

Writing your first essay: an introductory tutorial

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Introduction

This tutorial has been developed to integrate key skill areas, such as critical thinking, reading and note-taking, writing and referencing, into the context of essay writing, the most common form of assessment at university. The activities selected represent the areas of most concern to students as they work through their assignments. They also represent the key features for which markers are looking.

If you are concerned about your knowledge and skills to cope successfully with academic writing upon completion of this tutorial, a number of more detailed Study Link subjects are offered by the University. The Study Link site outlines these subjects and enrolment procedures:

<http://www.csu.edu.au/student/studylink>

The [CSU Learning Skills](#) website contains resources on a range of academic language and learning topics. Use the Student Services centralised point of contact – [Support Central](#) – to make an appointment with a Learning Skills Adviser to discuss the different ways we can help you with your studies.

Tutorial objectives

This tutorial will help you to:

Discover:

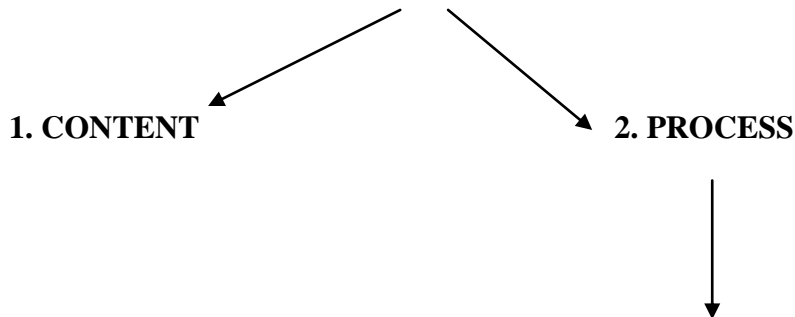
- ❑ What will be expected of you as an academic writer

Learn how to:

- ❑ Analyse a question
- ❑ Read and note-take efficiently
- ❑ Plan and structure an essay
- ❑ Reference your work correctly

What markers expect

Markers look for:



A. Has the question been answered?

B. Is there evidence of “wide” and critical reading?

C. Is there a logically structured argument?

D. Does your work conform to academic writing conventions?

Making sure you answer the question

Imagine you are writing a 1500 word essay that has the following topic:

Discuss the suggestion that students must possess a wide range of skills to succeed at tertiary study.

Key word analysis will help ensure that you answer the question.

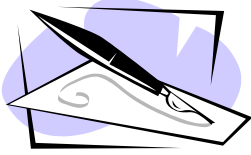
First, there are *content* words that determine what you will need to research; that is, what you are expected to write about. Look for two things:

The general *topic* (this often assists you with a good introductory sentence for your introduction); and

The *focus* of the question (this is what you will be spending your time on).

Second, there are *task*, or directional words that will dictate how you are expected to approach the question. These are sometimes contained within the instructions leading up to the question.

Finally, limitation words will guide your reading through time, place, and of course word limit.



Activity 1

Analyse the question above. Look for the *key* words.

- What is the *topic* of your essay?

- What is the *focus* of your essay?

- What is your *task*? (Refer to the page following for a comprehensive list of task words).

- What are the *limitations*?



Check page 24 for suggested response.

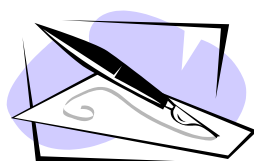
Common task words	Description
<i>Analyse</i>	Find the main ideas and show how they are related, what their function is and why they are important.
<i>Comment on</i>	Discuss, criticise, or explain the meaning.
<i>Compare</i>	Note the similarities and differences of what you are being asked to compare.
<i>Contrast</i>	Compare by showing the differences.
<i>Criticise</i>	Make a judgement about the merit of theories and opinions or about the truth of statements. Back this by discussing the evidence. It is not necessary to attack it. Discuss the strong and weak points and include your own analysis.
<i>Define</i>	Give the formal meaning of a word, term or phrase.
<i>Describe</i>	Give a written, detailed account or verbal picture in a logical sequence. Emphasise the important points. An explanation or interpretation is not required.
<i>Diagram</i>	Make a graph, chart, or drawing. Label it and include a brief explanation.
<i>Discuss</i>	Investigate and examine by argument giving the reasons for and against. Present a point of view - this will require both description and interpretation. Your opinion must be supported by carefully chosen authoritative evidence.
<i>Enumerate</i>	List the main ideas in point form.
<i>Evaluate</i>	Make an appraisal of the worth of something. Give the opinion of leading practitioners in the field of the truth or importance of the concept. Include the advantages and disadvantages. You may also include your opinion.
<i>Explain</i>	Interpret the facts; your main focus should be on the “why” or “how” with the aim of clarifying reasons, causes and effects. Do not just describe or summarise.
<i>Illustrate</i>	Use a figure, diagram or example (comparisons or analogies) to explain or make clear.
<i>Interpret</i>	Explore and clarify the meaning using examples and personal comment.
<i>Justify</i>	Give a statement of why you think it is so. Give reasons for your statement or conclusion.
<i>List</i>	Give a concise numbered list of words, sentences, or comments. Same as enumerate.
<i>Outline</i>	Give a general summary/description containing the main ideas supported by secondary ideas. Omit minor details.
<i>Prove</i>	Show by argument or logic that it is true. Establish certainty by evaluating and citing experimental evidence or by logical reasoning.
<i>Relate</i>	Show the connections and how one causes, or is like, another.
<i>Review</i>	Examine the subject critically. Analyse and comment briefly in an organised sequence on the major points.
<i>State</i>	Express the main points in brief and narrative form. Omit details or examples.
<i>Summarise</i>	Give a concise account of the main points. Omit details and examples.
<i>Trace</i>	Give the development, process or history of an event or idea.

