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 recording)
- No (didn't have time)
- No (wasn't aware of before now)
- Yes any spring 2022
- 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/.
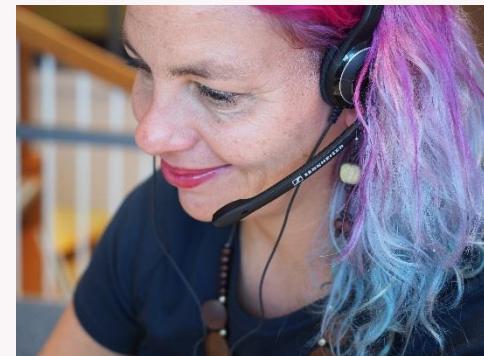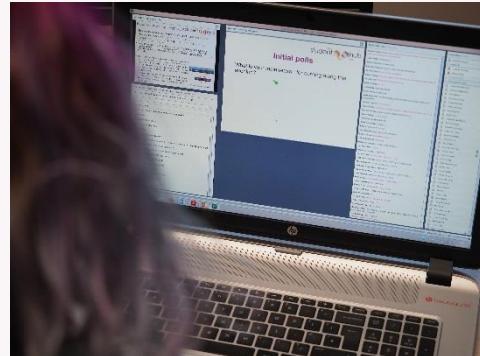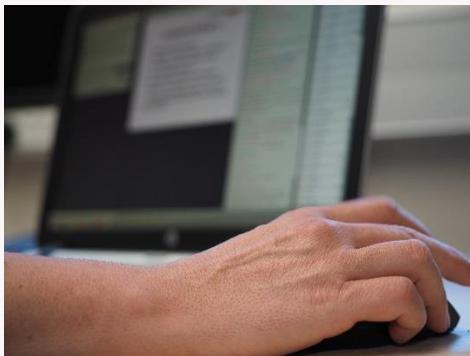
student hub live is the OU's live online interactive platform to support academic community

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 getting thinking more critically and being aware of what is important

- We'll give scenarios and illustrations to help recognise what is important

- 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)

Online tutor group roo.. ⌄

Speaker & Microphone Setup

Exit Room
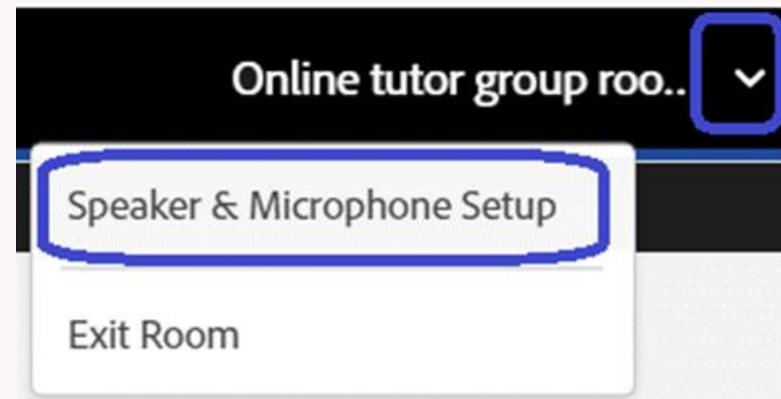
Session purpose

- **<u>Is for:</u>**
- Covering general advice about critical thinking as a concept
- Give some guidance about how to look at different sides and provide evidence
- Provide a space to share ideas and connect with other students
- **<u>Is not for:</u>**
- 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
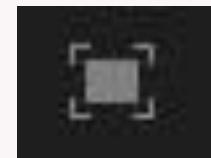
Please

- 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

Critical thinking and writing

This was our advert…

This workshop builds on the introductory workshop and is aimed mainly at Level 2 and 3 students. We will take a deeper look at critically analysing source material and identifying the most important elements for any argument or answer. The focus is on being critical in context, evaluating different approaches and being able to put them in perspective.

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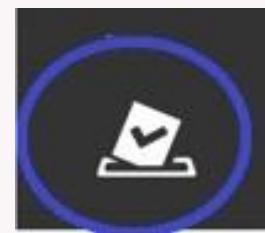
To come back to these slides after completing a poll click on the share pod slides icon

First thoughts

- Think about your favourite song. Use the short answer poll provided to say why it is your favourite song (you don't need to say what the song is, it's about why it is **your favourite** song

Ideas

- You like the melody

- You liked the lyric

- You like someone in the production of it (singer / other musician)

- It reminds you of something happy (or not!)

Why did we ask this?

- Critical thinking is about recognizing what is important, sometimes making a judgment call

- You have made a judgment call about what is your favourite song (although it may change in time!)

