

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?

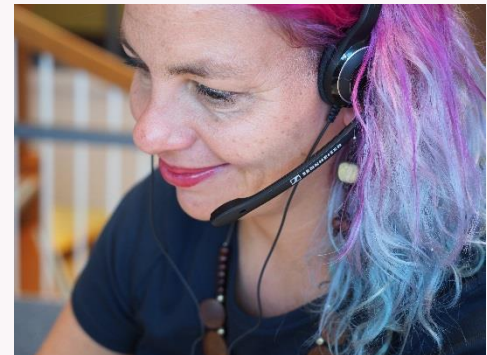
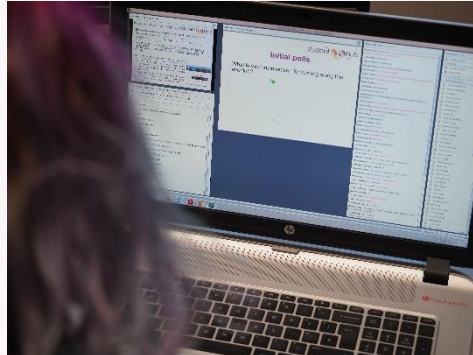
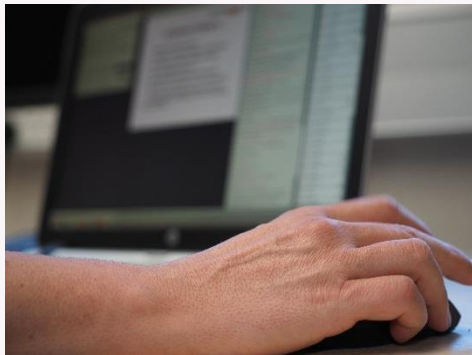
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

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 writing, including some different styles and methods, as well as key points for what needs to be included
- We'll give some tutor advice and suggestions for consideration
- You'll also get the chance to discuss things further

Session purpose

- **Is for:**
- Covering points to develop your essay writing
- Give some guidance about ways to write effectively and at an appropriate level
- 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



Please

- Do NOT share any personal information in the chat pod during the session
- On the recording names will be anonymised to user number
- However if you type anyone's full name or any other personal information in the chat pod it can be seen by everybody and it would also show up on the recording

Essay writing

This was our advert...

This workshop is aimed at Level 2 and 3 students who have written essays and want to improve the quality of their work. We will explore how to use references and determine the level of detail required to develop an economical but effective argument. We will discuss how to remove superfluous material, tightly edit your work, and ensure that there is clarity and cohesion from the outset. It is helpful (but not essential) to attend or watch the 'Introduction to essay writing (beginners)' workshop before attending.

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



Planning recap

- 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,
- In our advanced planning session we discussed structuring effectively including some examples of what needed to go into the introduction main body and conclusion,
- We gave some ideas for ways to recognise what was important and highlighted the fact that a plan can give away key clues – it needs to be obvious what is going to come,

A journey



Just like your essay -

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

An essay journey

- An essay also starts somewhere and it goes somewhere and it will have differences along the way
- You need to let your reader know this so that they know what to expect. Where are the highlights, when can they relax, what should they not miss and how will they know they are approaching that part of the journey?
- The introduction is the best place to make that clear, but you can also signpost along the way

Poll time

Which of the following aspects of the essay writing process is most important to you personally?

- Identifying the content
- Articulating how the content relates to the point
- Structuring overall
- Referencing correctly
- Editing
- Critical evaluation

Why did we ask this?

- Different students have a different set of priorities, and at different points within your module and study journey you may be looking to develop certain skills
- Recognizing your priorities at a particular stage can help you focus your efforts
- This is particularly important as you progress through your learning as level 2 and above will have a greater emphasis on critical evaluation and analysis

Main argument

- You need to be clear what your main argument is
- Check the instructions, including process words
- Ideally, a clear central theme or tenet will run through your essay to make that main argument clear
- You have to understand your question to be able to formulate a relevant main argument
- You also have to understand your module content to relate content to theme

