

2nd Edition

Research and Study Skills: Academic Writing  
**Student Pack**

ULTB



THOUGHT



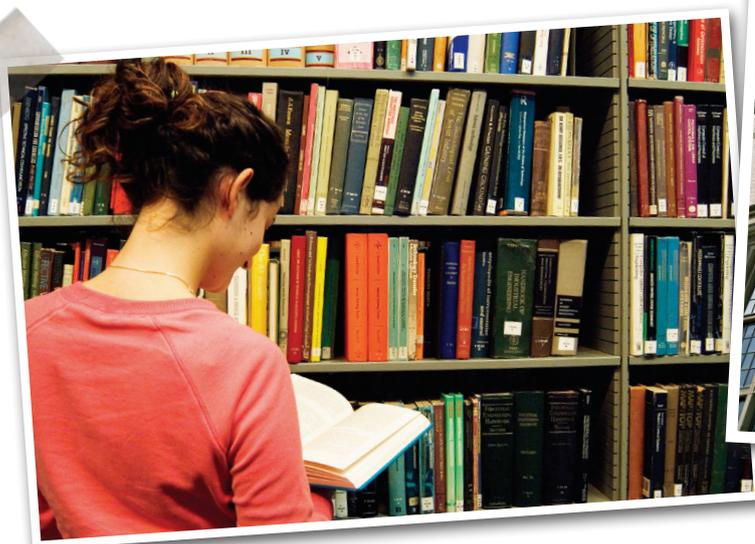
Think. Rethink

## Overview

This pack will help you develop the key skills that are needed for successful academic writing. Covering time management, plagiarism, referencing, paraphrasing as well as planning, structuring and writing an essay, this pack is a good starting point if you want to know more about academic writing or how to undertake an essay.

This pack is one of two packs on Research and Study Skills available from the University of Birmingham. The other, complementary pack focuses on research and evaluation skills.

**The Library Academic Engagement Team**  
Library Services, University of Birmingham. 2014



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## 1 Video of Library Services at the University of Birmingham

### ✓ Learning outcomes

By the end of this section you should be able to:

- Recognise the key services and facilities that academic libraries, such as Library Services at the University of Birmingham, offer.

### + Background

Library Services has created a short video outlining the range of facilities, resources and services that we can offer to our students to assist with their learning and research whilst at the University. The students who contributed to the video were studying at the University during the 2009-10 academic year and between them represent a range of the subjects that are available. This video is relevant to both prospective and new students of the University of Birmingham as well as to 6th form students interested in finding out more about the size and scale of an academic library.



### ➔ Activity

The Library Services video will be shown.

You can watch this video again by going to:

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/libraries/index.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/libraries/index.aspx)

or <http://youtu.be/MWXIAAmf2ME>

Please note that from Autumn 2016 some of the spaces shown in this video will no longer be available. This is due to the opening of a brand new technology-rich Main Library. Full details of the new Main Library project can be found at:

<http://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/library/newlibrary>



## 2 Time management



### Learning outcomes

By the end of this section you should be able to:

- Understand the importance of time management as an essential life skill.
- Recognise 'time stealers'.
- Consider a number of time management techniques and strategies including prioritisation and SMART goals.



### Background

Time Management is an essential skill. Good time management allows you to keep control of all of your work and social activities. It allows you to prioritise and complete activities to deadlines, for example handing in essays on time or revising for exams. Managing time effectively results in you feeling less stressed and consequently more able to plan your studies and achieve good grades.

#### Prioritise

Someone who works hard and is well organised but spends all their time on unimportant tasks may be efficient but not effective. To be effective, you need to decide what tasks are important and focus on these, starting with the most urgent. This is called **prioritisation**.

Consider using 'to do' lists as an easy way of keeping track of what you have to do. Once you have listed your tasks, use 'The Four Ds' to help prioritise them.

#### The Four Ds

**Do** – these are the tasks that you really need to do within the short-term future. For example hand in an assessed essay on time.

**Dump** – these are the tasks that you do not *need* to do, for example baking cakes.

**Delay** – these are the tasks that do need to be completed at some point, but do not have a deadline in the short-term future and so could be left to be completed a week or two later, for example booking train tickets for a journey that you will be taking later on in the year.

**Delegate** – these are the tasks that you could ask others to do instead, for example walking the family dog.



**2** Time management continued



Activity

Your tutor will put you into small groups and give each group a list of tasks that need to be completed within the next 24 hours using the following scenario:

Tomorrow you start your first day on a work experience placement at an accountancy firm, based in Birmingham City Centre. You need to arrive there by 8.45am. Your school is closed today because of a local election but open for a teacher training day. The time is now 11.45am and you and your brother are at home and have only a little money on your person.

Consider all of the tasks you need to complete before you start the work experience at 8.45am tomorrow and allocate them under the Do, Dump, Delay and Delegate headings as you think most appropriate. For the items you put under the 'Do' heading, arrange in a timeline order of how you would complete them.

When you have completed the activity, you should be prepared, in your small group, to feedback to the rest of the class.

DO	DUMP
DELAY	DELGATE

### 2 Time management continued



#### Time Stealers

Be aware of the things that can steal your time and ensure that you manage these, so that you make time for them within your schedule (as friends and family are important).

- Friends – depending on your schedule you may not always be able to go to every social activity they invite you to. Learn how to prioritise the important events in your life and how to delay the other ones for a time when you have less work to complete.
- Family – ensure you have a quiet or private study space where you can focus, for example a library, without interruptions from family members.
- Romance – schedule in time for romantic partners and they should understand and give you space if you have important work commitments.
- Jobs – think about how many hours per week you can work for and still leave enough time for study and social commitments – consider this when applying for jobs or when accepting additional hours.
- Social Media – it is easy to think you will only spend a moment or two checking your Facebook and Twitter updates. In reality, you will often spend much longer than you think especially if replying to or commenting on those updates. Try checking your Facebook/Twitter/emails at specified times during the day or when you have accomplished a certain task. For example, once I have written 500 words of the essay I can then look at social media.



