

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?

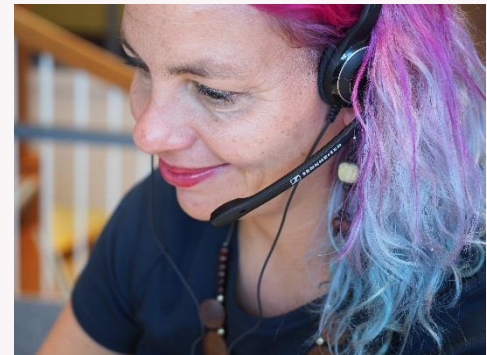
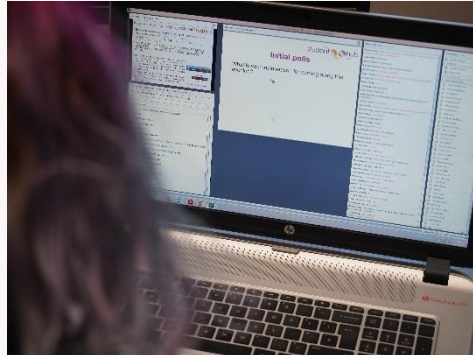
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

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?

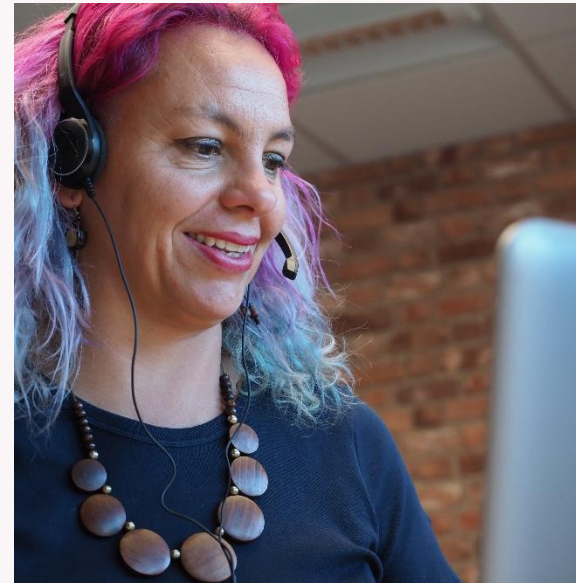
- All student hub live sessions are non modular and focus on skills relevant to study at university level
- Polls are anonymous to other participants but the chat box will have your logged in name associated with your comments during the live session.
- All online sessions are recorded and available 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



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 a tutor in science and health sciences at Access to level 2.

She normally talks at the online workshops but is supporting today

Workshop

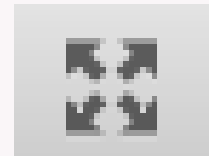
- This is going to be a structured workshop to help you get thinking
- We'll look at what is meant by essay planning, including some different styles and methods, as well as key points for what needs to be included
- Then we'll give some tutor advice
- You'll also get the chance to discuss things with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

Session purpose

- **Is for:**
- Covering the basics of essay planning
- 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 introduction

This was our advert...

Writing complete and effective essays requires careful planning. This workshop, aimed at Access and Level 1 students, introduces the planning and writing process. We will discuss the structure and key components of an essay, and you'll learn how to include these elements in your plan. Examples of plans will be showcased, and we'll show you how to scope and order your material. You'll also learn how to plan your paragraphs so that each one addresses a key element of your essay and builds towards a coherent argument.

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



Why plan?

- It allows you to structure your work and know what you need to do.
- It also ensures you cover all parts of the question.
- It saves time in the long run randomly writing information that isn't relevant.
- But... plans can change and don't have to be perfect.

First thoughts

Have you ever written something long?

- Yes
- No

First thoughts

Now, did you plan what you were going to include in that long piece of writing?

- Yes
- No

Scenario and poll

Imagine you have just been told you have won a prize and will have 30 minutes to purchase as many '**non essential items**' as you can in that time (e.g. *not food and other things you have been able to buy in person during lockdown*).

You will be taken to the shopping mall in an hour.

What will you do to plan?