- There are many factors that will go into that

- New information may change what your favourite song is

Activity 1

- Imagine you are being asked to evaluate two theories that have been researched using different methods
    - One presents facts and commentary to say that students receive the highest grades if they go to live events (tutorials or similar)
    - The other similarly present facts and commentary to say that students receive the highest grades if the work by themselves and read the module content
- How could you critically evaluate the two theories? Give some suggestions in the poll pod available

Our Ideas

To think about this argument critically, you could ask the following questions;

• What else contributes to success?

• What are the characteristics of students who attend tutorials? For example, do they have more time to study and is this the factor that gives them the edge?

• What is it about tutorials that may make a difference? Could this be achieved another way?

Evaluation

- The task of evaluation is to consider the relative importance of different elements – some may have particular resonance depending on the context – critical evaluation will consider the context

- What are you being asked to be critical about? What are your parameters?

Poll time

- Do you notice anything about the order of the pyramid? Please suggest your ideas in the poll provided (don't worry if you haven't seen it before)

➢ You need to know information before you can apply and analyse it

As you read module material
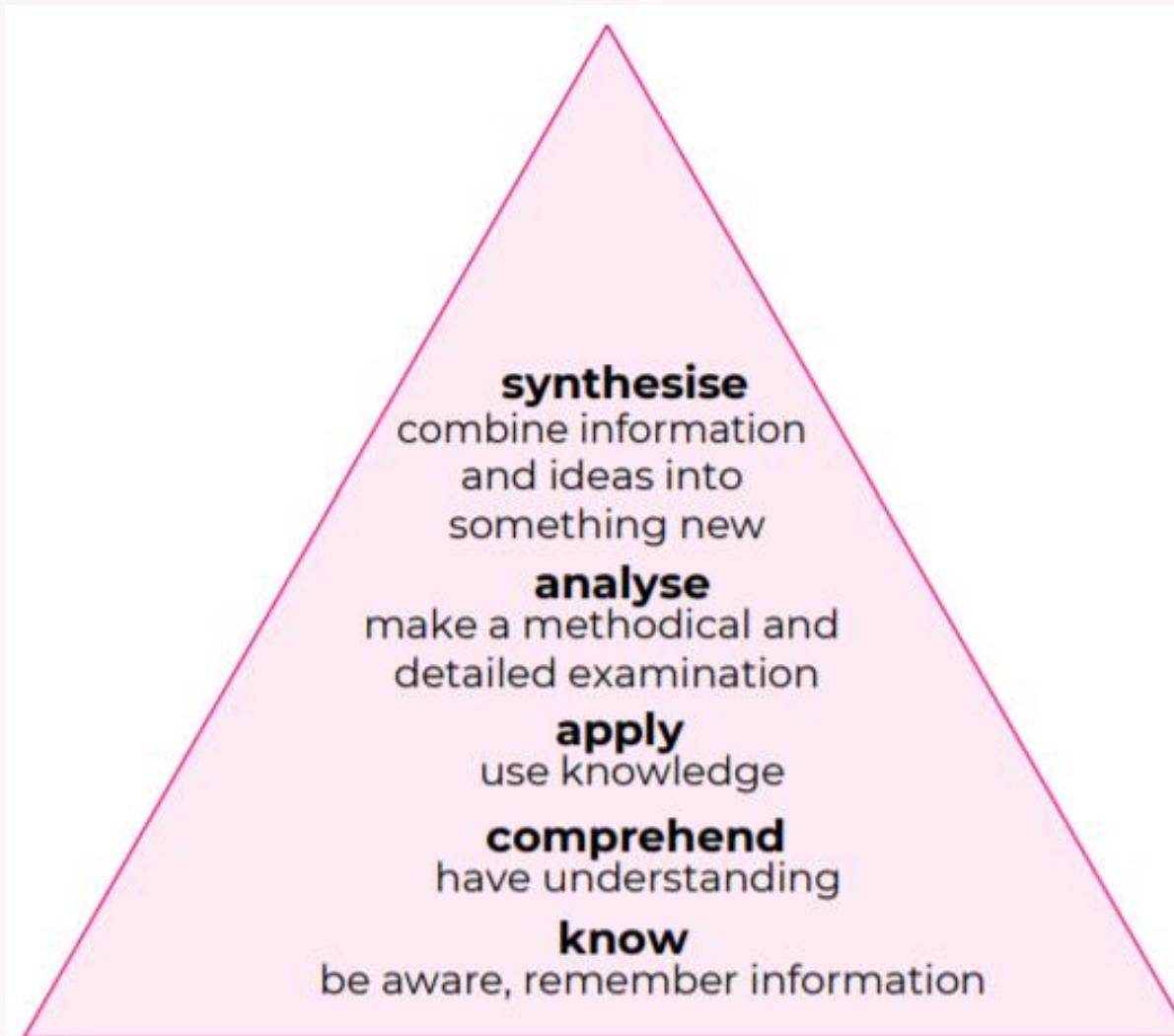
As you read module material

Analyse

Examine how key components within your module materials fit together and relate to each other.