### 2 Time management continued



#### Create SMART Goals

Using the SMART technique can help you really consider your tasks, what is involved in each task and how long it will really take to complete it.

- **Specific** – you need to be specific eg. instead of 'I'm going to revise this afternoon', you should say exactly what you are going to revise, for example 'I'm going to revise the first two acts of Hamlet this afternoon'.
- **Measurable** – you need to ensure it is something you can measure, for example 'I'm going to write 500 words this morning for my politics essay'.
- **Achievable** – it has to be something you can achieve; do you have the correct resources, time and equipment to achieve the goal?
- **Realistic** – you should not say 'I'm going to write 12,000 words today' (which is unrealistic), you should say 'I'm going to write 1,000 words of my essay today' (which is a more realistic goal).
- **Timely** – you need to ensure you know the time-line of when all of the smaller components of the activity need to be completed by so that you can finish them ready for the deadline.

The key is to:

- Work SMARTer – set SMART goals.
- Prioritise tasks – what is most important and when is the deadline?
- Schedule time – perhaps draw up a timetable – very useful for planning revision.
- Manage your time stealers – don't allow family, friends, social media, computer games, television programmes etc. to steal your time.
- Manage interruptions – find a quiet work space eg. a library where it is harder to be interrupted. Ensure the person interrupting you knows that you have a task to complete. Turn off mobile phones and Facebook/Twitter alerts whilst you are focussing on the task.
- Avoid procrastination – stop worrying about what pen or notebook you want to use and just get on with the task in hand. It will be less stressful in the end.
- Organise and manage your work space – if you keep your work in order it will be easier for you to focus on the task rather than waste time looking for documents in your work space that you need in order to do the task.



### 3 Plagiarism and when to reference



#### Learning outcomes

By the end of this section you should be able to:

- Recall what is meant by plagiarism.
- Consider different scenarios and judge in each case whether or not they would be classed as plagiarism.
- Consider different scenarios and judge in each case whether or not a reference would be required.



#### Background

Plagiarism is taken very seriously at university level, be it intentional or unintentional plagiarism. In essence, plagiarism is a form of cheating because the plagiariser is effectively taking credit for someone else's work. Students can sometimes fall into the trap of unintentionally plagiarising and this section aims to highlight all the different forms of plagiarism to help you avoid this. At best plagiarism can lead to assignments needing to be re-written and/or marks deducted. At worst, plagiarism can lead to expulsion from the university.



The following are two useful definitions of plagiarism:

- 'Plagiarism is passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally as your own'* Carroll, J. (2002) **A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism in Higher Education**. Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.
- 'The action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own; literary theft.'* **Oxford English Dictionary** (2006) 3rd ed. [online]. Available from: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/144939> [Accessed 6th May 2014]

### 3 Plagiarism and when to reference continued



#### Activity

This activity gets you thinking about plagiarism and when you need to reference.

You will be asked to complete the following quiz. For each question tick the appropriate box to indicate your answer.

#### Answer the following questions:

1. It is the day before your assignment is due to be submitted. You contact an online essay writing service, who later that day (for a fee) emails you an essay that meets your requirements. The next day you submit this essay.

#### Is this plagiarism?

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

2. You have been asked to submit an essay on Romeo and Juliet and your cousin emails you her old essay on that topic for which she received a high mark. You make a few alterations and add a few new ideas. You submit this essay.

#### Is this plagiarism?

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

3. In your essay you discuss your own thoughts on banking bonuses.

#### Do you need to reference?

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

4. You are writing an assignment about the British Constitution and you state that the Queen is the Head of State of the UK.

#### Do you need to reference?

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

**3** Plagiarism and when to reference continued

**Answer the following questions:**

- 5.** You include a table of data or a picture from another source.

**Do you need to reference?**

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

- 6.** You paraphrase in your essay Richard Dawkins' views on natural selection from one of his popular books. Because you are not directly quoting, you don't put quotation marks.

**Do you need to reference?**

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

- 7.** You and a friend are taking the same module and therefore have the same essay to write. The essay is not to be done as group work. You and your friend write your essays in the library together and end up with very similar essays.

**Is this plagiarism?**

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

- 8.** You find a paragraph in a book that supports an argument that you are making in your assignment. You copy this paragraph into your assignment, putting quotations marks at the start and finish and provide a citation.

**Is this plagiarism?**

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

Further information on plagiarism and how to reference can be found at:  
<http://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/icite>

## 4 Referencing

### ✓ Learning outcomes

By the end of this section you should be able to:

- Recall why referencing is important.
- Use the Birmingham Harvard system to reference a book, a journal article and a website.

### ✚ Background

Referencing is an essential part of academic scholarship. There are numerous reasons why referencing the material which you have found, and go onto use in your assignments is vital. These can be summarised as:

- To acknowledge an intellectual debt to another author / to avoid plagiarism.
- To give supporting evidence to specific facts or claims you make in the text.
- To enable a reader to find the sources that have been quoted.

There are many different ways of referencing. Examples of referencing styles include: the *Harvard* system (also known as the *author-date* system) and its many variations, as well as the *Vancouver* system (also known as the *Numbering* system). At the University of Birmingham the Harvard system is the official style which has been adopted, although some Schools prefer to use other systems (for example the Birmingham Law School use: *The Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA)*).

You should always check with your tutor(s) which style they are expecting you to use for your assignments.



4 Referencing continued



### Activity

This activity will teach you how to include indicative references (citations) in the body of your assignment as well as how to construct a full reference list at the end. Your tutor will demonstrate how to include the indicative references and you will be asked to create the full reference list.

Imagine that you have been asked to write an essay on Particle Physics, Accelerators and the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). In order to research this topic you have used the five following works: you can find these items via the URLs below:

<http://bit.ly/1oml6U5>

<http://bit.ly/SwdpAQ>

<http://home.web.cern.ch/topics/large-hadron-collider>

<http://www.stfc.ac.uk/646.aspx>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1051/epl/2012501>

You will be assigned one or more of these items to reference. For the purposes of this activity, we are asking you to reference these items as if they were printed books and journals (in fact if an electronic version of an item is identical to the print version then it can be referenced as if it was the print version – this will avoid typing in lengthy URLs).

