

# 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?

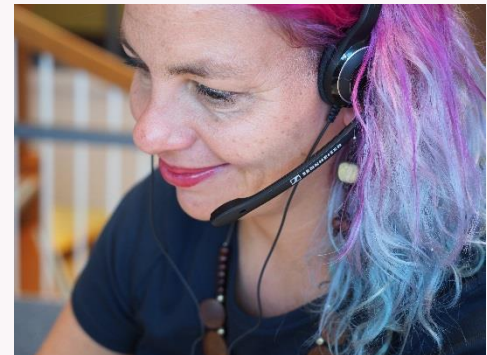
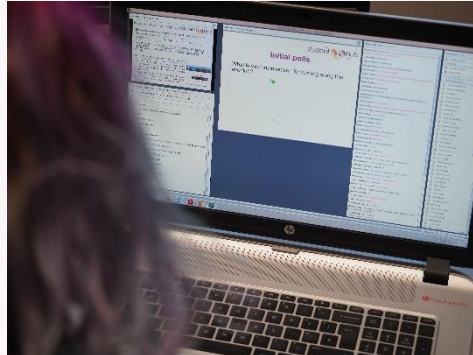
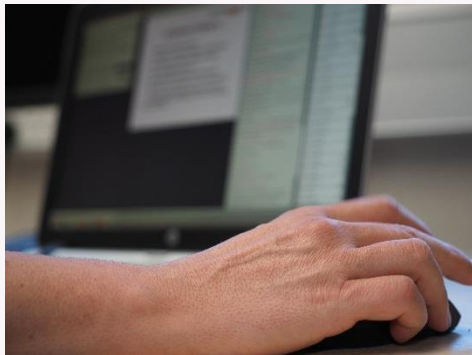
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

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

- No (I'm brand new to SHL!)
- No (but have listened to one or more recordings)
- No (didn't have time)
- No (wasn't aware of before now)
- Yes any post summer 2021
- Yes any earlier

# 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.



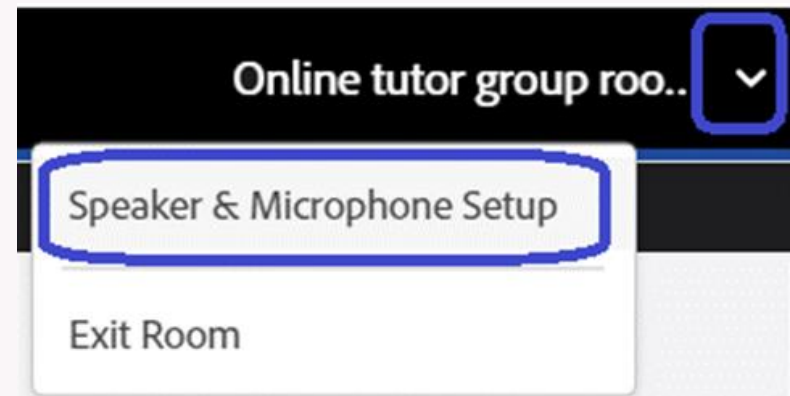
Rob Moore works on a range of under-graduate and post-graduate modules for the Open University Business School. Rob's passion is in making live online sessions fun and effective.

# Workshop

- This is going to be a structured workshop to help you get thinking about putting plans into action
- We'll look at some principles of essay writing, including some different aspects, as well as key points for what needs to be included
- There is a lot of interaction so please be ready to answer polls (questions) or add to chat pod during the session
- You'll get the chance to discuss with others in a small group / or alternative discussion activity (dependent on numbers)

# Small groups

- This session has been planned with a small group activity (breakout room)
- This is where you can exchange ideas with other students rather than just hearing from us
- Please make sure you have done the audio and speaker set up now so you are ready for when that begins (note microphones are not active now)



# Session purpose

- **Is for:**
- Covering the basics of 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



# Initial poll

What is your main reason for coming along to this session? Please choose the option that fits for you today:

- Study skills for current module(s)
- Study skills for future module (s)
- Connecting with other students
- Gain new ideas
- Responding to recommendation from tutor
- Curious about what studenthublive is

# Essay writing

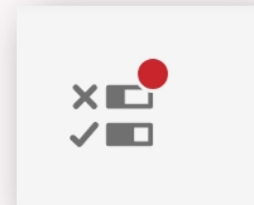
## This was our advert...

This workshop for Access and Level 1 students or those writing essays for the first time (or the first time in years!) covers the basics of drafting and editing essays. We will focus on how to prepare an essay plan, using each reference effectively. The workshop will introduce tone of voice, writing objectively, and how to differentiate between evidence taken from the module materials and your own ideas when answering an essay question. It is helpful (but not essential) to attend or watch the Introduction to essay planning (beginners) workshop before attending.