- Please use the short answer poll to identify your aim here and say what you need to do to make sure you are as effective as possible

Our ideas

- If you are wanting the best pair of jeans that you can try on, you'll want clothes that you can get in and out of easily to try them on, and do it quickly
- You will need to know where in the mall / shop you need to go to get what you want
- You may want to plan the order of your trip to make sure you get to the places you want to
- You may want to write a list, and you may even prioritise it
- You may want to plan a budget

Why do we ask?

This is planning overall. You need to think of a purpose and what you need to do in order to achieve that purpose

Most people will have written something long at some stage but without a plan it might not have been as effective and efficient as it could have been.

An essay is similar, think what you need to achieve - what is your remit?

Example

- Using cake!
- Both were cake (and tasted great 😊) but one worked much better as it was planned and not rushed and had the right bits go into it in the right order.

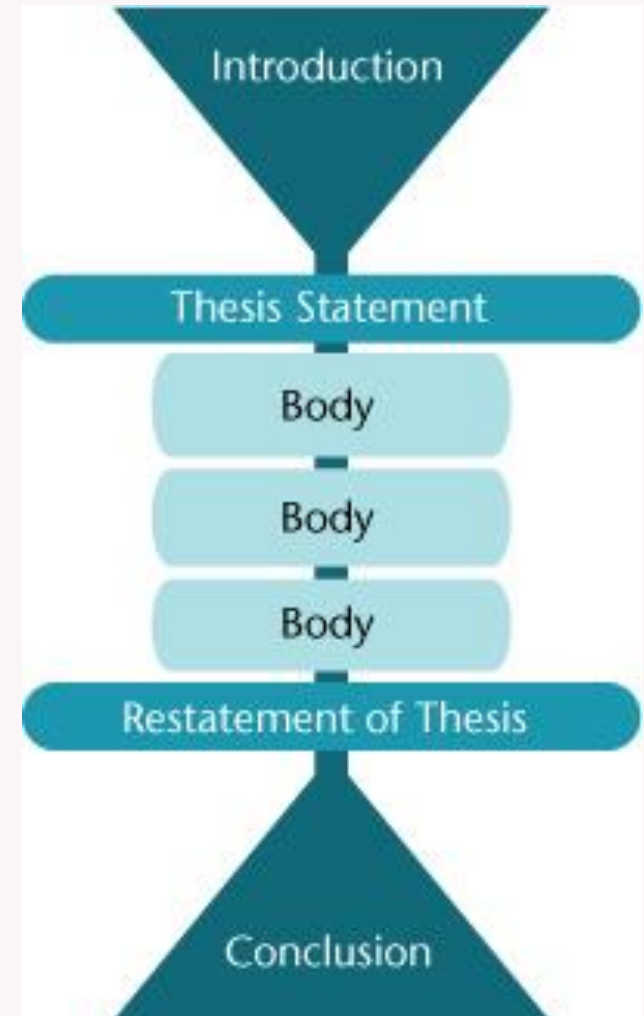


Example

- Be prepared
- There is a quick and efficient way, and also a sloppy way
- You can put all the ingredients together and get a cake but the best cake will be ordered and organised so it does the best possible job

Academic essays

- Have a particular structure (introduction, paragraphs and conclusion)
- Each paragraph needs to include some evidence from the module material and is a building block in answering the question.
- The introduction and conclusion frame your paragraphs