Thinking critically

Critical thinking is a process, not an outcome. It involves a continual questioning of assumptions (facts taken for granted without proof) - both your own assumptions and those you might read or hear. You do this by:

- Identifying the underlying assumption
- Examining its accuracy and validity
- Asking probing questions
- Casting aside old assumptions
- Being aware of the context of time and culture, and
- Imagining and exploring alternatives.

In other words, critical thinking is thinking about your learning and demonstrating that thinking to your reader/lecturer/marker. Evidence of critical thinking will be reflected in higher marks for your assignments.



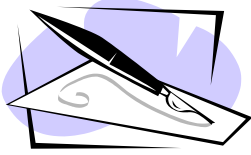
Activity 2

Give yourself a score out of eight from the list of traits below. Ask yourself, *do* I think critically, or should you say, *can* I think critically? (Circle the number beside the traits you recognise in your thinking.)

You are likely to think critically if you are:

1. intellectually curious, want to know the truth
2. objective, look at evidence rather than responding emotionally
3. open-minded, willing to look at all sides of an issue
4. flexible, willing to change your position if evidence warrants it
5. intellectually sceptical, accept arguments only if they are logical
6. intellectually honest, accept evidence even if it contradicts your beliefs
7. systematic, pursue each argument to its logical conclusion, and
8. respect others' viewpoints, willing to admit you are wrong

Ref: O'Shea, R. (1997). *Writing for psychology* (2nd ed.). Sydney: Harcourt Brace.



Activity 3

What are some *critical questions* you might ask yourself about the assignment question you analysed above?

Discuss the suggestion that students must possess a wide range of skills to succeed at tertiary study.



Check page 24 for suggested response.

Reading and note-taking

Having analysed your question you can now begin your research. If you have any problems finding material in the Library, then ring a librarian on 1800 808 369 (Free call).

A brief chat with a University librarian may save you hours. You might also like to improve your researching skills by working through a series of Web-based tutorials InfoSkills@CSU, available on the Library's website.

A few simple guidelines will help you with the reading and note taking process:

- Understanding
- Writing, and
- Remembering.

Some steps to try are:

1. Scan for the main ideas and to increase interest.
2. If the material is relevant read in full. Read with a purpose in mind, using highlighting sparingly to indicate the most important points.
3. Now take brief notes, preferably in your own words.
4. Be a critical thinker. Ask yourself questions such as:
 - What is the main idea?
 - What are the supporting ideas?
 - How do these ideas compare with those in other texts?
 - Is the text biased/narrow?
 - Are there any key quotations? Don't forget to record full bibliographical details for later use.

Here are some practical tips which will also help you:

- Aim to take notes on one side of your page only. This has the advantage that you can spread out your notes and see what you have.
- For essays/ assignments you need to record the title of the book, author, publisher, place and date of publication in your notes.
- In the case of a journal article, you need to record the following details in your notes: the author and title of the article; date of publication; page numbers of the article; name, volume and issue number of the journal.
- Highlighting and underlining are valuable strategies, making you focus your attention on the text, think about key concepts and issues, and leave a trace on the page of the sense you have been making of the text.
- Use of colour, arrows, and boxes makes your work distinctive. If your notes are distinctive they will be more easily recalled to the mind's eye.
- Make it a habit to read your lecture/module notes the same day you take them. Perhaps rewrite lecture notes in a more legible form. Early reinforcement is important to learning. *The most important thing about your notes is that you re-visit them on a regular basis.*

Organise your notes from the first day of your course. Use folders, workbooks or other filing systems. Make sure notes are clear and easy to follow. It's amazing how this can help you recall information.