Compare

Explore the similarities and differences between the ideas you are reading about. Do some ideas conflict with or complement each other?

Synthesise

Bring together different sources of information to serve an argument or idea you are constructing. Make logical connections between the different sources that help you shape and support your ideas. Are there any inferences you can draw from the material and apply to an assignment question?

Methods of evaluation

- Using the same questions to consider different aspects allows you to think about things at a deeper level.

- What is not included may be just as important as what is evident!

WWW: Where, what, why?

PROMPT
- Provenance
- Relevance
- Objectivity
- Method
- Presentation
- Timeliness

Structuring evaluation

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

Knowing your context

- This is where reading your question is very important, you can critically analysed the same information in a different way depending on what you being asked about

Scenario

- On the next slide is some promotional information about why you might want to attend Isabella's chocolate workshop– look carefully at it and then listen to what you are being asked to critically analyse about it
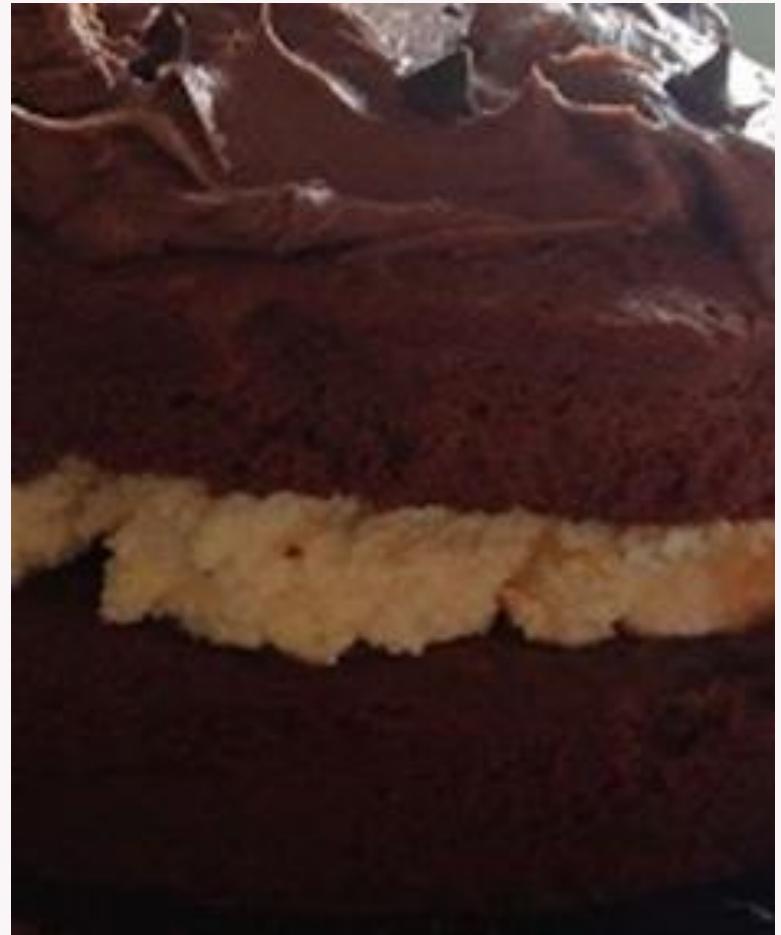
Why take Isabella's chocolate workshop

Isabella's chocolate workshop will be fantastic if you are interested in the history of chocolate and want to know a bit about the geography of South America in the time of the Aztecs. We will also be comparing different techniques to make the most effective chocolate cakes and cookies. We will look at the science of combining ingredients on how to explore different possibilities. We will be making use of fully equipped kitchens to trial the techniques. There will be opportunities to provide peer feedback as well as to hear experiences of past course attendees.

Critically analyse poll

- What information is there to help you decide what is useful about the trip if you are a baker and want to know whether to register on this course to help develop your skills?