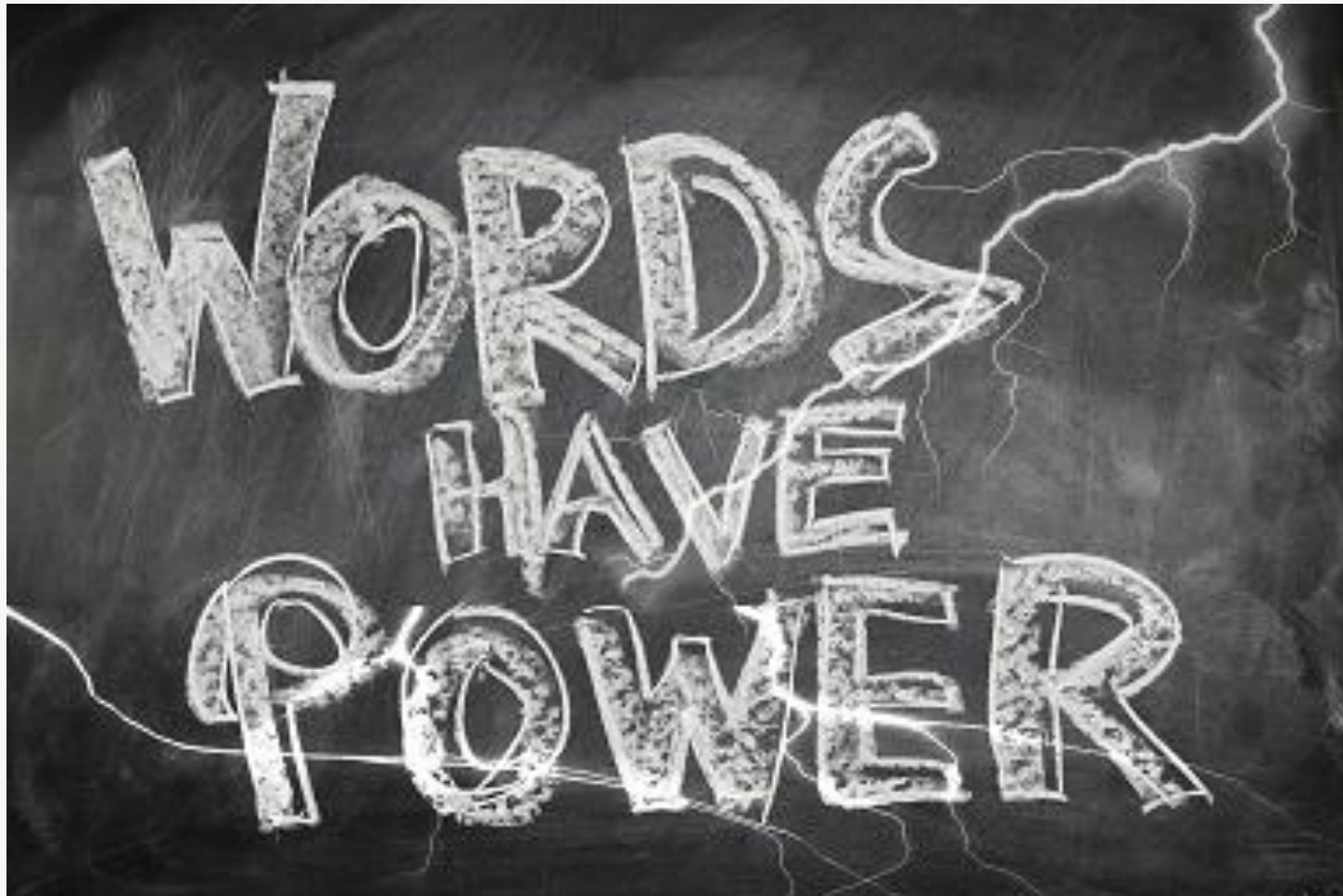
An economical argument

- Think about how much you need to describe?
- Description is simple facts about what is
- Explanation is making it clear how these relate to the topic and why they do so
- **How** and **why**
- Don't use up words describing information if that leaves no space for linking it to the topic and evaluating its importance

Planning & scoping material

- We covered planning in the separate session but this leads to scoping material
- Scoping means identifying the material and content that needs to go in
- You must work out what is going to be relevant and equally ignore what is not relevant *regardless of how interesting it is!*
- Think of your audience – are they white water rafters or ornithologists