Your tutor will provide instruction of how to complete this activity and how they will require you to feedback.



## Referencing Books

### Recipe:

1. Name(s) of author(s)/editor(s)
2. Year of publication (in brackets); if no year put n.d. in brackets (n.d.)
3. Title of book **emboldened**
4. Edition, if not the first
5. Number of volumes, if more than one
6. Place of publication
7. Name of publisher

### Example:

Parker, C.C. and Turley, R.V. (1986) **Information sources in science and technology: a practical guide to traditional and online use.**  
2nd ed. London: Butterworths.



## Referencing Journal Articles

### Recipe:

1. Names(s) of author(s)
2. (Date)
3. Title of article
4. Title of periodical **emboldened**
5. Volume number
6. Part number (if used by the journal) in brackets
7. Page numbers in full

### Example:

Broida, T.J. and Chellappa, R. (1991) Estimating the kinematics and structure of a rigid object from a sequence of monocular images. **IEEE Transactions on Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence**, 13 (6): 497-513



## Referencing Web Pages

### Recipe:

1. Names(s) of author(s)
2. Year of publication (in brackets); if no year put n.d. in brackets (n.d.)
3. Title of web page **emboldened**
4. [online]
5. Available from:
6. The web address
7. [Accessed: date the web page was accessed]

### Example:

Blakeman, K. (2009) **RBA Business Information on the Internet**  
[online]. Available from: [www.rba.co.uk/sources/index.htm](http://www.rba.co.uk/sources/index.htm)  
[Accessed 2 November 2009].

### For Corporate Authors:

These items have no named personal author, but are issued by a professional body, society, government department or other similar corporate body. In such cases the organisation is named as if it were the author (the following examples are for books):

Swedish Trade Council. (1991) **Swedish export directory**. 72nd ed.  
Stockholm: Swedish Trade Council.

British Medical Association. (1981) **The handbook of medical ethics**. London: BMA.

### If there is no publication date:

Replace the bracketed year eg. (2009) with (n.d.) which stands for 'no date'.

4 Referencing continued

### Supplementary Information

This activity deals with referencing a book, journal article and website. There are many other types of information that you may wish to reference during your studies. The following is a fuller guide on how to reference different types of materials and will aid you with referencing in the future.

**The following guide has been adapted from:**

University of Birmingham (2010) **Preparing and Quoting References using the Harvard System** [online]. Available from: <http://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/library/harvard> [Accessed 25th May 2011].



## 4 Preparing and quoting references using the Harvard System

### 1. Citing references within the text

#### 1.1 Referencing ideas

Where the author's family name falls naturally within the text, put the date of the publication in brackets after the family name.

Bloggs (1990) demonstrated the importance of suspended sediment in determining the pollution profile of rivers. However, Smith and Jones (1992) claim that additional factors such as channel hydraulics have been shown to be equally influential.

When referring to a source in passing, include the author's family name and date in brackets. If you have multiple references, separate them with semi-colons and order them either alphabetically or chronologically:

These ideas have been pursued by other American scientists (Graf, 1994; Outcalt, 1996; Wolman and Brown, 1999).

When citing **three or more authors** use the first author's family name followed by 'et al.' or 'and others' eg, (Meakin et al., 1991).

Where reference is being made to a specific part of a work, a page reference should be given, eg, (Gregory, 1990, p.26). This applies particularly where you are making reference to a particular figure, diagram or table within a work.

#### 1.2 Primary and secondary sources (referring to a source quoted in another work)

You may wish to refer to an author's idea, model or dataset but have not been able to read the actual chapter containing the information, but only another author's discussion or report of it. Similarly you may refer to a primary source, eg, an author's letters or diary, or a government report, that you have only 'read' as cited or reproduced within another author's text. In both cases you should acknowledge the use of a secondary source using the following format:

The model of Mitchell (1996) (cited in Parry and Carter, 2003, p.160) simulates the suppressing effects of sulphate aerosols on the magnitude of global warming.

In this example you should ideally list both the Parry and Carter (2003) and Mitchell sources in your reference list but many schools will accept the listing of the secondary source (ie, Parry and Carter) only.

#### 1.3 Quoting words from published material

When quoting words from published material, the quoted text must be enclosed in quotation marks. For example:

Harvey (1992, p.226), however, now questions the validity of quantitative geography, stating: '... the so-called quantitative revolution has blinded many researchers to the truths they are supposedly seeking'

## 4 Preparing and quoting references using the Harvard System continued

Lengthy quotations are indented and separated:

Harvey (1992, p.226), however, now questions the validity of quantitative geography, stating: '... the so-called quantitative revolution has blinded many researchers to the truths they are supposedly seeking: results are scorned if they are not liberally sprinkled with equations and formulae. The growing popularity of qualitative methods, however, is thankfully reversing this trend'.

Here, the use of three full stops (ellipsis) is used to indicate missing text.

### 1.4 Citing authors of book chapters

If the book in which the chapter appears is edited by a different author, you still need to cite the author of the *chapter* (see 2.3.3).

### 1.5 Citing anonymous works

When citing works with no identifiable author, cite the title of the work (see 2.3.4).

### 1.6 Citing works of Corporate Authorship and Official Publications

In situations where works have no named personal author use the issuing organisation as if it were the author (see 2.3.5).

### 1.7 Prolific authors

If you wish to cite an author who has published more than one item in the same year, use lower case letter to distinguish between them. Eg, Smith (1990a) is the first piece of Smith's work referred to, Smith (1990b) the second and so on. The letters should also be included in the reference list.