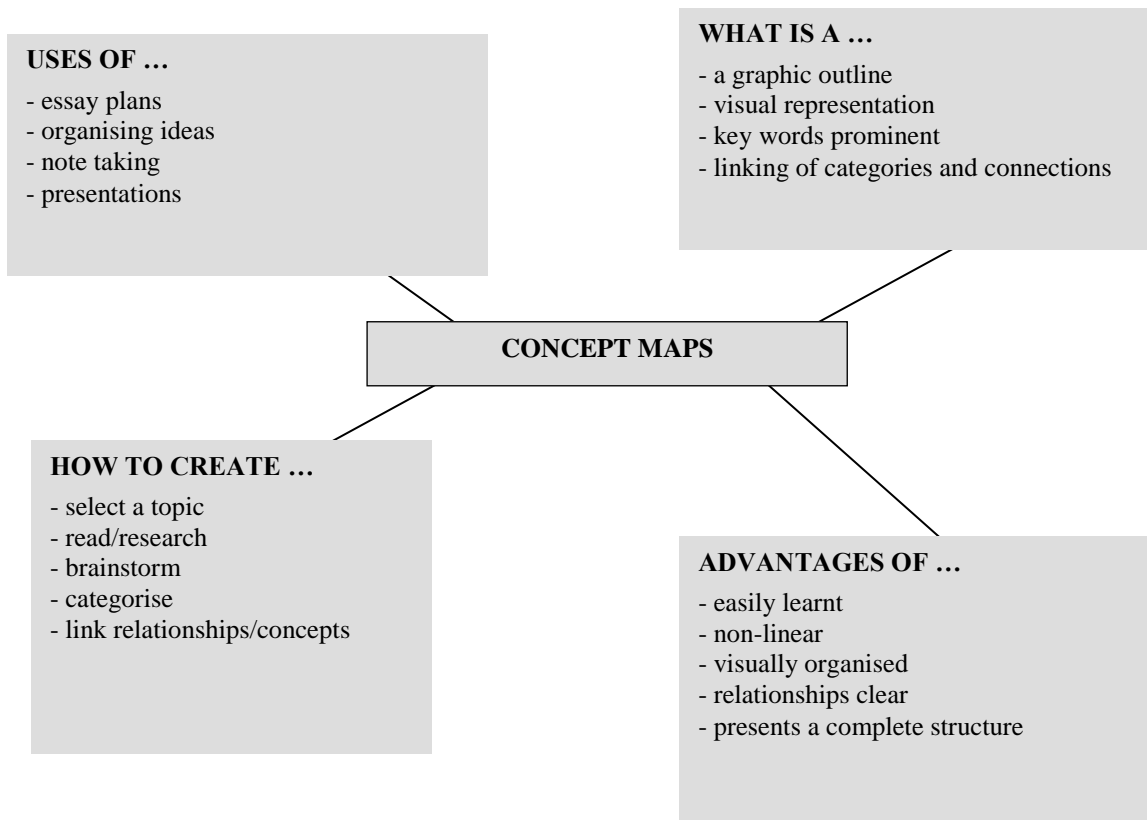
There is not necessarily one best way to take notes. The approach you take depends on:

- the kind of text you are working with;
- your purpose in writing the notes;
- the amount of time it is reasonable to invest in this task; and
- your preferred patterns of learning.

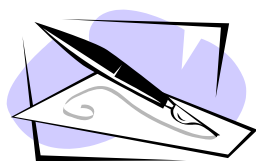
Linear note-taking is most frequently used, with main headings and subheadings appearing down the page. Sections are often indented and numbered. You are most probably using this system now.

Concept mapping, also known as *mind mapping* or *patterned note taking*, is an alternative method of note taking which presents the same information in the form of a visual map. This format lends itself to the use of colour, space and imagination. Some believe this aids learning and memory.

Here is an example, using *concept maps* as the central thought:

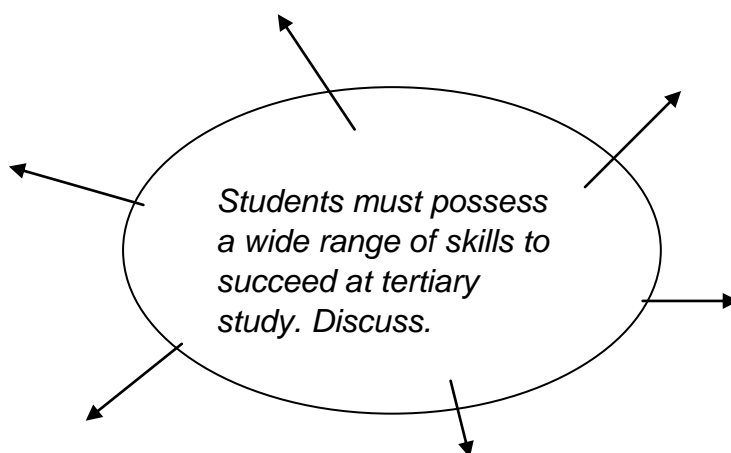


Adapted from Williams, L. V. (1983). *Teaching for the two-sided mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster.



