

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?

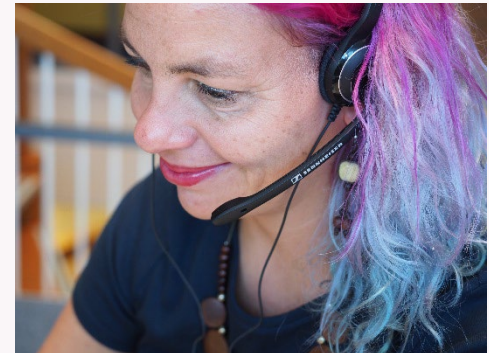
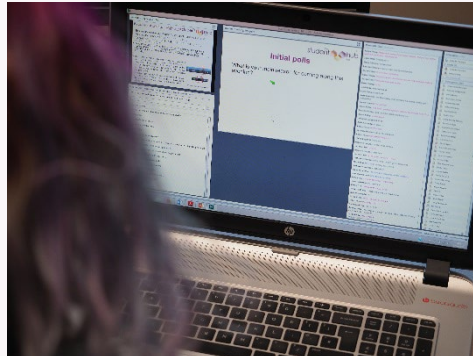
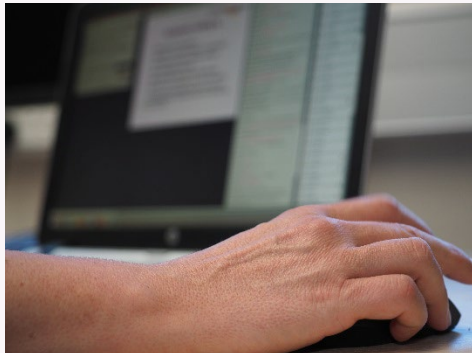
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

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 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



Margaret Greenhall is a study skills specialist. She has applied the same skills as you'll use in writing essays to write a book. She tutors on science level 1 courses. Her hobbies are rowing and Lego.



Amanda Smith is a tutor of law modules at levels 1 and 2 law modules. She writes literature reviews for research papers – which are just really long essays! Out of the office, she is a ballroom dancer.

Workshop

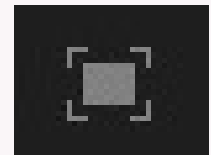
- This is going to be a structured workshop to help you getting thinking critically if you are new to it or at lower levels of study.
- We'll get you starting to think about key elements and give some tutor advice about aspects that are important
- There is a lot of interaction so please be ready to 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)

Session purpose

- **Is for:**
- 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
- **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

Critical thinking and writing (Beginners)



This was our advert...

Aimed at Access and Level 1 students or those who are new to critical thinking and writing, this workshop covers the basics: we will look at how to use module information, taking it apart to understand the key themes for yourself, independently of the guidance you are given. We then move on to writing critically, identifying relevant information, and presenting it objectively in your own words.

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



Hopefully!

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

First thoughts word cloud

- What is your preferred method of working through key points in module materials to help you understand things?
- Please use the word cloud provided to give your ideas
- Note that these need to be single words rather than phrases, if you press the space button your first word will go through

Our ideas

- Notetaking
- Highlighting and annotating
- Making a mind map
- Key points cards (flash cards)
- Post it notes
- Talking to a friend
- Watching videos or searching for additional explanations

Why is this relevant?

- Thinking critically requires the understanding of relevant module content, so you must have located that and recognise what was important to be able to think critically about it.
- Critical thinking is about dissecting different aspects of the source and considering it in context of the questions you are asking (or are being asked) – your criteria.

Topic:	
Source: (e.g. author, book title, page number, edition)	
Description	
Claims	
Evidence for claims	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Questions and queries	
Links to other topics	

Content/description

- This is saying **what** something is
- It gives facts and details overall
- These are normally irrefutable – they are facts
- Some are **more important** within the context than others though which is where evaluation comes in
- Description is active and is about identifying what matters and having the confidence to leave out what is "peripheral"

Note taking

- There is creative note taking session on Tuesday 13th December at 11 am sign up at <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>
- We have a recorded version from the 7th July last year.
- Access through this room then view past recordings and look for the name
- There was also a studio broadcast;
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nfjFAz2ZQOU&t=337s>

Activity

- You have been invited to contribute to a program entitled 'my most prized possessions'. You have to name your 10 most prized possessions **and** explain why you have chosen each in a short sentence.
- Please use the short answer poll available to suggest anything that is relevant to how you might start to do this. *Hint – it is not stating what the possessions are at this stage but how you will formulate the decision.*
- Remember to scroll to see other answers and see what others think

- Monetary value
- Sentimental value
- Heirloom
- Practical

Critical thinking process



Link this to your module

- Bringing together those two activities, your key points and your prized possessions. What are the key points in your module-the prized possessions that you don't want to lose from the module?
- What points form the bottom of your pyramid?
- Recognizing why they are key points helps you in your analysis
- The criteria on which you decide may vary, it might not always be your choice

Looking for clues - poll

- Is there anything in your module that helps you recognise what is most important?
- Please use the short answer poll to give your ideas and look to see what other people have said

Our ideas

- Learning outcomes – these state what you should be expected to know from topics, sections, books, the module overall and emphasise what is most important
- TMA and assessment questions – bluntly these will emphasize what you need to know for the marks!
- Professional outcomes for some people

Drawing these together

- What is the purpose?
- What is relevant to meet the purpose?
- What is not relevant to that purpose?