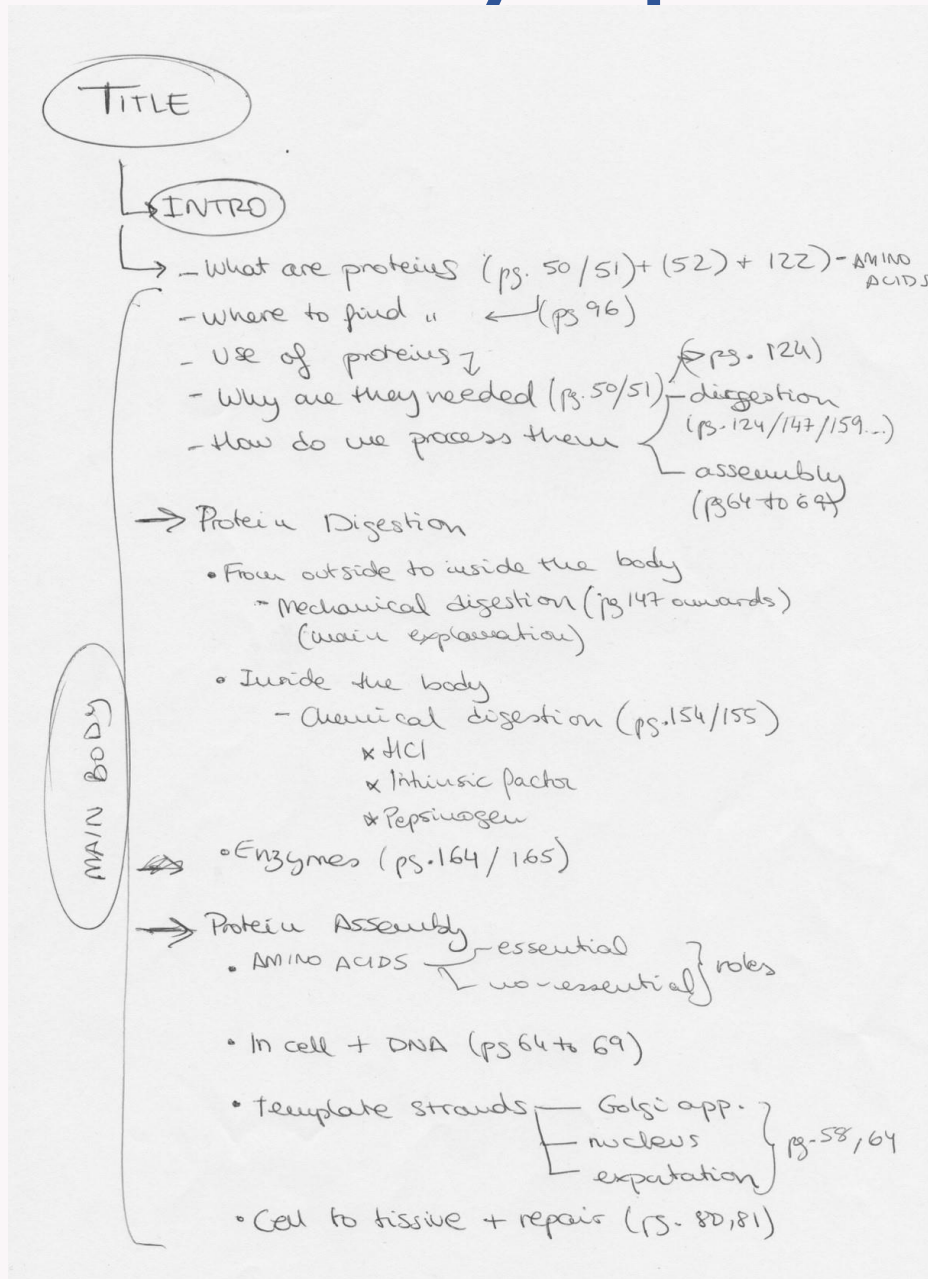
Answering the question you've been given

- Ideas to help:
 - Read the question - Read out loud
 - Note the key words - Underline
 - Make a list of the areas you **need to** cover
 - Make a list of any areas you **could** cover
 - Understanding what the question is *actually* asking (process and content words)
- Consider making the instructions into a question that you then know you have answered – but do not reframe or change the question!