Selecting words and language



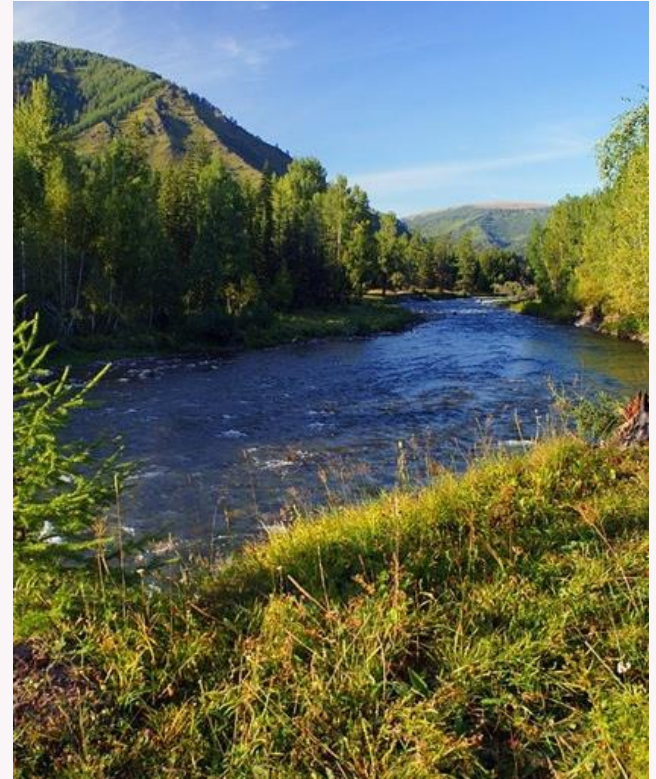
Weighing things up

- In your essay plan you will have identified various sources of evidence & linked it to the topic
- In your plan you should have considered what to include and in what order, but in writing the essay you can consider weight



Using each source effectively

- Use your words to convey importance and detail to emphasise points or to explain why certain parts are not included
- *Did your white water rafters know what was coming up?*
- *Did you highlight the important birds for the ornithologists?*



Framing your evidence

- Now we have scoped what matters to the argument and the audience we need to present it in a fitting way
- Your writing is the only tool you have to make links, introduce and influence the readers focus
- What have you told your reader you are covering – what do they expect?



Pace and flow

- Look back to our river example...
- The essay must continuously progress, or you are in the doldrums
- But a ride over lots of rapids without any sense of direction can leave the reader confused
- At times the pace can be fast as you are making links and summarising, and at other times it can be slower (when you need a lot of detail)
- It is important to manage the expectations of the reader, make the links where necessary, and foreground things they may need to know

1. Why take Isabella's river journey

Isabella's River Journey will be fantastic if you are a white water rafter or an ornithologist. You have cozy wooden chalets to sleep in before you begin & these are equipped with wood burning stoves for cold nights. We give a full safety briefing & have different groups depending on your main purpose. White water rafting groups will take a route with many exciting turns & twists along with rocky parts and thrills & spills. Ornithology groups will have spotter guides & be encouraged to use high powered binoculars to locate neighbouring birds both in & above the water. Prices are reasonable and include transportation from your chosen station. Chocolate is also in plentiful supply

