

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?

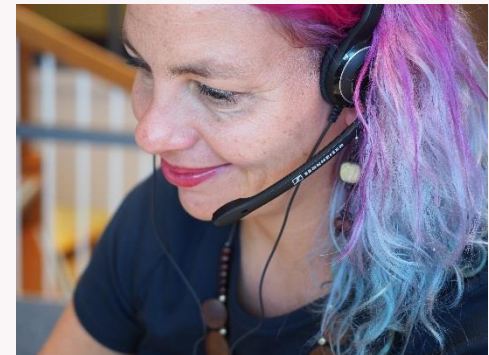
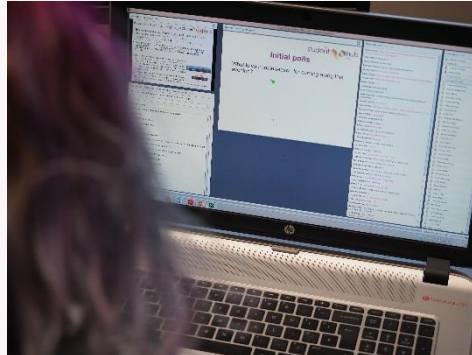
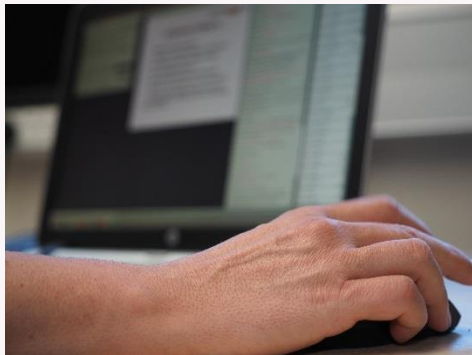
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

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 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 give the chance to think about elements that make up an academic argument (for an essay) and how you can start to put this together to clearly convey the points
- We'll give some tutor advice and links to places where further information may be found
- You'll also get the chance to discuss things with others in a small group

Session purpose

- **Is for:**
- Covering key aspects of academic arguments
- Give some guidance about ways to write and argue 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

Developing a good academic argument

This was our advert...

Developing an academic argument, or line of enquiry, is an important skill but it can be difficult to learn to balance critical opinion and evidence. Presenting a solid narrative involves considering the structure of your argument and developing it persuasively. This interactive workshop is ideal for Level 2 and 3 students.

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



Arguing Poll

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you read the word argument?

- Please use the short answer poll to give your ideas.

Now what about when it is part of the phrase *academic argument*?

- Please use the short answer poll to give your ideas.

What is an academic argument?

- It is not arguing
- It is clearly making a point
- It uses evidence and examples
- It is persuasive
- It shows the reader **you** know what is important and have carefully put it all together
- It is not personal opinion based
- Meets the parameters of **your** essay (not anything else you might like to include!)

Not this!



The Loch Ness Monster (Nessie)

- A Scottish legend about a beast (dragon / dinosaur) that lives in Loch Ness



Supporting an(y) argument

- Use the 2 short answer pods available to give some evidence FOR the existence of Nessie the Loch Ness Monster and AGAINST the existence of Nessie the Loch Ness Monster
- Don't worry if you haven't heard of her previously, either look at the other suggestions or say what kind of evidence there would or could be for her existence

Supporting an(y) argument

The idea here is that evidence can take a variety of forms. It needs to be objective (data, photographs, corroborated sightings) even if the original concept can be considered to be less than sensible.

In this case the concept is one that may not be true or accepted but evidence is still evidence, and an argument needs evidence

Weighing up Nessie evidence

Good:

- Common memory / multiple people viewed at the same time and reported findings
- Visual evidence exists
- No active evidence that she does not
- No scientific corroboration
- Poor quality visual evidence
- Questionable motives

Weighing up Nessie evidence

Poor:

- I once saw a photo of it
- Someone told me that it exists
- Everyone knows it is made up
- It's a silly idea so of course it isn't true
- People claiming to see her were drunk so obviously didn't know what they were doing

What's the difference?