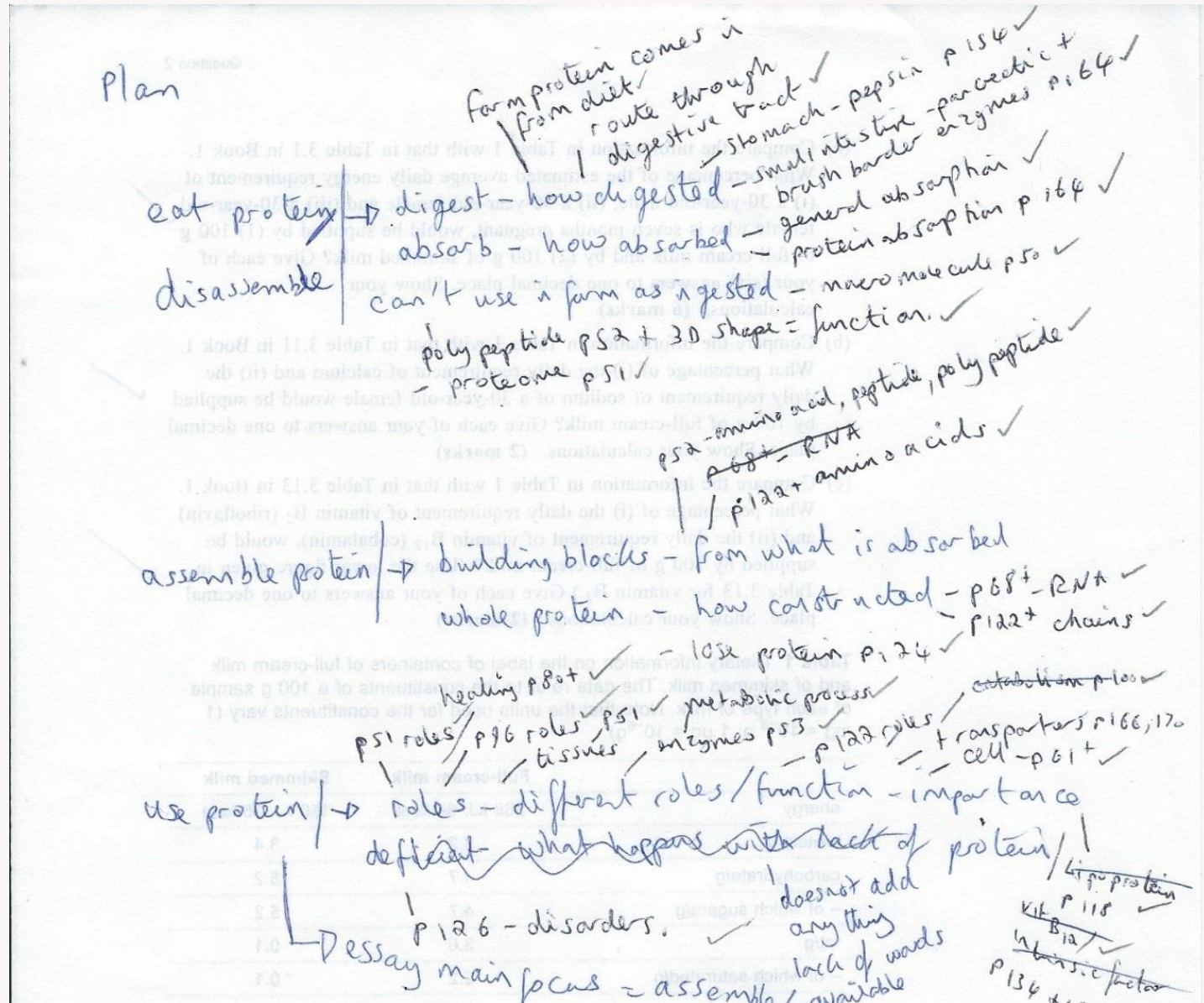
Types of plan

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

List style plan



List style plan



Examples of plans

- Those were a couple of examples and whilst specific to a topic (as a plan should be!) show *how* the question would be answered and give some facts
- A plan should have enough information that someone else with a similar amount of knowledge could pick it up and write the essay from it
- It needn't be grand or look snazzy, but it needs to show what will be included and how the question is tackled
- Start with the body of the essay.....

Planning the body of your essay

- Think about how many "things" you need to cover (by reading the question and student notes)
- Think about the wordcount you have
- Decide therefore how many paragraphs you can include
- Prioritise the things you need to cover
- For each "thing", identify evidence from the module material
- Think about how it relates to answering the essay question
- Think about which order each "thing" may appear in to have the greatest impact

Planning the introduction and conclusion

- Now you know what you are going to say, how can you prepare your reader?
- Introduction: Are there key terms, parameters, what will you cover and broadly how will you conclude?
- Conclusion: How does all the evidence you have included address the question

Question time

- If you saw this image about a film – what do you think the film might be about? Please use the short answer poll to give your ideas

