

What are SHL workshops?

- Studenthublive is non modular and focuses on study skills relevant to higher education
- This means all sessions are skills based and are not subject based. We cannot provide subject/faculty related sessions
- SHL workshops do not take the place of tutorials provided by your modules
- All events are always advertised on our website along with studenthome news, social media channels and careers sources
- All events are bookable; workshops do fill up as they are popular

Online workshop basics

- 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 (*may not be accessible on some mobile devices*) and from <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>.

Today's workshop

- This is a structured workshop to help you develop your critical thinking and assumes this is not new to you but that you are building skills
- We use illustrations and examples to get you thinking, as well as providing specific suggestions and ideas to consider the topic further
- There is a lot of interaction so please be ready to answer polls (questions) or add to chat pod during the session
- We can not give module or subject 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 (this will hide the chat)



Inclusivity

- We welcome all students at our workshops. Please do be aware that they can be very busy and some students may struggle with the non scripted nature. Slides are available to download within the live session and from the event page on the [studenthublive](https://www.studenthublive.com) website to follow along or prepare for what will come up.

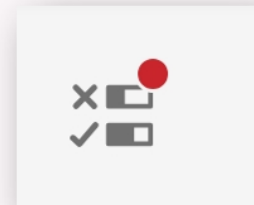
Please

- 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 so we would not be able to make the recording available

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



Your hosts today!



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.



Margaret Greenhall teaches science at first and second year courses. She is a specialist in studying skills having taught creative problem solving, memory and speed reading for many years.

Developing your Critical thinking and writing

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
- It gets you going
- 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 they work independently
- How could you critically evaluate the two theories? Give some suggestions in the poll pod available

Our questions to ask

- 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?



Bloom's taxonomy 1



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)

Bloom's taxonomy 2

Remembering

Understanding

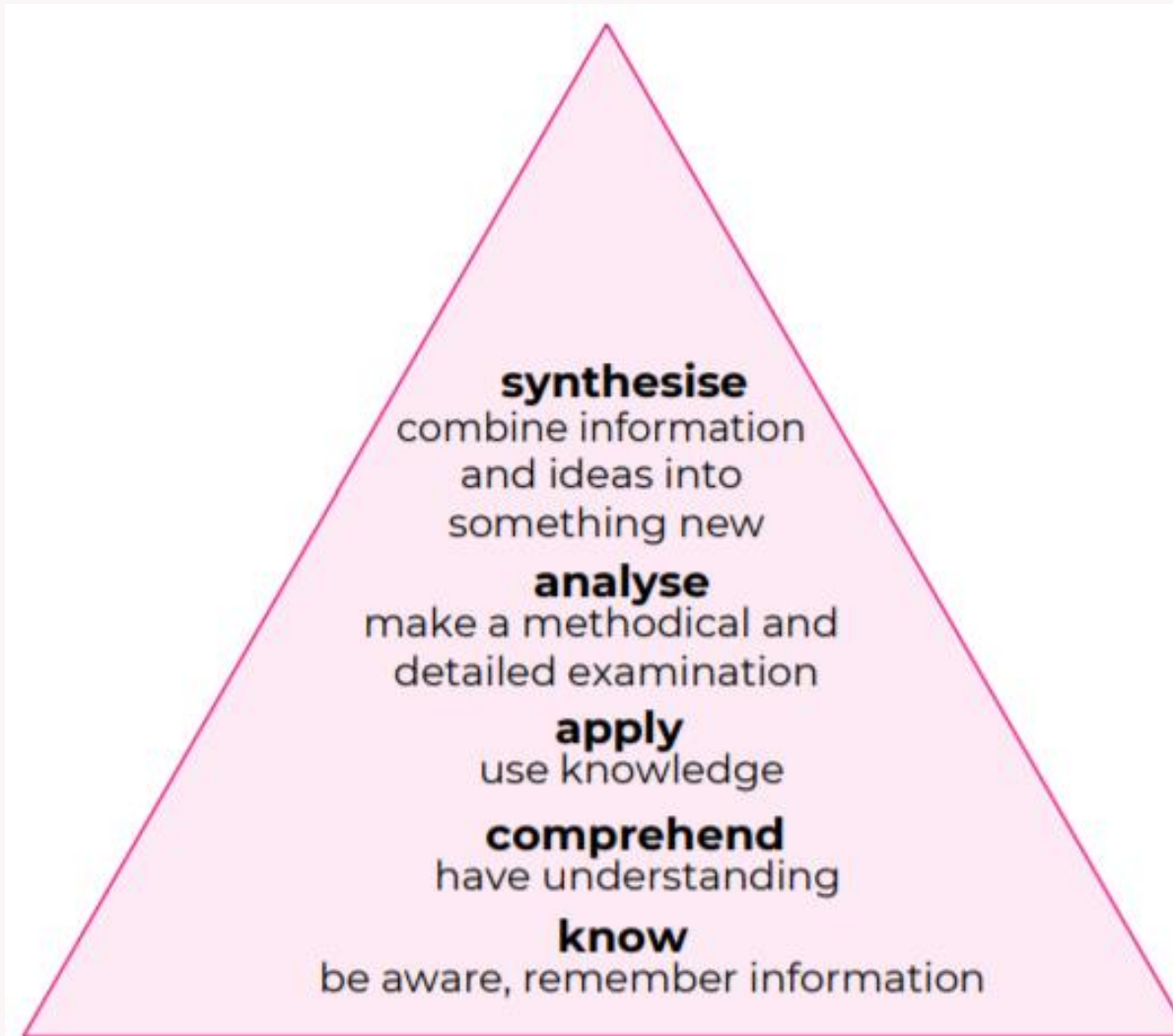
Applying

Analysing

Evaluating

Creating

As you read module material 1



As you read module material 2

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
- Evaluate - what is there about this point that is for/against
- 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 analyse the same information in a different way depending on what you are 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 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, **why** it is important and have applied it effectively

Critical thinking interrogates ideas

**quality of
evidence**

=

**quality
of data**

+

**quality of
interpretation**

Coherence 1

- 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 2

- 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?

You also need to evaluate the evidence you've been presented with to establish its worth, in its 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

- 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 appear 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

Feedback

Please complete the feedback form that is available at

<https://forms.office.com/e/FCqNuTg6uP>

This is immensely valuable to provide information on how studenthublive is beneficial to students as well as to help us plan our future programme

(Please remember that as explained earlier studenthublive is non modular and we cannot provide subject based sessions- sorry!)



- 4 Apr 11am Critical thinking and writing (advanced)
- 11 Apr 7pm Managing your time better
- 18 Apr 7pm Confidently using other people's ideas
- 25 Apr 11am Tackling procrastination
- 28 Apr 11am support & wellbeing for student carers

19 Apr 11am So where did that idea come from?

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