# What do you want to learn?

Using the short answer poll provided please say what you are hoping to learn from today's 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
- 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
- A plan is a road map of what you intend to do. It helps you to know what you intend to do and allows you to know whether you have done this
- You can also think of it as a recipe which makes it clear what is going to go into the essay and the order

# First thoughts

How do you feel about putting your essay plan into action (e.g. writing your essay)? Please say a few words in the anonymous poll pod provided

# Moving on

- We have talked about planning essays but this session is about the actual writing, so converting that plan into the final essay

# Poll time

If you saw this as an advert for a film what might it be about?





# Why do we ask?

- You need to be clear in your essay what it is about
- Your reader also needs to have a clear idea and follow your thread
- Sometimes essays meander or are misleading and don't cover what they say they're going to

# 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

# Your learning journey

- Whilst there is content you need to cover within your essay, the way you do it and what you personally decide you are intending to maximise your effort on it up to you,
- At different points in your learning journey your focus may be on different underlying skills

# Poll time

What worries you most about writing essays?

Please use the short answer poll to give your ideas and we will discuss some (and come back to others)

# Hopefully!

- We'll cover ideas to address many of these issues
- Remember your own module assessment guide as well as the studenthome help centre and library resources e.g
- Referencing your sources  
<https://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/pathways/13/15>
- Quick guide to Harvard / cite them right  
<https://www.open.ac.uk/library/help-and-support/quick-guide-to-harvard-referencing-cite-them-right>

# Don't forget!

- Allocated tutor
- Module resources
- Tutorials dedicated for your module / faculty / pathway

# Tone of voice

- Most essays are written in the third person
- You are writing, in your own words, about things that other people say and you are using your own academic knowledge to decide what to include and why it is relevant
- You are not, **unless specified**, writing about your opinion, experiences or perspectives
- It is better to be clear than to forthwith and henceforth confuse and confuddle your reader with lots of sophisticated words that are entirely unnecessary

# Identifying opinions

- Sometimes obvious due to words I, we or emotive language
- Is there a citation?
- Does the point make sense for the contexts?



# Tone of voice

- There will be times when you are expressing your objective view about someone else's opinion
- And other times when you will be relaying what that opinion is
- And sometimes you will explain why that opinion is relevant



# Using each source effectively

- In your essay plan you should have various sources of evidence
- That evidence needs to be linked back 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

- This does not mean relating everything that you haven't included...
- This does not mean using value laden words to try and emotively persuade your reader
- This also doesn't mean stating which source you view is most important (unless asked)
- Your words should convey the importance

# Tips and techniques for writing

You are the tour guide

- This tour will....
- This is important because....
- There are lots of things here but notice this....
- This is very different compared to....
- While that was interesting, another area to look at is....



# 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

Being clear you are addressing the question in the right way:

- These are the instructions that tell you what you need to do:
  - Describe
  - Explain
  - Critically analyse
- 
- We strongly recommend the studenthome > study skills resources here - <https://help.open.ac.uk/understanding-the-question>

# 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

# Pace and flow

Remember our tour bus example...

- The essay must continuously drive along, or you are idling and won't see any new sights
- But a speeding trip will make it difficult to see each sight as you go past
- At times the pace can be fast (e.g. moving between sights / linking information), and at other times it can be slower (when you need to take those photos / a lot of detail)



# Paragraph structures - PEE

- PEE

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

Tip – if you read the first sentence of each paragraph you should get a good idea about the flow of the essay. You should not begin a paragraph with evidence – it is important to introduce it and explain how it contributes

# Small group activity

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

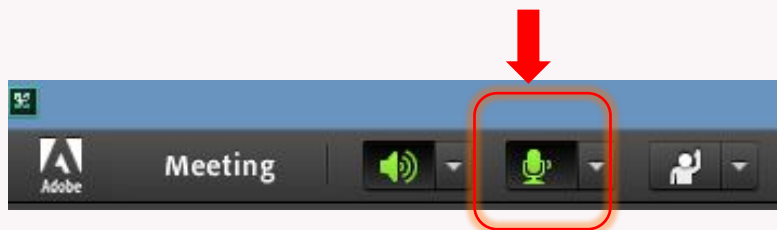
- We suggest you use the first couple of minutes to introduce yourselves and get used to the room. Choose a volunteer to keep the discussion on track and feed back to the main room
- Remember to activate your microphone to speak as per the instructions given.
- Breakout groups work best if people engage 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.
- *Things I do well in my essay writing are....*
- *Things I would like to do better in my essay writing are...*
- 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

- Essay writing is a process and takes practice
- An essay is a story that communicates a topic in a structured way and all paragraphs relate to that topic, even though they may have their own mini topic



# Final poll

What do you feel are the main things you will take away from this session?

- Better understanding of today's topic
- Better understanding of the place of study skills within university study
- Enthusiasm for my studies
- Enthusiasm for my skills development
- Feel part of the university
- Feel part of SHL

If you have any other feedback please send to [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk)



8 Mar 11am Developing your essay writing

**9 Mar 11am live broadcast - Interpretating and using other people's theories and facts**

15 Mar 11am Intro to critical thinking & writing

22 Mar 11am developing critical thinking & writing

**23 Mar 11am live broadcast - Whose idea is this anyway?**

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