- **What are your criteria?**

Critical analysis

- This is a higher level skill that gains more marks than anything else.
- It means looking at the information and evaluating it and considering whether it allows you to answer the question fully.

Critical analysis

It is a questioning process –

- **What is the relevant content?**
- **Who said what? Who are they?**
- **Why is what they said valid?**
- **Did they miss something out?**
- **Can I find anything that disagrees with them?**

Critical analysis

- **What is important?**
- **What are my criteria?**
- **How can I use this?**
- **How does this connect to other information?**

Choosing criteria poll

- You need to buy a book from an online book shop. There are ten books on the topic.
- Which of these would be your most important criteria?
 - 1. The author
 - 2. The reviews
 - 3. The price
 - 4. The length
 - 5. The contents
 - 6. The cover art
 - 7. The date of publication

Critical analysis hints

- It isn't about ripping something to shreds
- It **is** about evidencing your assertions
- If you ascribe to one person's theory as presented what is it about it that is convincing?
- Have you looked at what might not be right about it?
- Is there anything missing ?
- Is the view / evidence important because of the amount of people that agree or something else?

Your evaluations (assertions)

- These are *yours* but not presented in a subjective way – essentially they are you as a student of your module representing the module content
- So it is not about your personal opinion of whether you agree or disagree with some facts presented, someone's theory, or the results of an experiment
- It is about how you as an objective university student can convey information appropriate to your learning level

Objectivity

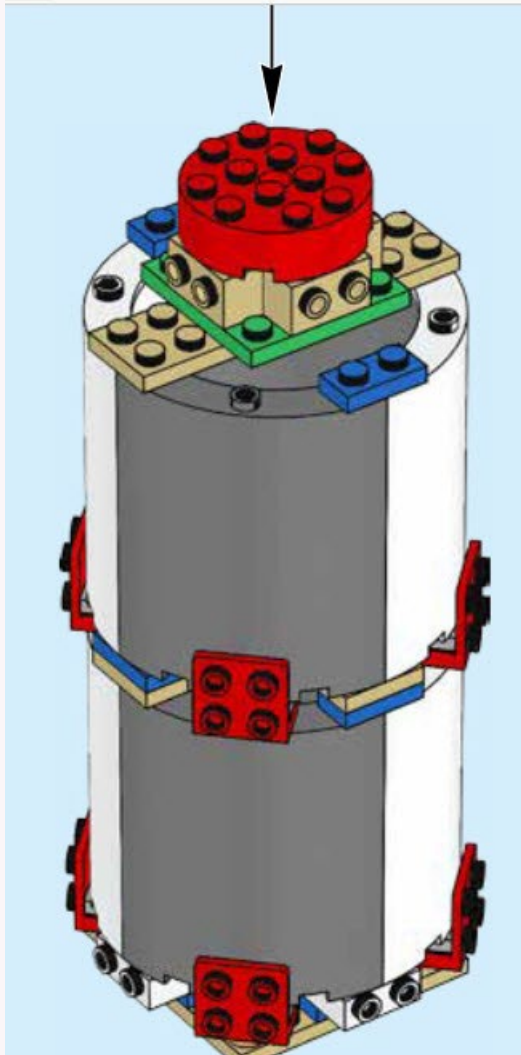
- Similar to critical analysis, this is not about *objecting*
- It is about looking at things to from a balanced perspective, both sides
- It may be an easy 'fence to sit on' to cover both sides
- Or it may be that you have to come down on a side because you can't straddle