Activity 4

Quickly brainstorm some ideas for your essay question in the form of a concept map.



Check page 24 for suggested response.

Creating a logically structured argument

Step 1: Analyse your question thoroughly

Essays can range from simple descriptive tasks to those requiring complex lines of argument. Some essay questions provide a logical structure for you to follow within the question itself. This is often seen in a lengthy assignment question, so don't be anxious, because much of the logic and planning has been done for you.

Look at the following question from the School of Public Health:

Describe the process of homeostasis of the human organism by applying this concept to a specific physiological process.

The question could finish here leaving you to decide on your content and structure. However, the question went on to provide the following directions:

- a) *List one process (for example, body temperature), and define normal physiological ranges maintained by the body.*
- b) *Identify the components of the homeostatic process for the example selected, and explain how these physiological processes interact to ensure that a normal state is maintained.*
- c) *Provide one example of a pathological condition that can disrupt normal homeostasis in this case.*
- d) *Describe failure of the regulatory process by applying the concept of positive feedback, and explain the consequences of such a failure.*

While the question is considerably longer, note how much *additional* direction has been given.

Other essay questions, however, require that you create your own logical structure. You need to decide what you are going to include, why and where. The following question is a good example of this.

Discuss the suggestion that students must possess a wide range of skills to succeed at tertiary study.

The task word *discuss* signals to you that the reader is looking for a logical discussion based on a line of argument – called a thesis statement.

Step 2: Decide on a thesis statement – a clear line of argument or discussion.

Thesis statements are not always required for undergraduate essays, but developing one can be a useful step in the development of your paper.

The homeostasis question above requires a structured answer but you are not asked to argue your viewpoint. The tertiary study question does, however, require that you hold a view. Do students really need to possess a wide range of skills? There will be differing viewpoints.

A thesis statement expresses your viewpoint, and may indicate the line of argument that will follow. You might agree, disagree or perhaps qualify your argument in some way so that it agrees with part of the question. Your thesis statement drives your essay. It helps you decide what to include, why, and the order of inclusion.

The thesis statement and the topic sentences (opening sentence for each paragraph) provide the *framework* for your paper.

For the *writer*, the thesis statement:

- Serves as a planning tool.
- Helps the writer determine the paper's real focus and clarify the relationships between ideas.
- Becomes a hook on which the writer can "hang" the sub-theses or the topic sentences that present evidence in support of the argument.
- Anticipates questions about the topic and provides the unifying thread between pieces of information.

For the *reader*, the thesis statement:

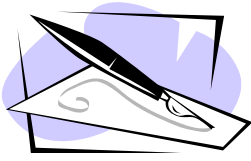
- Serves as a "map" to follow through the paper.
- Prepares the reader to read.
- Keeps the reader focused on the argument
- Helps the reader spot the main ideas.
- Engages the reader in the argument.
- Offers enough detail for your reader to grasp your argument.

Thus, a thesis statement

- Makes an argumentative assertion about a topic; it states the conclusions that you have reached about your topic.
- Makes a promise to the reader about the scope, purpose, and direction of your paper.
- Is focused and specific enough to be "proven" within the boundaries of your paper.
- Is generally located near the end of the introduction; sometimes, in a long paper, the thesis will be expressed in several sentences or in an entire paragraph.
- Identifies the relationship between the pieces of evidence that you are using to support your argument.

Source: [The Writing Center, The University of Wisconsin - Madison](#)

Thesis statements generally grow out of a consideration of many points of view/pieces of research. Thesis statements can develop and evolve at any point in the research, planning and writing of your essay. At all stages of your work, take care to remain open to the "many points of view" you will read about. Your thesis statement may not reach its final form until you are at the end of your research.



Activity 5

Write down an acceptable thesis statement (in one sentence) in response to this question.

Discuss the suggestion that students must possess a wide range of skills to succeed at tertiary study.



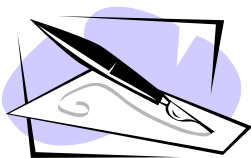
Check page 25 for suggested response.

You can see from the list of possible thesis statements (on p. 25) that the content of the essays will differ, driven by the line of argument suggested by each thesis statement.

Let's look at one line of argument with respect to the above question. If you believe that students *must* possess a wide range of skills to succeed at tertiary study, then the paragraphs that follow your introduction will support this. Do not ignore opposing views: acknowledge them but show how your thinking counters the opposing line(s) of thought. In your Introduction you must outline the line of argument that you will follow in your paper. There is no benefit to having the reader guessing until the finale – your conclusion. Do not forget that your paper is but one of the many papers your marker has to read.

Step 3: Plan your response before you write.