## 2. The Reference List

A complete reference list or bibliography should be included at the end of any written work. A reference list includes all cited items only, whilst a bibliography includes all cited items and any other works consulted but not cited in your text. In either case, all cited sources must be included. Items are listed alphabetically by author's family name, year (and letter if necessary). The name that is given in the reference list must be the same as the name used in the text. For each work listed, certain elements should be present:

### 2.1 Books

1. Name(s) of author(s)/editor(s)
2. Year of publication (in brackets); if no year put n.d. in brackets (n.d.)
3. Title of book **emphasised**
4. Edition, if not the first
5. Number of volumes, if more than one
6. Place of publication
7. Name of publisher

Parker, C.C. and Turley, R.V. (1986)  
**Information sources in science and technology: a practical guide to traditional and online use.** 2nd ed. London: Butterworths.

The date should be the original date of publication of the edition being cited, not the publication date of the first edition or the date of the most recent reprinting. Other elements may be appropriate, such as the sub-title of a book, or a volume number and series title if the book is issued as part of a series. Conceivably (in a full bibliography, for example), the international standard book number (ISBN) might also be included.

4 Preparing and quoting references using the Harvard System continued

**2.2 Periodical (ie, journal) articles**

1. Names(s) of author(s)
2. (Date)
3. Title of article
4. Title of periodical **emboldened**
5. Volume number
6. Part number (if used by the journal)  
in brackets
7. Page numbers in full

Broida, T.J. and Chellappa, R. (1991) Estimating the kinematics and structure of a rigid object from a sequence of monocular images. **IEEE Transactions on Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence**, 13 (6): 497-513.

**2.3 Particular types of references**

**2.3.1 Works of personal authorship**

Personal authorship is where the work is authored either by a single individual or two or more authors in collaboration. The first author's name is always presented in inverse order with surname preceding forenames or initials. Subsequent names are also inverted.

**a. Works by a single personal author**

These require the essential elements for works given above:

Williams, J.G. (1991) **The bible, violence and the sacred: liberation from the myth of sanctioned violence**. San Francisco: Harper.

**b. Works by two personal authors**

In a joint-authored work list both of the authors:

Heymann, H.G. and Bloom, R. (1990)  
**Opportunity cost in finance and accounting**.  
New York: Quorum.

**c. Works by three personal authors**

In a work by three authors list all the authors:

Husk, G., Colley, M. and Elliott, C. (2009) The role of mental health staff in intermediate care. **Nursing Older People**, 21 (9): 24-28.

**d. Works by more than three authors**

The abbreviation 'et al' or 'and others' can be used. For example, in a work authored by six authors the first three should be named followed by et al:

Herron, C.M., Mirkov, T.E. and Solis-Gracia, N. et al. (2005) Severity of Citrus tristeza virus isolates from Texas. **Plant Disease**, 89 (6): 575-580.

\* Where author names are particularly long and make referencing unwieldy it is acceptable to use only the first author name followed by 'et al'.

**2.3.2 Works produced under editorial direction**

These are items produced under the general editorial control of one or more editors. Individual chapters, however, may each be written by different authors. The abbreviation (*ed.*) or (*eds.*) is used to denote an edited collection:

Seidman, S. and Wagner, D.G. (eds.) (1992)  
**Postmodernism and social theory: the debate over general theory**. Cambridge (MA): Blackwell.

4 Preparing and quoting references using the Harvard System continued

**2.3.3 Parts of books**

If you wish to refer to a chapter in a book or a particular part of a publication, construction of the reference will depend on whether or not the author of the chapter or part is also responsible for the whole book.

**a. Author of the chapter is also the editor of the book**

Parrot, B. (1990) **The dynamics of Soviet defense policy**. Washington DC: Wilson Center Press. pp.7-40.

**b. Author of the chapter is not the editor of the book**

1. Name(s) of author(s)
2. Year of publication (in brackets)
3. Title of chapter (in speech marks) In
4. Author or editor of book
5. Title of book **emboldened**
6. Edition, if not the first
7. Number of volumes, if multi-volumed work/series
8. Place of publication
9. Name of publisher
10. Page numbers

Lake, D. (1991) "British and American hegemony compared: lessons for the current era of decline." In Fry, M.G. (ed.) **History, the White House and the Kremlin**. London: Pinter. pp.106-122.

Here it is clear that the chapter by Lake (in the edited collection by Fry) has been drawn upon specifically, rather than the book as a whole.

**2.3.4 Anonymous works**

Truly anonymous works have no identifiable or ascertainable author. These should be listed by title first.

**Dod's parliamentary companion**. (1992) 173rd ed. Etchingham: Dod's Parliamentary Companion Ltd.

In the alphabetical list of references, file such items by the first significant word of the title, omitting definite and indefinite articles (such as 'the').

**2.3.5 Works of corporate (organisational) authorship**

These items have no named personal author, but are issued by a professional body, society, government department or other similar corporate body. In such cases the organisation is named as if it were the author:

Swedish Trade Council. (1991) **Swedish export directory**. 72nd ed. Stockholm: Swedish Trade Council.

British Medical Association. (1981) **The handbook of medical ethics**. London: BMA.

Where a list of references includes items published by government departments of more than one country it is advisable to enter the name of the country of origin before the name of the department. This collects such items and makes location and identification of them simpler:

Great Britain. Home Office. (1981) **Direct broadcasting by satellite: report of a Home Office study**. London: HMSO.

4 Preparing and quoting references using the Harvard System continued

United States. Atomic Energy Commission.  
(1958) **Progress in peaceful uses of atomic energy, July-December, 1957**. Washington: US Government Printing Office.

### 2.3.6 Unpublished works

Research may involve consulting materials which have not been published. Use the word 'unpublished' only if appropriate. In many cases it is unnecessary. For an unpublished thesis or dissertation use the style:

Wild, M.T. (1972) **An historical geography of the West Yorkshire textile industries to C.1850**. PhD thesis, University of Birmingham.

For material which is soon to be published, but is 'in press' at the time of your writing give as much detail as you can:

Kouvatsos, D. (in press) (1993) **Maximum entropy analysis of queuing systems and networks**. Oxford: Blackwell.

Personal conversations, letters or interviews etc, are often cited only in the text. If entered in the references use the style:

Smith, J. (2004) **Personal communication**.

Fuller information can be given if available:

Smith, J. (10 July 1999). **Interview with author**. Boston, Massachusetts.