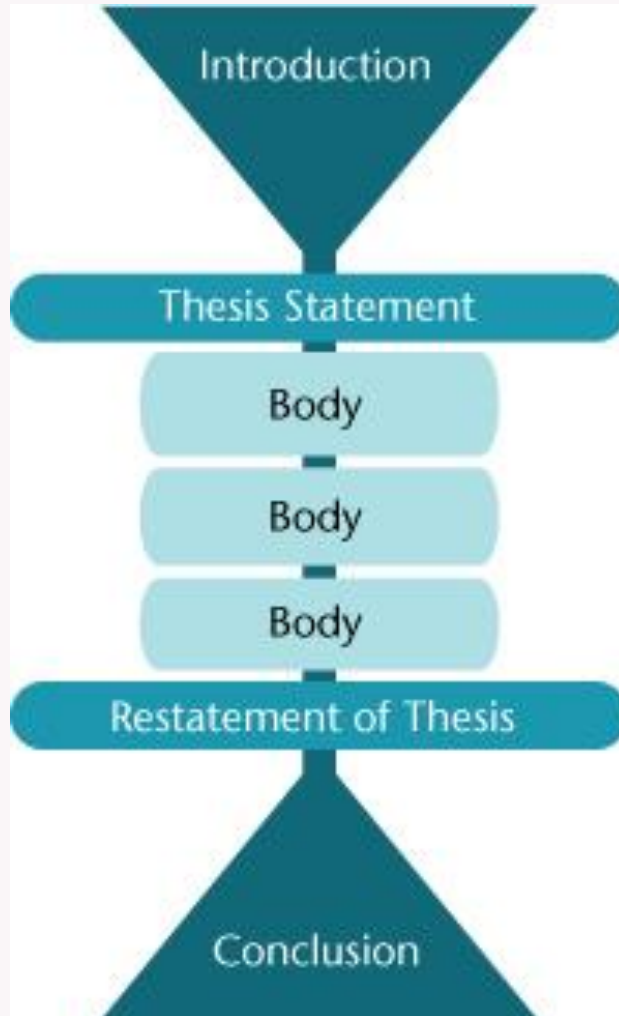
2. Why take Isabella's river journey

- Isabellas river journey is a journey like no other. Having unique experience of the terrain, Isabella has unique information about the most thrilling journey (for the white water rafters) and a regular exposure to the wildlife, knowing where the birds are nesting and where to spot rare finds. Her knowledge of the local landscape means that you will see and experience things that may have been missed, and you can also rest assured that Isabellas local knowledge means you will be safe and responsible tourists. Offering excellent value for money, friendly connections and all of the essentials covered, this tour offers a unique highlight of the area.

What was the point of the example?

- Some information was irrelevant to the purpose – what was the specific remit in this case?
- So with essays, information can be correct in itself but doesn't help convey the correct information – it is peripheral to the point
- In the case of our advert ornithologists don't care about white water rafting and vice versa
- Equally some information can read well but on closer inspection example 1 doesn't deliver on the question as well as example 2

Structure



The thesis statement is what you aim to deliver in the essay and is a concise summary of this – usually one sentence

Structure

- You can adopt a structure like this if you wish but the key is to ensuring that the essay funnels in important information
 - So the introduction frames what is needed
 - then the information is covered before
 - the funnel moves back out to summarise
- All words apart from the main content and argument should be framing and shaping essay