Assume your earlier concept map represents the results of “extensive” research. If you started writing your essay as soon as you completed your research, the structure is likely to be disjointed and hard to follow. To write an essay on the tertiary study assignment question you would first have to organise your points, deciding which points to include and why. As they stand now, the points may all be relevant but you will need to decide whether some points can be grouped or categorised, and also in what order you might want to discuss them.



Activity 6

Look again at your response to **Activity 4**. How might the points in the concept map be grouped (or placed into categories)?



Check page 25 for suggested response.

Your thesis statement will help you determine what points you want to address first. You now have a plan. A disjointed essay is usually the sign of a lack of planning.

Step 4: Guide your reader through your essay

The points identified in your plan will now be expanded into paragraphs, which need to be clearly signposted. In fact the reader should be able to read your introduction, and then the first sentence in each paragraph, to gain a good overview of your essay.

The first sentence of each paragraph (often referred to as the topic sentence) is most important. These sentences hold your essay together, relating the paragraphs to your thesis and letting the reader know what point you are making and why. These important sentences frequently contain a signpost, sometimes called transitional words or phrases, and they help guide the reader through your essay.

There are a number of common signposts used within an essay (see page 18 below). The following website also contains more transitional words and phrases which will give you plenty of opportunity for stylistic variation in your paper:

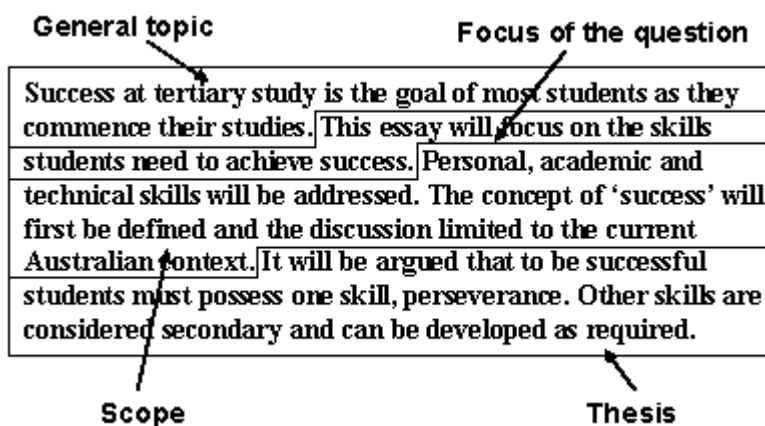
[Using Transitions](#)

Step 5: The most important paragraph

The introduction to your essay is your most important paragraph. It contains your analysis of the question, the points you are going to cover and your thesis. A good introduction includes these elements:

1. Start by identifying the *general topic*
2. Identify the *focus* of your essay
3. Identify the scope – the points you will be covering and note any limitations (not word count)
4. Finish by identifying your thesis.

Look at the following introduction for the “success at tertiary study” question:



Note that the term “most students” was used, not “all students”. Beware of making absolute statements that you cannot substantiate, although it could be argued that success is the *goal* of all students depending on their definition of success. In this case the introduction will differ.

Note also that success wasn’t defined in the introduction but that a definition discussion was signalled. It can be appropriate to include a simple definition in an introduction but the introduction is not the place for a definition debate. This would occur in paragraph two.

Common signposts

To introduce an additional idea	Furthermore Moreover In addition Equally Again Additionally Equally
To introduce an opposite idea	On the other hand However In contrast Conversely Nonetheless Although Notwithstanding Albeit
To introduce a choice or alternative	Otherwise Alternatively Also In the same way Similarly Likewise
To concede a point	Admittedly After all Also true, however
To introduce an example	For example For instance
To introduce a conclusion or summary	In conclusion In summary To conclude To summarise Therefore

To indicate cause and effect	As a result Consequently Accordingly Hence
To indicate chronological order	First, ... Next, last, finally First of all After that Since then
To indicate order of importance	First, second, ... Above all The most important
Other sentence starters	It can be seen that Studies suggest It tends to be the case It would seem

Following academic convention: referencing



Activity 7

Can you work out the four errors in this sentence?

In my opinion Smiths analysis was spot on.



Check page 25 for suggested response.

Notice that one of the errors in the sentence had to do with the correct way to acknowledge a reference to someone else's written work. It is important as an academic writer to understand:

WHY you reference, because it will enable you to better know

HOW to reference in-text and end-of-text, and

CHECK if you are correct.

Why to reference

- To respect and acknowledge the work of others
- To give credibility to your work
- To allow the reader to read further on a particular point you have made
- To follow academic convention.

Failing to acknowledge another author's work is called *plagiarism*. This is the act of taking and using another author's work as one's own. Where this occurs it is regarded as cheating and is dealt with under the disciplinary provisions of the University.

How to reference

CSU uses APA Style for referencing, and students need a copy of the [APA Referencing Summary: a CSU guide](#) which is available from the Learning Skills website.