You may also wish to indicate the status of Smith if that is relevant, eg, Chief Executive of a major manufacturing company.

### 2.3.7 Newspaper Articles

#### Print newspaper articles:

1. Name(s) of author(s)
2. Year of publication (in brackets)
3. Title of article
4. Full title of newspaper **emboldened**
5. Day and Month
6. Page number(s) in full

Smith, P. and Tucker, S. (2009) Australia stamps its mark on M&A and equity-raising leagues. **Financial Times**. Monday 25 May, p.14.

For electronic newspaper articles please go to 'Referencing electronic sources' section.

### 2.3.8 Videos, films or broadcasts

1. Title **emboldened**
2. Year (for films, the preferred date is the year of release in the country of production)
3. Format of the material
4. Director if ascertainable
5. Production details (place and organisation).

**The amazing newborn**. (1977) Film.  
Consultant: Marshall H. Klaus. USA.

### Programmes and series

Number and title of an episode should be given, as should series title and transmitting organisation and channel and date and time of transmission.

4 Preparing and quoting references using the Harvard System continued

**Holby City** (1999) Episode 7, Take me with you. TV, BBC1. 1999 Tuesday 23 February.

**Contributions**

Items within a programme should be cited as contributors.

Blair, T. (1997) Interview. In: **Six o'clock news**. TV, BBC1. 1997 29 February. 1823hrs.

**2.3.9 Referencing electronic sources**

Electronic sources of information are becoming increasingly important in academic work, but as yet a fixed standard for referencing these does not exist. A good guideline is to emulate the style for printed material as far as possible and to include as much information as possible.

**a. Webpages**

In citing an electronic work such as a webpage, elements include author's/editor's surname and initials, year of publication, title, the word online in square brackets, edition details, place of publication, publisher (if ascertainable). The web address and the date the page was accessed should also be included:

Environment Agency (1999) **Nitrate vulnerable zones** [online]. Available from: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/modules/MOD43.7.html](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/modules/MOD43.7.html) [Accessed 1 September 1999].

**b. E-journals**

If you are referencing an electronic version of a journal article which also exists in print, reference the article as you would if it were the print version, using the page numbers taken from

the on-screen article (see section 2.2). A reference to an article from an 'electronic only' journal should include author's/editor's surname and initials, year, title, journal title (followed by [online]) and volume and issue details, web address and the [Accessed date].

Bailey, S. (2005). Assessing the Impact of the Freedom of Information Act on the FE and HE Sectors. **Ariadne** [online], 42. Available from: [www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue42/bailey/](http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue42/bailey/) [Accessed 20 June 2005].

**c. Electronic newspaper articles:**

For an online version of a newspaper article, you should also include information on how you accessed the article. If you have accessed the article through a database then provide these details in place of the URL.

1. Name(s) of author(s)
2. Year of publication (in brackets)
3. Title of article
4. Full title of newspaper **emboldened**
5. Type of medium in square brackets
6. Day and Month
7. Available from: URL (or database details)
8. Accessed date in square brackets

Prosser, D. (2010) China overtakes Japan as world's second-largest economic power. **The Independent** [online], Tuesday 17 August. Available from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/china-overtakes-japan-as-worlds-secondlargest-economic-power-2054412.html> [Accessed 18 August 2010].

4 Preparing and quoting references using the Harvard System continued

Prosser, D. (2010) China overtakes Japan as world's second-largest economic power. **The Independent** [online], Tuesday 17 August. Available from: Nexis UK [Accessed 18 August 2010].

**d. Personal electronic communication (e-mail)**

When referencing personal e-mail messages, give the sender as the author followed by their email address, identify the full date and use the subject line as the title of the work. Identify the recipient of the message and their email address.

Smith, J. (j.smith@bham.ac.uk), (4 April 2005). Re: **How to format bibliographies**. e-mail to T. Jones (t.jones@bham.ac.uk).

**e. CD-ROMs and DVDs**

For CDs and DVDs which are works in their own right (and not bibliographic databases), list the author's family name and initials, year, title, medium (CD or DVD), place of publication (if known) and the publisher.

Hawking, S.W. (1994) **A brief history of time: an interactive adventure**. [CD-ROM]. Crunch Media.

**3. General**

In selecting information for each part of the reference quote from the title page and other preliminaries of the book or article. Generally capitalisation and punctuation can be changed (as long as you are consistent) but the author's original spelling on the title page should be observed.

**4. Good Practice**

Noting your references as you work is imperative if you are to use your time efficiently. As you make notes or photocopy material note the full reference details. This will prevent you from relying on memory or having to find your source again when you come to write your bibliography/reference list.

Acknowledging your sources correctly is time-consuming but essential, so leave plenty of time for this important activity.



## 5 Paraphrasing



### Learning outcomes

By the end of this section you should be able to:

- Understand what paraphrasing is.
- Understand the importance of effective paraphrasing as opposed to just substituting words.
- Identify good academic practice and poor academic practice in a paraphrasing context.
- Paraphrase a short section of text.



### Background

When writing academic essays, you will often need to strengthen your arguments by referring to the ideas of other writers and scholars in the field. Sometimes you might choose to cite exactly what they have said, using quotation marks, but at other times you will want to express their ideas in your own words. Doing this effectively and respectfully is an important part of good academic practice.



### 5 Paraphrasing continued

#### Activity 1

This introductory activity will help you to identify what paraphrasing does and does not involve. Please read the following statements in your groups and decide whether they are true or false.

#### True or False...?

1. Paraphrasing means expressing another person's ideas in your own words.

True  False

2. If you have read something and then expressed it in your own words, you do not need to reference where the original idea came from.

True  False

3. You should paraphrase a section of text by using a thesaurus to change some of the words.

True  False

4. You should paraphrase a section of text by expressing it in a different way, highlighting key ideas and getting to the heart of what the writer is saying.

True  False

5. Good paraphrasing shows that you understand another writer's point of view.

True  False

Please be prepared to discuss your answers.



