to look at planning

- A plan is like a map of what you intend to do
- If you are taking someone on a journey with you (your reader) they may benefit from knowing your plan
- They can then prepare well and allocate their attention for the best bits forthcoming journey including where you are going, what you may meet along the way, the highlights, the "do not miss" bits, and some parts may require a little additional context
- You can also think of it as a recipe which makes it clear what is going to go into the essay and the order

A journey



- A river starts somewhere
- It goes somewhere
- It has a journey which may be different along the way

Poll time

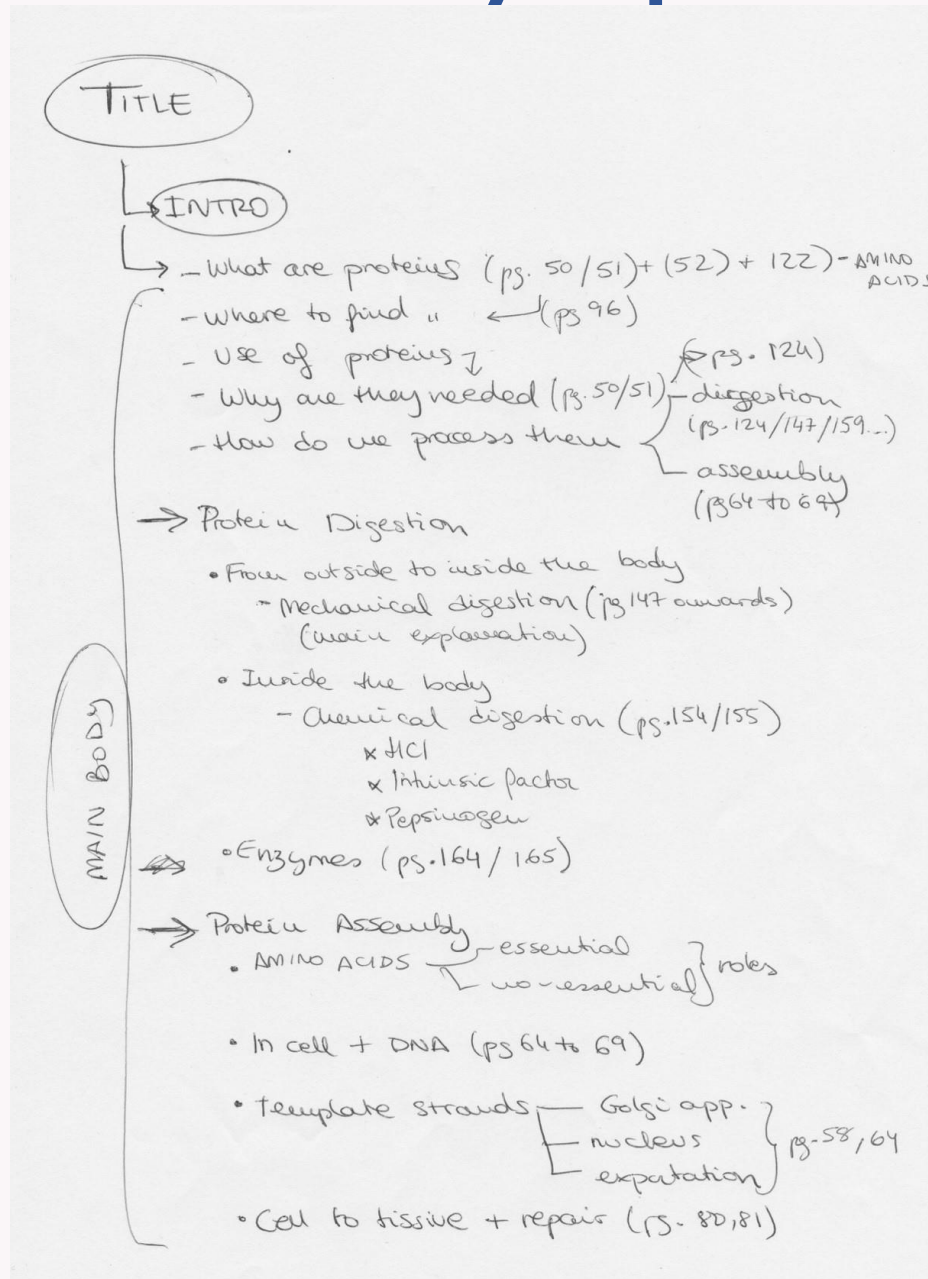
- Please suggest in the short answer poll pod available what type of plans you can think of. (here think about the style of plans you might be aware of – don't worry if you don't know but do look at other suggestions)