- Evidence can be questionable but can still be presented in a convincing academic manner
- Value laden arguments undermine integrity (even if they are true) – be objective
- It's about the approach and collating evidence and presenting in an academic fashion (almost regardless of what that evidence is – within reason)

Value laden arguments

- These are essential emotional arguments and either adding in something to try and 'play on heart strings' or otherwise persuade the reader.
- They are trying to get the reader to agree with you personally
- They undermine evidence that is objective as they are subjective

Know the topic

- This is central to being able to develop the argument
- For your TMAs you will know the topic as it will be your module
- Check instructions carefully – are you being told to follow a specific argument?

Planning

- First and foremost – Plan, think about what you need to do and collect everything together
 - Do you need to define anything?
 - Do you need to research some factual points? (e.g. do you understand what the information actually says?)
 - Do you have a limited pool to look for information (e.g. specific book / topic / section)?
- Planning takes time but it saves time – if you have an idea of what you need to do then you will know if you have done it

Poll

- Suggest in the short answer poll pod how you might start to work out what your argument might be for an essay – do you have any strategies?
- Don't worry if you haven't any ideas or are new to this, look at ideas suggested by others

Strategies to make an argument

- PEE
 - Point
 - Evidence
 - Explain
- You can also cover all of the 'for' then all the 'against', or theme your evidence

Illustrations of PEE

- **Point:** There are different opinions about whether the Loch Ness Monster exists
- **Evidence:** There is photographic evidence of the Loch Ness monster, however some argue that the quality of this evidence is low.
- **Explanation:** while the quality of evidence can be contested, it can be argued that the volume of photographic evidence and the similarity of images produced indicate support for the existence of the monster

Clear links

- All the points must relate to the argument
- Just because they are interesting or you spent ages finding them out doesn't mean they are relevant and will give marks
- Repeating doesn't help the point (it just uses up words)
- Avoid circular arguments

Structuring

- The best argument can be let down by a higgledy-piggledy order
- Don't switch back and forth
- Each paragraph should be a mini topic in itself
- Avoid single sentence paragraphs or massively long sentences (12-15 words of often fine)
- *Our essay planning and writing sessions have more on structuring essays in particular*

Argument theme poll

Which of the following is true of how you finalise your main argument?

- I know from my module reading what the argument will be and tailor to that
- I know from my personal experience what the argument will be and tailor to that
- I write and only when finishing writing work out what the argument will be
- I'm never really that sure on what the argument is!

Usually...

- It will be through the researching and writing that an argument will become clear
- You are using the evidence provided to support that argument
- Be wary of personal opinion which may cause you to ignore suitable evidence
- There may be exceptions, so always check your specific instructions

Editing

- Editing allows you to focus and make absolutely sure you have addressed the argument and it is clear
- It takes out repetition and checks for any holes
- It gives a more professional overall result

Discussion activity

- Discuss as a group your experiences of developing an argument within an essay. You may like to cover whether you have used PEE or another approach, how easy you found it to know what the argument was and whether you were successful.
- Please bring back a few points that you can share with the rest of the group.

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

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

- Discuss as a group your experiences of developing an argument within an essay. You may like to cover whether you have used PEE or another approach, how easy you found it to know what the argument was and whether you were successful.
- Please bring back a few points that you can share with the rest of the group.



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**

Discussion activity

- There will be 2 specific questions in chat pods for you to explore some of the elements we have discussed further.
- If you could give a best way to **start** developing an argument what would it be?
- What is the best thing you can do in terms of **building** an argument within an essay?
- 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'

So....

- What can people share from their sessions?

Take home message

- Plan carefully so you know what the argument needs to be, then check what you have written to make sure this has been done in a coherent way that covers all sides
- You do need to understand the topic to be able to recognise what the argument is

Final polls

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



7 Dec 11am Intro to critical
thinking

14 Dec 7pm Developing Critical
thinking

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