### 5 Paraphrasing continued



#### Tips for Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is often defined as putting a passage from an author into your own words. But what are your own words? How different must your paraphrase be from the original?

The answer is it should be considerably different. The whole point of paraphrasing is to show you have read and understood another person's ideas, and can summarise them in your own writing style rather than borrowing their phrases. If you just change a few words, or add some bits of your own to an otherwise reproduced passage, you will probably be penalised for plagiarism.

You should aim to condense and simplify a writer's ideas, and describe them using different sentence structures and expressions. It is also important to credit the original writer by referencing. You may wish to introduce your summary of their ideas with a phrase such as 'According to Smith (2000)...'

In order to paraphrase well, you must understand the essence of a writer's argument. Here are some reading strategies that may help you to do that:

- First gain an overview of the article or chapter by reading the introduction and conclusion.
- Then read the document through quickly, to get a general 'feel' for it, scanning for the central points.
- When you read through again, focus on things that are relevant to your essay or discussion.
- Ask yourself questions as you read – do you understand the points being made? If not, what is holding you back? Consider the writer's argument. What are they saying? Do you agree or disagree?
- Then turn the article over or put it to one side, and try to sum up the writer's argument in one sentence or short paragraph. Do this without looking at the words the writer has used. This will force you to use your own words and will test your understanding of what you have read. You can then check the original text to ensure that you have produced a fair summary of their ideas.



5 Paraphrasing continued



Activity 2

This activity enables you to consider examples of effective and ineffective paraphrasing.

Please read this piece of text, taken from the University of Birmingham's (2014) website. Then consider the two examples of paraphrasing below it. Which do you think is the most appropriate and effective example of paraphrasing?

**Original Text**

The University's 250 acre campus was recently listed in the top ten most beautiful universities in Britain by *The Telegraph*. It is a campus that is expanding and improving all the time with our most recent investments being in the planned building of a brand new multi-million pound sports centre, a redeveloped library with a cultural hub and a brand new student hub housed in the iconic Aston Webb building.

University of Birmingham. (2014) **About Birmingham** [online]. Available from: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/birmingham/About-Birmingham.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/birmingham/About-Birmingham.aspx) [Accessed 6th May 2014]

**Paraphrase 1**

The University's large campus was recently listed by *The Telegraph* in the top ten most beautiful universities in Britain. It is a campus that is growing and developing all the time with its most recent investments being in the planned building of a new multi-million pound sports centre, an improved library with a cultural hub and a brand new student hub housed in the famous Aston Webb building.

**Paraphrase 2**

The University of Birmingham's (2014) website reports that its campus was recently listed in *The Telegraph's* 'top ten most beautiful universities in Britain.' It goes on to highlight that the campus is being continually developed. Future plans include a new sports centre, a state-of-the-art library and a student hub.

Your thoughts

### 5 Paraphrasing continued



#### Activity 3

This activity gives you the opportunity to practise paraphrasing a piece of text.

Please read this extract from the University of Birmingham's (2014) website and then attempt to express the key ideas in your own words. When you are reading, remember to consider what the main message of the text seems to be. You can then emphasise this in your paraphrased version.

#### Original Text

The University grew out of the radical vision of our first Chancellor, Joseph Chamberlain. Founded in 1900, Birmingham represented a new model for higher education. This was England's first civic university, where students from all religions and backgrounds were accepted on an equal basis.

Birmingham has continued to be a university unafraid to do things a little differently, and in response to the challenges of the day. It was a founder member of the National Union of Students and the first university in the country to:

- Be built on a campus model
- Establish a faculty of commerce
- Incorporate a medical school
- Offer degrees in dentistry
- Create a women's hall of residence
- Have a purpose-built students' union building

University of Birmingham. (2014) **A Brief History** [online]. Available from: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/about/history/index.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/about/history/index.aspx) [Accessed 6th May 2014]

#### Paraphrased version

5 Paraphrasing continued



Paraphrased version continued

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing a paraphrased version of text.

## 6 Planning, structuring and writing an essay



### Learning outcomes

By the end of this section you should be able to:

- Identify clear and concise writing.
- Understand the stages of planning an essay.
- Follow a basic essay structure.
- Consider the key elements within the introduction, main body and conclusion of the essay.



### Background

The main purpose of writing an essay is to demonstrate ideas and arguments that answer a particular question. The writing of essays forms part of a range of academic assessment activities used at university. The activities contained in this section will help you gain a better understanding of how to plan, research and structure your writing.



### Activity 1

This 'ice breaker' activity will help you realise the importance of writing clearly (as well as the importance of checking what you have written). Take a look at these sentences and identify why they are ambiguous or muddled:

1. Drug taking in sport is illegal and many people are concerned about this.

2. Singapore is smaller than London and every other country in Southeast Asia.



**6** Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued



- 3.** Schools, parents and the government are amongst those who have been blamed for the obesity crisis and there is much being done to prevent this.

- 4.** People who smoke are significantly more likely to die than people who do not smoke.

- 5.** 50% of the nineteen participants said they had not done any work experience during their time at university.