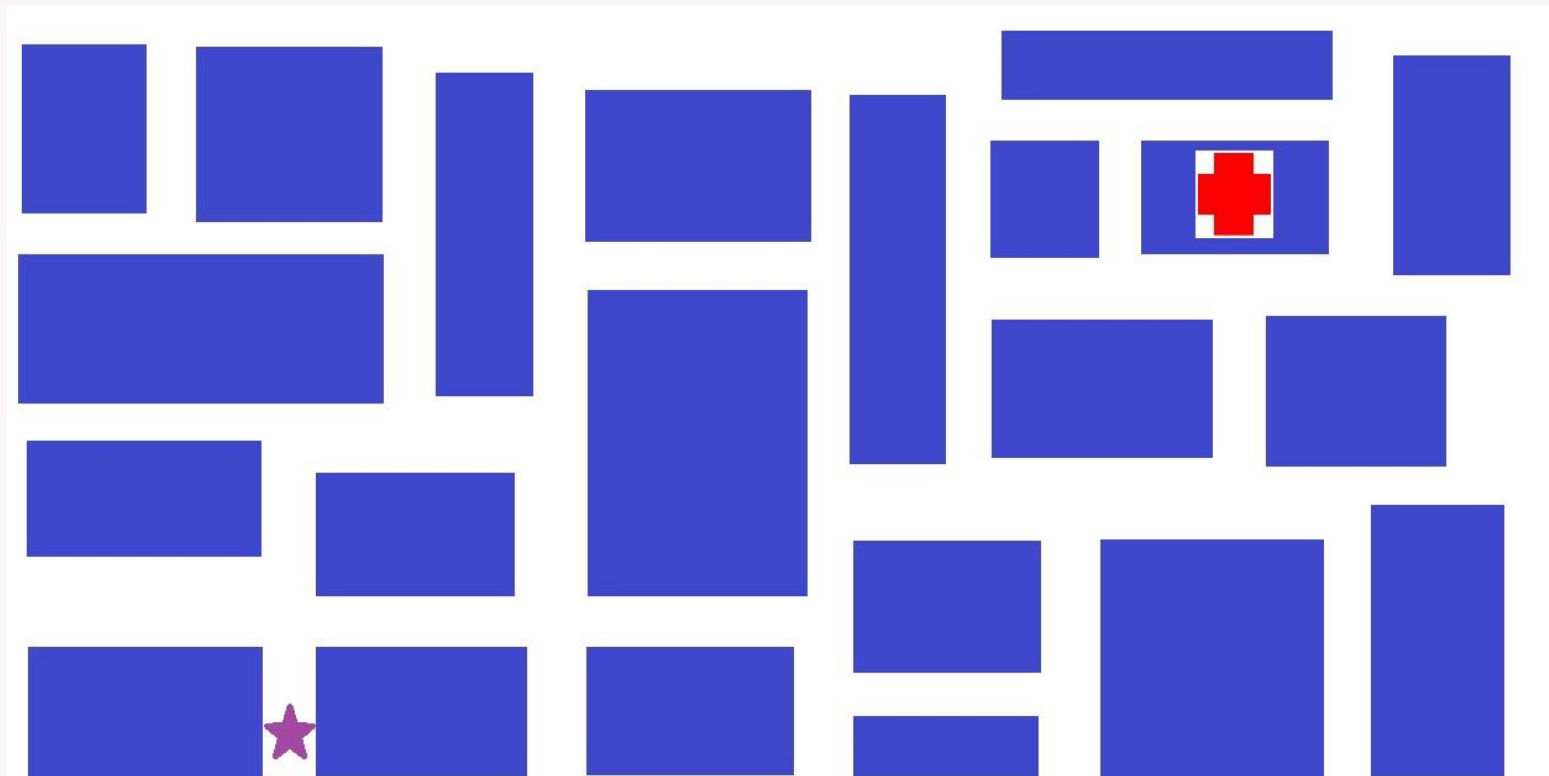


Clues!

- Don't be afraid of giving away some clues – your introduction does need to give a very good idea of content
- This is your chance to say how you are addressing the question (not just restating the question and saying you are answering it – HOW)
- You are also making it clear to your reader why your selected approach is a sensible one