The acknowledgement of the work of others has two essential aspects:

1. Citing references in text
2. The References list at the end of your paper

In text referencing is acknowledgement of the work of others within the text of your essay or piece of writing. Material that must be referenced includes:

- *Direct quotations*: this means you take the exact words from your source and enclose within inverted commas. Your in-text reference includes the surname of the author, year of publication and page number.
- *Paraphrasing*: this means you use your own words to express ideas taken from another source. Your reference must include the surname of the author, and year of publication. When paraphrasing material inclusion of the page number is not required, but is encouraged.

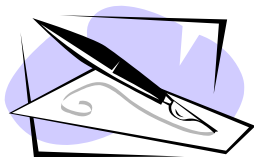
The reference list is the list of sources you used in your essay or other piece of writing and is included at the end of your assignment.

- A *references list* includes only those works you actually cited (used) in the text with a few exceptions, such as personal communications. Entries are listed alphabetically by author.
- A *bibliography* includes sources you cited *and* sources you used to generate your ideas but did not actually cite.

Most CSU subjects require a reference list but not usually a bibliography.

Some general guidelines

- Where possible acknowledge the author by name.
- Where possible acknowledge the original source.
- As a rule of thumb, to check if you are correct, ask yourself if the reader can locate the source you have used.
- Be consistent.



Activity 8

Circle the correct response.

1. Referencing is important because it
 - (a) Acknowledges the work of others
 - (b) Allows the reader to follow up your source
 - (c) Gives your work credibility
 - (d) All of the above
2. Your essay needs to include
 - (a) Only your own ideas
 - (b) Lots of direct quotations
 - (c) A mix of direct quotations and paraphrases
3. An in-text reference to a direct quotation must have the following
 - (a) The author's surname and date of publication
 - (b) The author's initial, surname and date of publication
 - (c) The author's surname, date of publication and page number
4. A paraphrase is
 - (a) Written in your own words
 - (b) Enclosed in inverted commas
 - (c) Less valued than direct quotations
5. The list of references includes
 - (a) Every source you have read for the essay
 - (b) Only those sources you actually cited in your essay
6. The university guide to referencing is available
 - (a) On the Student Services website
 - (b) On the Library website
 - (c) Both of the above



Check page 26 for suggested response.

In-text referencing

In-text referencing is used to acknowledge both *direct quotations* and material that you have *paraphrased*. You should ask your teacher to advise you on the balance of quoted and paraphrased material that is recommended within your discipline.

- Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing allows you to demonstrate that you understand what you have read and that you can apply this knowledge. Good paraphrasing can contribute to the smooth flow of your essay. When paraphrasing the work of others you must still acknowledge the original source.

Examples:

Smith (1994, p. 52) believes that scholarship is more important than inspiration when preparing good assignments.

It has been said that scholarship is more important than inspiration when preparing good assignments (Smith, 1994, p. 52).

- Direct Quoting

Bate and Sharpe (1996, p. 41) make the important point that “quotations are misused when over used”. They go on to say that over reliance on direct quotations might suggest that the writer really does not know the material well enough to express the concepts in his/her own words. It is noted that there are times when it is neither possible nor appropriate to re-phrase material for which other words will not suffice.

In some disciplines, however, more lengthy quotations are allowed, because the original words, which the student is expected to analyse and discuss, matter a great deal.

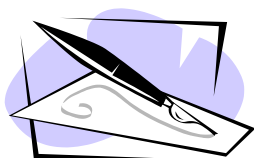
When quoting directly you should always use the exact wording and punctuation contained in the original work. If you decide to omit some of the words in the middle of a longer quotation, as they are not necessary, an ellipsis (three spaced periods . . .) should be used. If you wish to insert some of your own words, usually only one or two, into a direct quotation to maintain the flow of your essay or clarify a point, place square brackets around your own words.

Quotations of 40 words or more should be indented about 1cm from the left margin, and double spaced. Quotation marks are not required in this case, and italics are not used. At the end of a block quotation, cite the quoted source and the page or paragraph number in parentheses after the final punctuation mark.

Examples:

“In general, high scoring assignments are ones that . . . demonstrate a high degree of scholarship, not a high degree of inspiration” (Smith, 1997, p. 52).

Smith (1997, p. 52) notes that lecturers agree on what constitutes a good assignment. He states that “In general, high scoring assignments [credits+] are ones that . . . demonstrate a high degree of scholarship, not a high degree of inspiration.”



Activity 9

Recognising in-text referencing

Note the highlighted references in the following paragraphs and answer the questions at the end.