Structure ideas - PEE

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

Structure ideas - PESELS

- 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

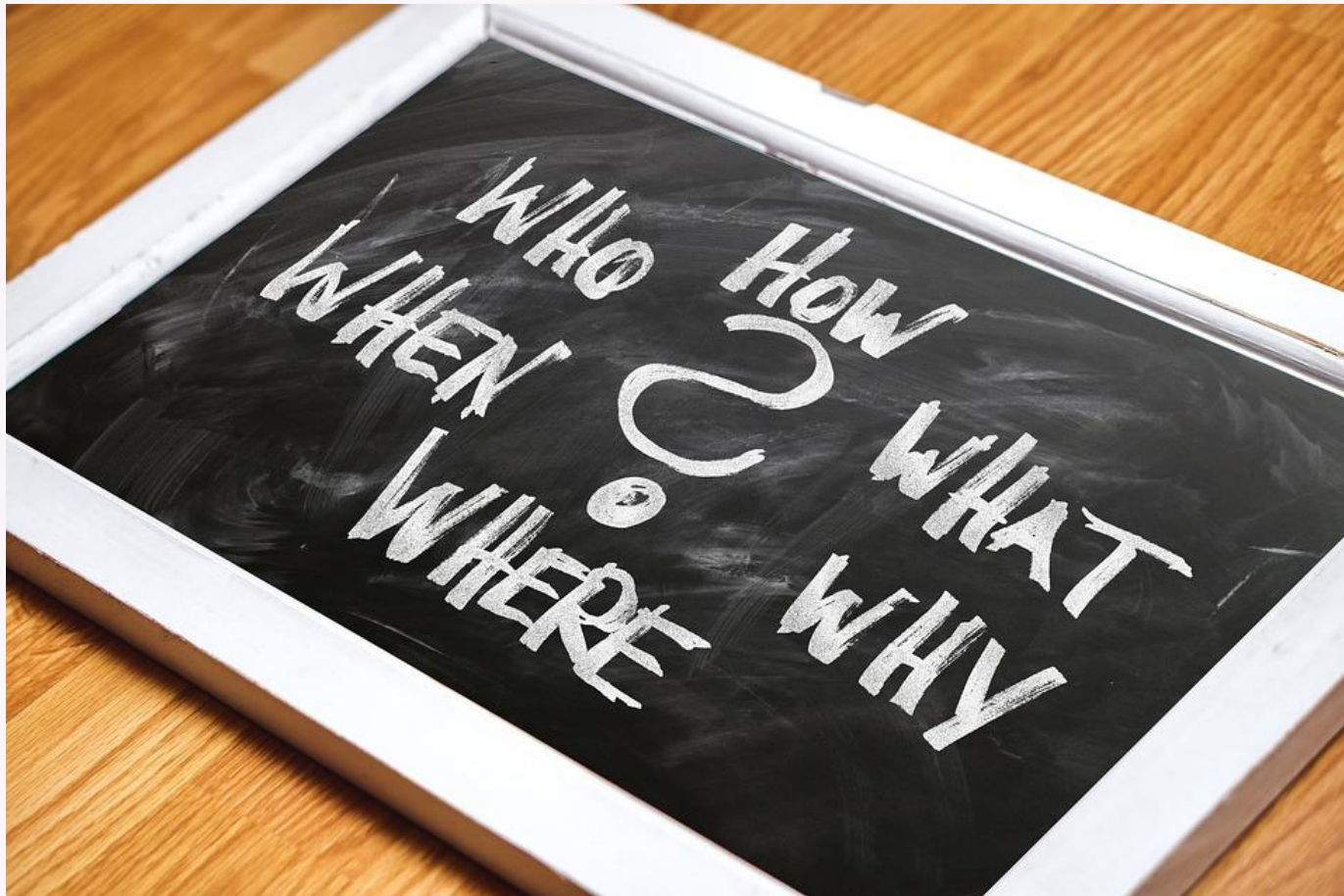
Editing

- This is the point at which all the ideas are neatened up and made as good as possible
- There are stages

Fresh Eyes



The task is clear



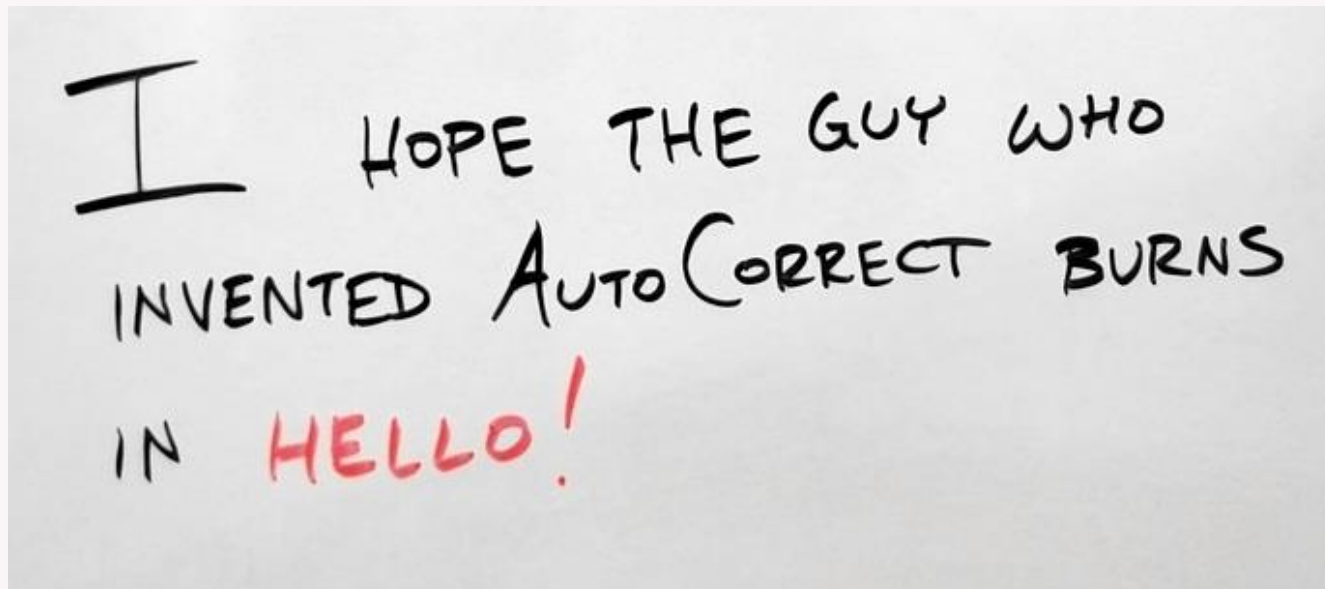
Structure



Position



Presentation



<https://help.open.ac.uk/developing-academic-english>

Editing summary

- Use fresh eyes
- Ensure the task that is being addressed **is** being addressed and it is clear
- Check structure is effective
- Have alternative viewpoints been covered as needed?
- Is the presentation what it needs to be?

Small group activity

- Discuss as a group how you would use language in your essays to showcase 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
- 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

Discussion activity

- There will be 2 specific questions in chat pods for you to explore some of the elements we have discussed further.
- *I use language well in my essay writing when....*
- *I am going to develop the way I use language within essays 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

- Developing essay writing requires a careful application of appropriate language,
- Information has to be tailored to the remit and lend appropriate weight to different concepts

Final polls

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



23rd Mar 10am Introduction to critical thinking & writing

23rd Mar noon Developing your critical thinking & writing

29th Mar noon Your first assessment (broadcast event)

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