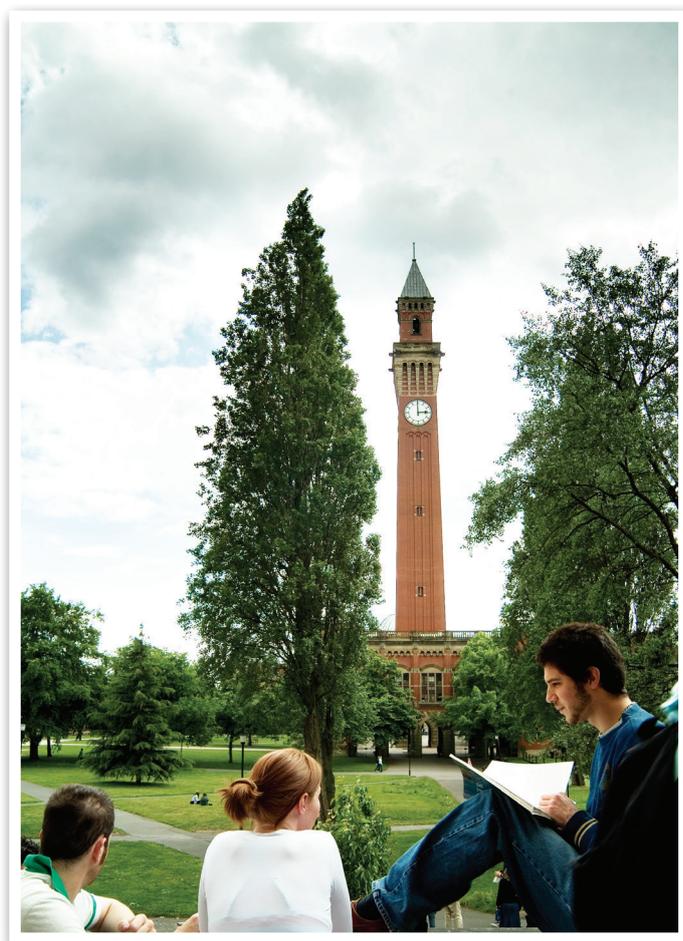
Now have a go at re-writing one of the sentences above...

### 6 Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued



#### Planning an Essay

The *Suggested Stages of Planning* chart on the following page provides some guidance on how to go about the stages involved in planning an essay.



**6** Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued

**Suggested stages of planning**

Break down the different parts of your assignment question. Figure out what the task word means (eg. discuss, argue, describe) and identify specifically what you need to write about. If the question is very broad and general, you will need to decide which aspects to focus your answer around.

Mind map everything you already know about the topic. Try to identify what your instinctive response to the essay question is. Identify some key research questions to guide your further reading

Be sure to keep track of where you have obtained information from as you research. Take effective notes and engage with what you are reading, asking questions and challenging points of view. Be sure to only note down things that are relevant to the essay question. You don't need to include everything you know about the topic.

From your research, identify key points that will help you to answer the essay question. You could pool these together in a mind map, or on a large piece of paper, or a typed document. Then you need to start organising the points. Which points are closely related? Which are counter-arguments? Which follow on from one other? Begin to group your ideas. At this point, you should also decide what the main, overall argument of your essay is going to be, based on the evidence that you have been gathering.

Now you need to decide on a logical order for your points. You could write a summary of each point on a separate card or sticky note and physically move them around until you have figured out the best order. You will find your own method, but the key thing is to be aware of the progression of your argument and the unfolding of your line of reasoning. How does each point link to the one before it and the one after it? How will your paragraphs build up your argument?

### 6 Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued



As you start thinking about planning your essay, you may find it useful to ask yourself the following questions and make notes accordingly:

1. Do I understand what my assignment question is asking?
2. What is my instinctive response to the question?
3. What do I already know that is of relevance to the question?
4. What else do I need to find out?
5. What have other scholars written on this topic and do I agree with them?
6. What is the main point I want to argue or get across in this essay?

#### Structuring an Essay

Once you have finished planning your essay, you need to start thinking about how to structure it. What should your overall structure look like? What main headings/bullet points would you use in order to organise your essay into an appropriate and logical flow of ideas? The **Essay Structure Checklist**, starting on page 36, provides some guidance.



6 Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued



Essay Structure Checklist

	Notes
Title	<input type="checkbox"/> Have you included the title of your essay?
Introduction	<input type="checkbox"/> Does your essay have a suitable introduction which identifies the topic? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the introduction give the reader a plan of the main themes/concepts that you are going to examine in the essay? This plan should not be merely description, but give some indication of analysis. These themes should be mentioned in the introduction in the same order that they are mentioned in the actual essay. It is worth looking back over your draft introduction once you have finished the essay so that you can edit it to match the actual structure of the finished document. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Suggestion:</b> Your introduction should be approximately 10% of the word count.
Main Body	<input type="checkbox"/> Is there evidence that you have read widely on the topic? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you put each main point in a separate paragraph (each main point may take up more than just one single paragraph)? <input type="checkbox"/> To helpfully signpost the structure of the essay to the reader, make it clear at the start of a new main point what you are about to go on to examine. At the end of the paragraph for each main area paraphrase the main points that have been covered. Ensure that each paragraph is actually answering the question you have been set. <input type="checkbox"/> Are the paragraphs linked in a logical manner (i.e. does your essay flow from one point to another)? <input type="checkbox"/> When you make a point or argument in the essay, or give a factual statement, do you provide evidence that supports it? This evidence will normally be given by referring to research that has been done by others eg. books, journal articles, websites. This is why it is important to read widely on your topic. <input type="checkbox"/> Do you reference clearly, using a consistent referencing style, where you have used the ideas or work of other people? <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Suggestion:</b> Your main body should be approximately 80% of the word count.

6 Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued

Essay Structure Checklist continued

	Notes
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does your conclusion address the essay question?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is your conclusion supported by the work and evidence you have produced in the main body of the text? If the answer you give here contradicts the evidence you give in the main body of the essay, then you need to either reconsider your conclusion or the evidence you have used in the main body.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does it summarise the main points? Your conclusion should not introduce new points or evidence which you haven't mentioned elsewhere in your essay but should be a short reminder of the points you have made in the main body of the essay.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Suggestion:</b> Your conclusion should be approximately 10% of the word count.</li> </ul>
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you used a variety of sources (eg. books, journal articles, websites)?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you provided references for all of your sources at the point in your essay where you have used them to provide evidence or to acknowledge where you get an idea from (references in the body of your essay are called in-text citations)?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are all of the references that you use in your essay shown in the reference list at the end of your essay?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are all of the references accurate, correctly and consistently formatted?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is the reference list constructed in alphabetical order?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Suggestion:</b> Your references may count towards your word count. Check with your tutor before starting your essay. You may be awarded marks for your referencing – if so, these are easy marks to obtain!</li> </ul>
Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is your essay neat and well presented?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is it in the correct word font and size? You will normally be told what to use at either the start of the course or when given the assignment. Ask your tutor if you are unsure.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Has it been edited, proof-read and written within the word limit?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you included your details? Check with your tutor what personal details you need to include. Eg. full name or just an ID number to allow for anonymised marking.</li> </ul>
Assessment criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does it meet the assessment criteria?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tutors are marking your essays against a set marking criteria. The marking criteria will normally be given to you either at the start of the course or when you are given an assignment. If you are not given a copy ask your tutor for one. It is vital that you know what criteria you need to meet in order to gain a high level mark.</li> </ul>

### 6 Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued



#### Activity 2

Read the following essay and use the **Essay Structure Checklist**, starting on page 36, to comment on its structure, use of evidence/ references, and how well it communicates with the reader. Jot down some thoughts on page 41.