Toms believes that “success at tertiary study is influenced by many factors”. He explains that educators are keen to determine what those factors might be with a view to better equip students new to tertiary study with the skills necessary to face the challenges ahead of them. Consequently, considerable research has been done in this area to discover factors common to the successful student (Smart, 2000). At one time there was a school of thought that “believed that only those students with UAIs of 80+ were likely to finish their degree” (Black, cited in Red, 2000, p. 10). Such researchers believed that innate ability was more important than the skills one might possess in order to succeed. However, White found in his study of first year students at the University of Self Discipline found that “50% of those students who successfully completed their degree had TERs of 80 or less” (n.d., p. 6). This lead other researchers (Jones et al., 1998) to believe that factors other than a high UAI account for success at university.

1. What is wrong with the reference to Toms in this exercise?

2. Is the reference to Toms’ material a direct quotation or a paraphrase?

3. Is the second reference a direct quotation or a paraphrase?

4. Should the reference to Smart’s work have a page number?

5. Who made the statement in the third reference?

6. Where will the reader find the words that are quoted from Black?

7. Would Black or Red be noted in your list of references?

8. What does n.d. mean in the reference to White's work?

9. What does Jones et al. mean? When would you use et al.?



Check page 26 for suggested response.

The References list

The references list appears at the end of your paper, starting on a new page. It should look like the example below. Notice that the second line is right-indented 1 cm to form a hanging indent.

References

- Anderson, J., & Poole, M. (2001). *Assignment and thesis writing* (4th ed.). Milton: John Wiley & Sons.
- Barrass, R. (2002a). *Scientists must write: A guide to better writing for scientists, engineers and students* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
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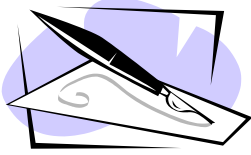
There must also be a direct link between your in-text reference and your end-of-text reference. That link is the first word you use and should be the same in both in-text and end-of-text. This is usually the author's surname, but sometimes it is the name of an organisation or the title of a work.

The [APA Referencing Summary-CSU guide to referencing](#) shows you how to set out your reference if, for example:

- there is more than one author
- there is no author but editors, revisers, or translators
- there is no publication date given
- the work is unpublished
- your source is not the first edition
- your book is part of a series

Some of the many sources you might reference are:

- Books
- Chapters in books
- Brochures
- Pamphlets
- Periodicals/journals
- Newspaper articles
- Articles or chapters in an edited book
- Intermediate sources
- Reports
- Theses
- Encyclopaedia articles
- Published proceedings , conferences etc
- Maps
- Databases, video recordings, kits and of course your
- DE package and, last but not least, the
- Internet referring to emails, forums, newsgroups, www sites, electronic journals etc.



Activity 10

Practising in-text and end-of-text referencing

Task: You are writing the essay in which you are asked to discuss the following statement:

Discuss the suggestion that students must possess a wide range of skills to succeed at tertiary study.

For the purpose of this exercise imagine that you have researched the question thoroughly and have come to the conclusion that you agree with the statement. One piece of research you came across was quite interesting. It challenged the importance of skills over innate ability. You photocopied a section of this research (see below) from page 6 out of a book by Janice Jones entitled *Skills for Success* published in 1999, by Tryhard Press of Sydney. Here is Jones' text:

Success at tertiary study is influenced by many factors. Educators are keen to determine what those factors might be with a view to better equip students new to tertiary study with the skills necessary to face the challenges ahead of them. As such there is considerable research into this area in an attempt to discover factors common to the successful student. There was a school of thought that believed that only those students with UAI's of 80+ were likely to finish their degree. Such researchers believed that innate ability was more important than the skills one might possess in order to succeed. However, a study of first year students at the University of Self Discipline found that 50% of those students who successfully completed their degree had UAI's of 80 or less. This led researchers to believe that factors other than a high UAI account for success at university. This opened up a new area of research in the field of tertiary study. xx

1. Write an example of a **direct quotation** using the above research. Do not forget to include your *in-text* citation.
2. Write an example of a **paraphrase** using the above research. Again do not forget to reference your work.
3. Write the *end of text* reference as it would appear in your **References** list. You might like to consult the quick guide supplied above.



Check page 27 for suggested response.

Answers to activities



Activity 1

Did your analysis look something like this?

Topic: Skills for success in tertiary study

Focus: Students must possess these skills to be successful

Task: Discuss

Limitations: 1500 words. Note you are not restricted to time and place.



Activity 3

Did your questions look something like this?

What does *success* mean?

“Must possess” implies that students arrive with a set of prerequisite skills. Is this true?

Does success mean the same to all students?

Do all courses require the same set of skills?

Do today’s students need the same skills as yesterday’s students?