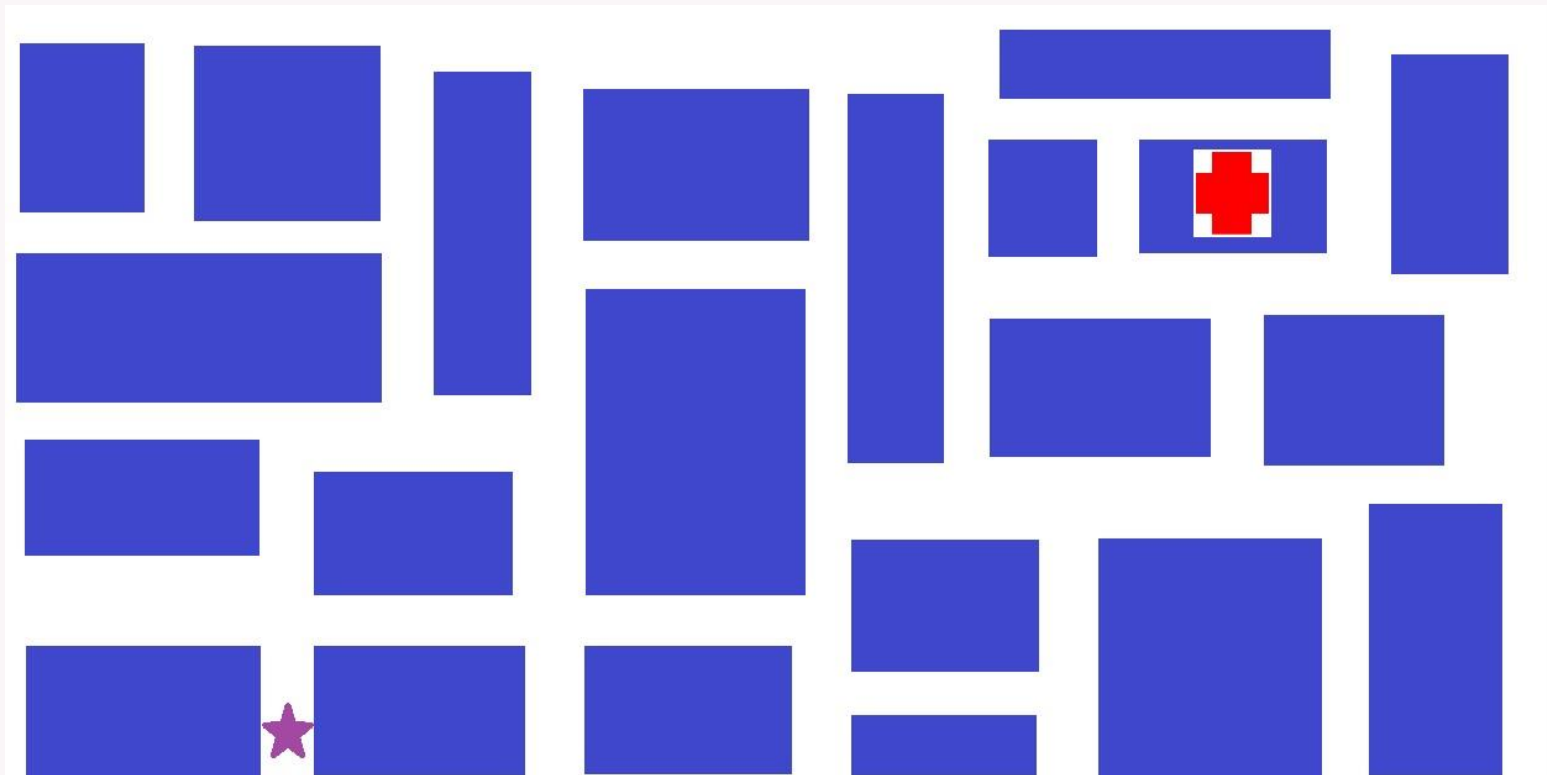
Activity

Look at this simple road map and look whether you can find a route from the purple star to the red cross using the white roads only (blue blocks are buildings).



Activity

Now think about anything that might affect the route taken. Please use the polling pod provided to suggest any ideas



What was the point?

- The idea was to show that there are lots of different ways to get from the start to the finish so you have to think about which you are going to take
- However not all ways are logical – and that is important for essay writing
- Your plan needs to prepare you as effectively as possible for writing the essay

Discussion activity

- There will be 2 specific questions in chat pods for you to explore some of the elements we have discussed further.
- *Things that will help me plan my essay are...*
- *I may find it hard to plan because...*
- 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

- An effective plan will take into account what is being asked and will work out how to answer this most effectively
- The plan will give a good indication of how you are answering the question, not just restating the question and indicating that there are questions
- *We will talk more about types of plans and how you structure the information you want to include in the advanced session*

Final poll

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



- 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

- 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](#)
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