- Please use the poll pod provided

Points to mention

- You had a specific scenario to use here

- There will always be more information and not all of it will be relevant to the specific context

- You needed to evaluate the information in the context of your instructions

- You may be able to see how you could provide a better example which takes out information that isn't relevant to the purpose

➢ Your critical analysis needs to be very focused – try not to include extraneous information which doesn't add anything other than words

Note…

- Critical analysis isn't about describing information but evaluating in context, so if all you did was restate the information you weren't making it clear *why* it was important

- Critical thinking is showing that you have appreciated what is important, **<u>why</u>** it is important and have applied it effectively

Elements of an argument
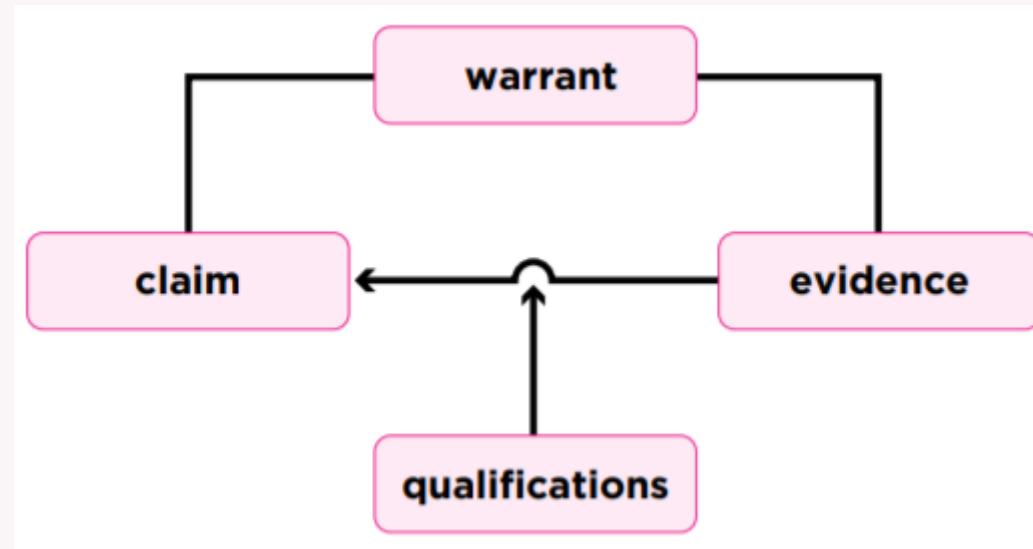
When you evaluate academic material such as a journal article, you're aiming to form a judgement on the validity of the argument presented.
You can do this by looking at
- the coherence of the argument
- the supporting evidence

Activity time

Think about a "fact" have you been told that you now know is not true?

- Why did you believe it in the first place

- How did you change your view?

Please use the relevant pod to give your thoughts and we will pick out themes that arise

Critical thinking interrogates ideas

quality of evidence = quality of data + quality of interpretation

Coherence

- Being able to identify when an argument is valid (i.e. that the claims made support the conclusions drawn adequately and justifiably) is vital.

- Check the line of reasoning – is it coherent and logical? Are there any flaws in its progression?

- Look at the conclusions drawn – are they supported adequately by the claims made throughout the argument? Are they valid and do they make sense?

Coherence

- Have the authors justified their claims by supporting them with acceptable sources of evidence?

- Are any assumptions made and, if so, are they acceptable?

- Have all alternative claims been considered? Is there any bias in the claims and supporting arguments?

- Is there any indication that a claim made is merely the author's opinion rather than based on evidence?

- Does the claim make sense when compared to the evidence used?

Supporting evidence

You also need to evaluate the evidence you've been presented with to establish its worth, in it's own right and when compared with other evidence

- Does the evidence support all the claims made – is it comprehensive?

- Is the evidence appropriate to the topic?

- Is the evidence recent and is that important for your purposes?

- How does this evidence compare with that provided by other people: does it conflict with other evidence? Is it complementary to other evidence? Does it coexist, adding something extra to the topic?

- Are there any methodological issues about the collection of the evidence that might affect its usefulness?

Bringing it back to the module

- Just because it is published doesn't mean it is right, and it doesn't mean that everything important has been included (the author may have been selective about material)

- Evidence can contradict, theories can have limitations

Discussion activity

- Now that you have some ideas and suggestions about critical thinking what do you think will be the aspect that you are going to be developing for your critical writing?

- 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

- If you want to speak you will need to activate your microphone *once in the room and you see the option available*


- 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

Breakout activity

- Now that you have some ideas and suggestions about critical thinking what do you think will be the aspect that you are going to be developing for your critical writing?

- Please bring back a few points that you can share with the rest of the group.

- 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

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?

Alternative activity

- There will be 2 specific questions in chat pods for you to explore some of the elements we have discussed further.

- *My best existing critical thinking and writing skill is…*

- *The critical thinking and writing skill I want to develop is…*

- 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 appears as 'user number'

Take home message

- Critical writing does require a good understanding of the topic (which takes time!)

- The key is evaluation rather than basic description, e.g. saying how and why rather than just what

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

Upcoming sessions

15 Jun 7pm Learning from feedback
21 Jun 11am What's in your open box?
22 Jun 7pm Dealing with other people's ideas
29 Jun 11am Introduction to critical thinking & writing
7 Jul 11am Creative note taking
(Live broadcasts in purple)
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

Study skills workshop

Live broadcast