Types of plan

- Simple list
- Series of relevant page numbers / topics
- Mind map
- Spider diagram
- Post it on a whiteboard

(selected examples to follow)

List style plan



List style plan

Plan

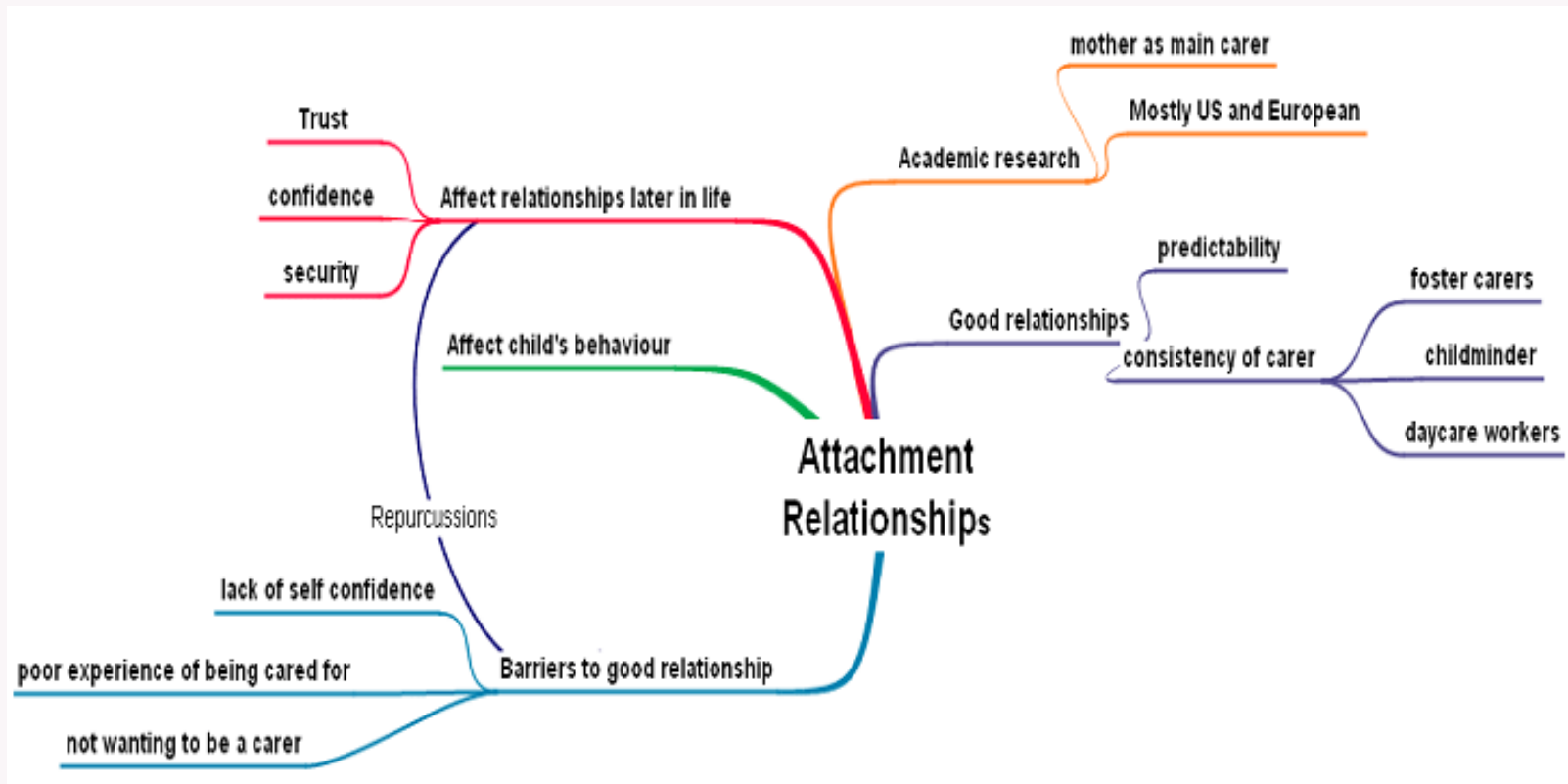
eat protein → digest - how digested
absorb - how absorbed
disassemble → can't use in form as ingested - macromolecule p50 ✓
poly peptide p52 + 3D shape = function ✓
proteome p51 ✓
p52 - amino acid, peptide, poly peptide ✓
p68+ - RNA ✓
p122+ amino acids ✓
assemble protein → building blocks - from what is absorbed
whole protein - how constructed - p68+ - RNA ✓
p122+ chains ✓
lose protein p124 ✓
healing p80+ ✓
p51 roles / p96 roles / p51 ✓
tissues / enzymes p53 ✓
metabolic process / catabolism p100 ✓
p122 roles / transporters p166, 170 ✓
cell - p61+ ✓
use protein → roles - different roles / function - importance
deficient - what happens with lack of protein /
p126 - disorders ✓
does not add anything
lack of words
essay main focus = assemble / available
Lipoprotein
K118 ✓
B12 ✓
trans.c factors
p134 x

