

# 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?

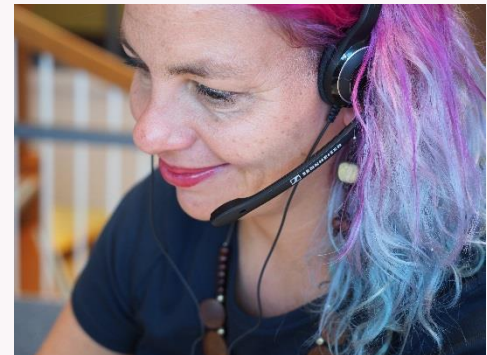
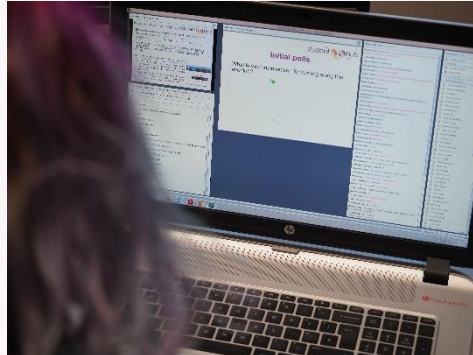
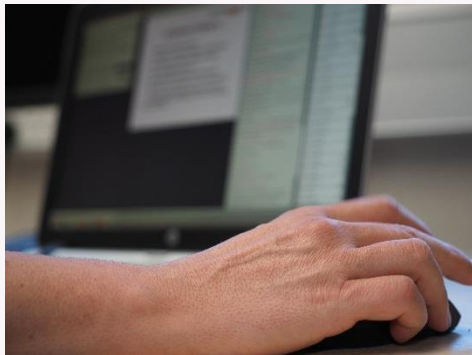
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

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?

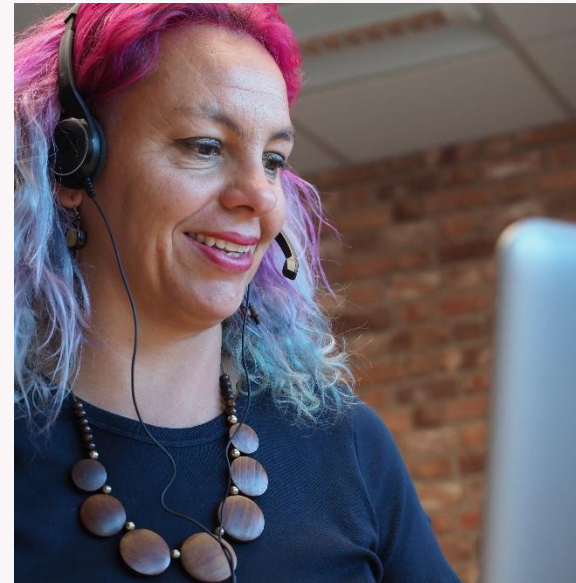
- All student hub live sessions are non modular and focus on skills relevant to study at university level
- Polls are anonymous to other participants but the chat box will have your logged in name associated with your comments during the live session.
- All online sessions are recorded and available 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 about putting plans into action
- 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 showcase ideas to give you different approaches
- You'll also get the chance to discuss things further

# 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

# 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.

# 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
- 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 well do you plan your essays? Please select the option nearest to your approach!

- Like a military operation
- Like a supermarket shop on an empty stomach
- Like an escape from a hungry bear

# 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

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>

# 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 view 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

# Tips and techniques



- You are the tour guide
- This is your terrain – you wouldn't say "in this tour we are going on a journey". 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....

# 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
- Use your words to convey importance and detail to emphasise points or to explain why certain parts are not included



# 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



# Activity – whos opinion is it anyway?





# Have a read

When tissues are injured, the damaged cells release chemicals that trigger the sequence of events described as inflammation. It occurs in response to any type of injury, such as a blow or a cut, an insect bite, or damage caused by pathogens multiplying in body tissues. Inflammation has four characteristic effects at the site of an injury: swelling, redness, heat, pain.

# Whose opinion?

- Listen to the different statements and then select whether they are quote, theorist opinion, personal opinion, or something else. These are all based on the text you can see.



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>

# Poll time

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



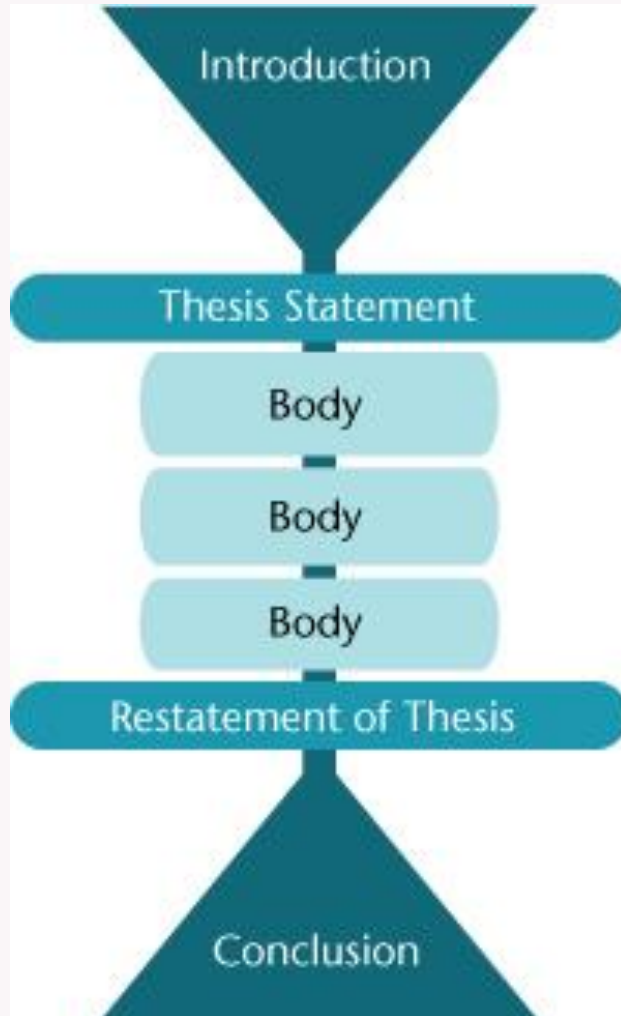
# Why do we ask?

- You need to be clear in your essay what it is about,
- Your reader 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

# 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



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

# Pace and flow

Remember our tour bus 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, and at other times it can be slower (when you need a lot of detail)

# 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

# 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



# 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 polls

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



- 10<sup>th</sup> Mar noon Developing your essay writing
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar 10am Introduction to critical thinking & writing
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar noon Developing your critical thinking & writing
  
- 29<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk)