**Tip:** A good way to assess the structure of an essay is to try to sum up the point that each paragraph is making in one sentence. If you read these sentences in order, can you follow the narrative of the essay? Should any of the paragraphs be moved to elsewhere? Does each paragraph **CLEARLY** answer the question? And is there evidence to support every point?



6 Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued

**How serious a problem is childhood obesity in the UK?**

The term obesity is defined as 'carrying too much body weight for a person's height and sex' (NHS choices, 2008a). A person is considered obese if they have a Body Mass Index of 30 or greater. In the UK, childhood obesity is growing. 'The number of obese children has tripled over the last 20 years; at least 10% of six-year-olds and 17% of 15-year-olds are now clinically obese' (NHS choices, 2008b.) The change in lifestyle, and need for both parents to have a career, results in children spending less time outdoors and more time in front of the television. Obesity has many impacts on children. It significantly increases their chance of developing 'heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and depression' (NHS choices 2008a). These problems then have a knock on effect on the NHS and affect the image of the UK.

One main health problem that is associated with childhood obesity is cardiovascular disease. Having excess body fat puts extra strain on the heart during normal everyday activity, and lays down fatty deposits in the arteries. A study, carried out by Dr Patrick Tounian, from the Department of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition at the Armand-Trousseau Hospital in Paris, compared the arteries of 48 obese children against those of 27 non-obese youngsters. The arteries of obese children were found to be much stiffer and more damaged than those of their non-obese counterparts (BBC News, 2001). This shows obesity has immediate effects on children's arteries, so even if they lose weight as they enter adulthood, the damage may be irreversible. If childhood obesity carries on increasing, it could eventually lead to a decrease in life expectancy in the UK. This puts an emphasis on the importance of preventative strategies. However corrective strategies are still important: if someone loses weight as they enter adulthood they are likely to have less health problems than if they never lost any weight.

Obesity can have long term mental effects as well as physical effects. Obese white females demonstrate significantly lower levels of self esteem by early adolescence, and obese children with decreasing levels of self esteem demonstrate significantly higher rates of sadness, loneliness, and nervousness, and are more likely to smoke and drink alcohol. This shows that obesity may affect children's quality of life. Their low self esteem could come from bullying at school due to their appearance, and inability to take part in as many childhood activities such as running around in the playground. Later in life this may lead on to more serious conditions such as clinical depression. Additionally, if low self esteem causes adolescents to smoke and drink this will also have associated health problems. Low self esteem may also have an effect on their employment rate; this will impact on the government as they will need to claim benefits, reducing the money available for other areas such as education. However, there may be many obese children who have high self esteem and enter adulthood with good jobs, so we are unable to generalise to the whole population of obese people.

6 Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued

Type 2 diabetes is largely associated with obesity as people's eating habits cause insulin receptors to become unresponsive. 'It usually occurs in people who are over the age of 45 and overweight... a growing number of cases are being seen in children' (BBC News, 2005). Once the disease has developed it will always affect the person and their quality of life, as they may be unable to join in normal childhood activities. However, it can be reduced by increasing exercise and cutting down on carbohydrates. This is an ethical issue as type 2 diabetes is preventable, by maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle.

The negative effect obesity has on health means that there is a knock on effect for the NHS. 'The overall cost of obesity to the NHS is currently around £1bn, with a further £2.3bn to £2.6bn for the economy as a whole' (BBC News, 2006). The cost is due to an increase in diseases, such as those discussed earlier, which results in increased admissions to hospital, prescription drugs and GP's time. An increase in childhood obesity will have a greater impact on the NHS than that of adult obesity as the child's medical conditions will need to be funded for a longer period throughout their life. It could be argued this large budget could be better spent on other areas in the NHS, rather than obesity which could be seen as preventable. There is also a lot of money being spent on research, looking into reasons and preventions for childhood obesity. Additionally an increase in childhood obesity does not give the nation a desired image of being fit and healthy.

Childhood obesity in the UK is more of a problem now, compared to previous years. There is evidence that it leads to many diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and depression. This then has a financial impact on the NHS. If childhood obesity carried on increasing, and the NHS was unable to meet its demands, it could become a serious problem. It not only affects those with obesity, but also people with other diseases waiting for treatment. Additionally there is an effect on governmental issues, as lower employment rates in obese people causes more money to be given as benefits. This could be prevented by educating children and parents about eating healthily and increasing physical activity, so that childhood obesity does not increase to a point where the UK is unable to cope.

**Bibliography**

BBC News. (2001) **Heart symptoms in obese children** [online]. Available from: [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/1617890.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/1617890.stm) [accessed 29 October 2008]

BBC News. (2005) **Child obesity diabetes risk probe** [online]. Available from: [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4175551.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4175551.stm) [accessed 30 October 2008]

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**6** Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued

Your thoughts

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write their thoughts on the topic.

### 6 Planning, structuring and writing an essay continued



#### Activity 3

This activity can be used as a quick test to consolidate what you have learnt in this section.

Re-arrange the following 10 words and phrases in the order in which you would do the tasks if you were planning, researching, structuring and writing an essay.

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion             | <input type="checkbox"/> Mind-mapping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring the question | <input type="checkbox"/> Notes        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction           | <input type="checkbox"/> Research     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Key points             | <input type="checkbox"/> References   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Main Body              | <input type="checkbox"/> Task word(s) |

#### Task (arranged first to last)

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |





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