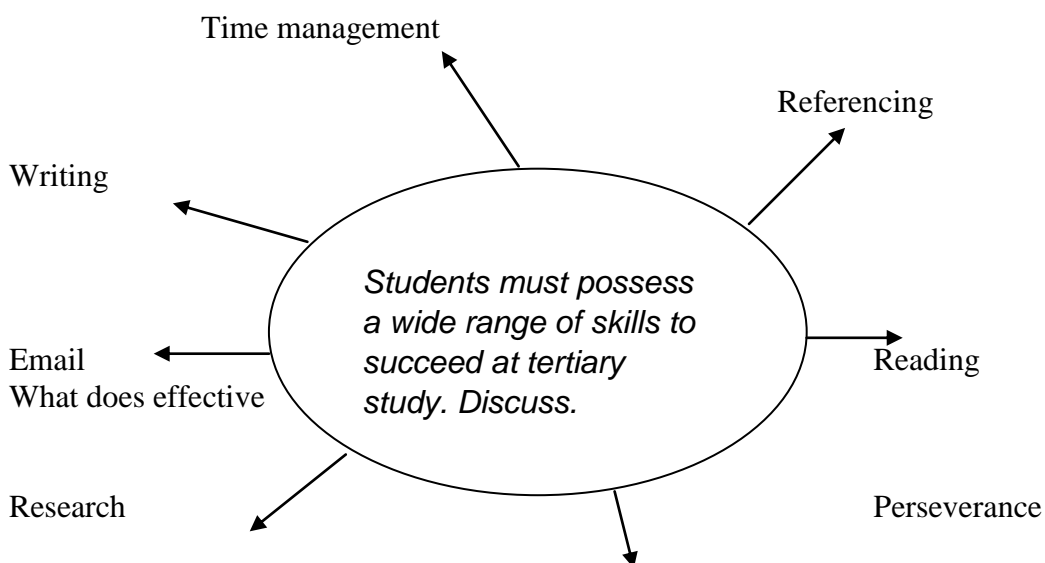
Do students need a range of skills?

Are all skills equally important?



Activity 4

Did you get something like this?





Activity 5

Did your thesis statement look something like any of the below?

- Students need a range of skills to succeed at tertiary study.
 - To succeed at tertiary study students do not need a range of skills but one key skill.
 - To succeed at tertiary study students first year students need different skills to those required by later year students.
 - The skills needed to succeed at tertiary study vary from individual to individual.
 - The skills needed to succeed at tertiary study vary from course to course.
 - Students do not have to possess a range of skills but need to be able to develop their skills in order to succeed at tertiary study.
-



Activity 6

Personal skills

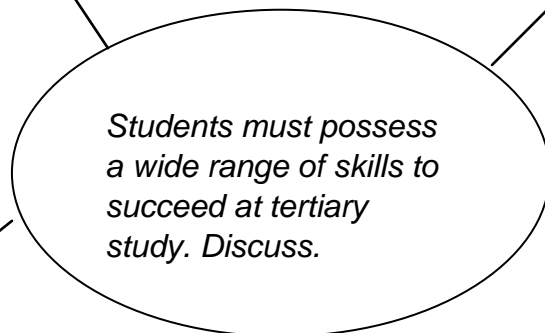
Time management
Perseverance

Academic skills

Referencing
Reading
Writing
Research

Technical skills

Word processing
Email



Activity 7

1. *In my opinion* – is not necessary, your essay is your opinion (based on your research). Also you need to avoid the use of first person *I, me, my, us, we*.
2. *Smiths* – needs an apostrophe before the “s” (Smith’s)
3. *was spot on* – avoid colloquial expressions
4. There is no reference.

This sentence would be better expressed in the following way:

Smith's analysis (2003, p. 20) was accurate.



Activity 8

d c c a b c



Activity 9

1. What is wrong with the reference to Toms in this exercise?

The date and page number are not given.

2. Is the reference to Toms' material a direct quotation or a paraphrase?

A direct quotation

3. Is the second reference a direct quotation or a paraphrase?

A paraphrase

4. Should the reference to Smart's work have a page number?

In this case inclusion of the page number is not required, but is encouraged.

5. Who made the statement in the third reference?

Black

6. Where will the reader find the words that are quoted from Black?

In Red's publication of 2000.

7. Would Black or Red be noted in your list of references?

Red

8. What does n.d. mean in the reference to White's work?

No date is available

9. What does Jones et al. mean? When would you use et al.?

This is short for the Latin et alii, "And others". Use this expression when you have three or more authors. (Remember to put the stop after "al.", because it is an abbreviation.)



Activity 10

1. Jones (1999, p. 6) states that “success at tertiary study is influenced by many factors.”

or

“Success at tertiary study is influenced by many factors” (Jones, 1999, p. 6).

2. Jones (1999, p. 6) believes that success at tertiary level cannot be attributed to one single factor.

or

Success at tertiary level cannot be attributed to one single factor (Jones, 1999, p. 6).

3. Jones, J. (1999). *Skills for success*. Sydney: Tryhard Press.