Content



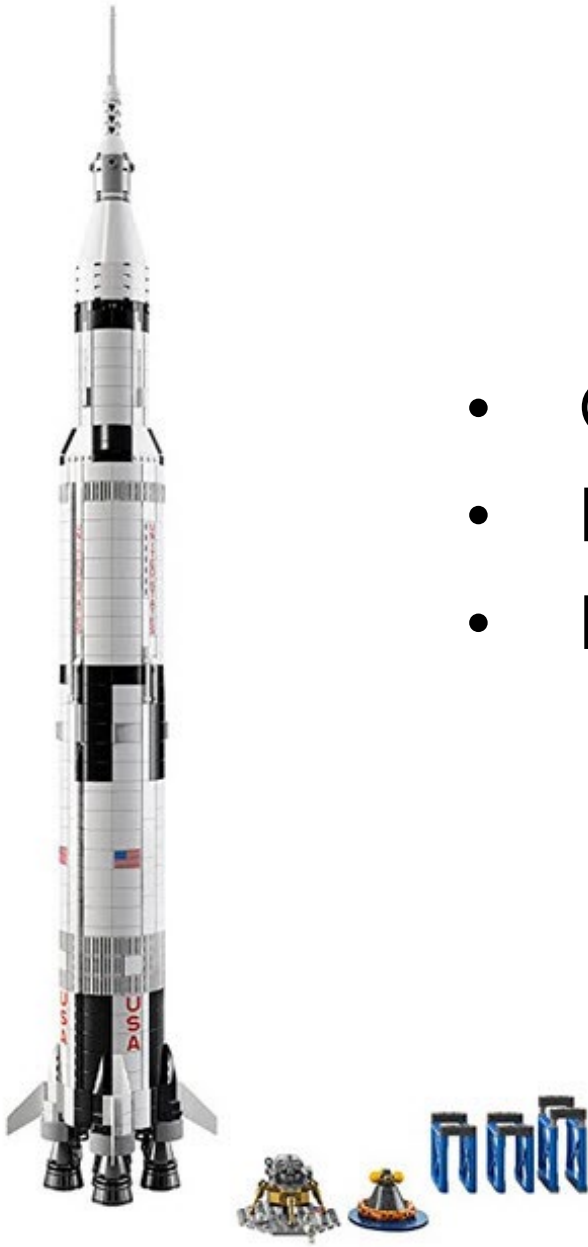
Critical thinking



- This is dissecting the information
- Checking it for validity
- Rebuilding it
- Hidden work

Evaluation

- Connecting things together
- Deciding which bits to keep
- External view the world sees



Activity time

- Think about your favourite food – **why** is it **your** favourite food?
- Use the short answer poll pod provided to give your ideas

Why?

- You don't describe your favourite food to make it clear why it is your favourite food, that is saying *what it is*
- *Critical thinking* is the explanation about why it is your favourite food – you have to make a considered decision based on the evidence

Critical writing

- Objective
- Third person
- Not opinionated
- Weighing up against other point (evaluation)
- Providing evidence for assertions

Using PEE to evaluate

- PEE
 - Point – make it
 - Evidence – support it with facts
 - Explain – why the evidence is supportive and it is relevant
- This is about including the fact in a way that makes it clear you haven't just stumbled across it but can relate it clearly to the topic you are presenting – the explanation is where you have evaluated the evidence

More points

- Critical analysis looks at why and how and questions the information for its value.
- Not just *what* it is but *why* and *how* it is
- Remember it is not just about describing or listing pieces of factual information. It is evaluating them and showing how they are important and relating them to each other and the overall topic
- Unless you are asked to give your personal opinion then please don't!

What are tutors looking for?

- What do you think your tutors are looking for in your writing?

What are tutors looking for?

- A clear indication you know what is important and have been able to link this to the overall context and purpose of the piece of writing
- If you are using evidence, that you have selected appropriate aspects of it e.g. not just namedropped, and have referenced correctly and fully
- Convincing writing that shows that you know what you are talking about and haven't just stumbled across a bit of information that you are regurgitating

Indicators that critical thinking isn't there

- Close paraphrasing of the content
- Non-active description rather than evaluation
- Personal opinion
- Too little information e.g. just a citation after a brief assertion
- Words like obviously – why is it obvious? What evidence has been presented to make the case?
- Can the reader be expected to understand based on the information that is actually included?

Discussion activity

- There will be 2 specific questions in chat pods for you to explore some of the elements we have discussed further.
- *The best tip I have picked up about critical thinking and writing is...*
- *I am going to develop my critical thinking and writing 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'

Critical thinking process



Take home message

- Critical thinking and writing do 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
- You have used your module material, internalised it, then extracted what is important to make your case and conveyed that in your answer

Feedback please

Please use the following link to provide feedback to help the studenthublive team to continue to improve what we do

<https://forms.office.com/r/3cD4Zeyz68>

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





22 Nov 7pm Developing critical thinking & writing

24 Nov 11am Support for student carers

29 Nov 7pm Advanced critical thinking & writing

6 Dec 11 am Learning from feedback

13 Dec 11 am Creative Note-taking

15 Dec 7pm Festive party

23 Nov 11 am SHL live video

Busting myths on academic integrity

Details, booking information and subscribe for events at <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>

Past student hub live online study skills sessions

https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/eventlist_catchup

Send us feedback at studenthub@open.ac.uk