Hand drawn mind map



Mind Map: Proteins (detailed) based on p.122-127, Book 1, SK277, Human Biology

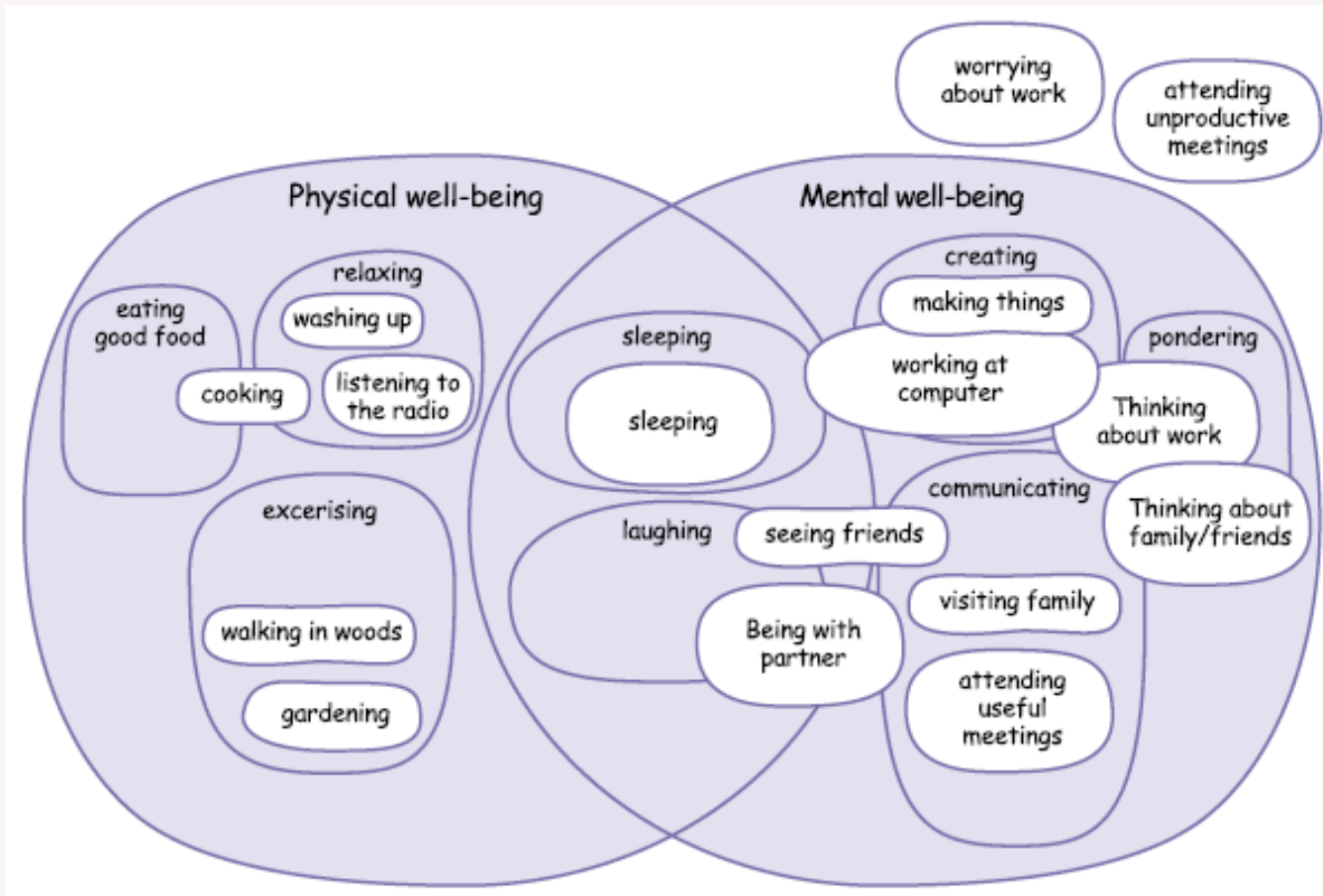
Computer generated mind map



Using structures to help plan

- Visual and structural things like grids and diagrams can help you think about the information in a different way. Identifying the bits that are missing, the things that may not neatly fit offers the potential for a more critical approach
- Tables are very good for comparisons, separating out specific parts of a theory for example
- Flow chart can show how things may impact on other things
- Concentric circles and venn diagrams can show connections and overlaps
- Grouping concepts can identify relationships between things

Grouping concepts together



More help

- <https://help.open.ac.uk/planning-and-writing-your-answers>
- The studenthome help centre has lots of great ideas

Get active!

Planning involves 'movement' e.g. action & a plan has to be active:

- HOW will you answer the question?
- What is the AIM of your essay?
- How does the information you are including relate to the topic – not just because a word search or the suggested areas to look has revealed it as relevant – WHY is it relevant?

Small group activity

- Discuss as a group how you think you can improve your essay planning overall
- 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

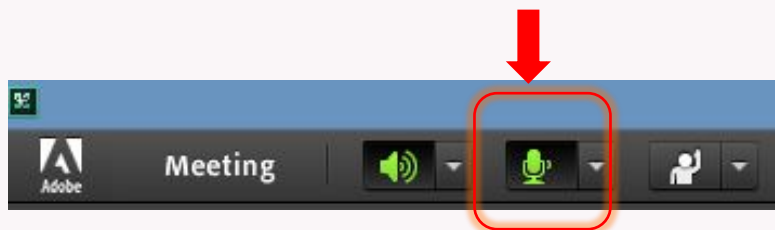
- We suggest you use the first couple of minutes to introduce yourselves and get used to the room. Choose a volunteer to keep the discussion on track and feed back to the main room
- Remember to activate your microphone to speak as per the instructions given.
- Breakout groups work best if people engage 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

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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?
Please use either the chat pod or the
anonymous short answer polling pod

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 best thing I do when planning an essay is...*
- *To improve my essay planning I am going to...*
- 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

- Effective essays are planned so that you have a clear idea of what you are going to do and can then know how to achieve that
- Any plan needs to have enough information for you or someone else with a reasonable grasp of the content to pick up and be clear on what is intended

Final poll

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



2nd Mar noon Get back on track (freshers)

2nd Mar 7pm catching up strategically (freshers)

5th Mar 9.30am Essay planning for beginners

10th Mar 10am Essay writing for beginners

10th Mar noon Developing your essay writing

23rd Mar 10am Introduction to critical thinking & writing

23rd Mar noon Developing your critical thinking & 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

