



Workbook
Study Techniques



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Instructions

1. This workbook provides you with lots of knowledge covering the unit you are studying. To help you to understand this knowledge, be active in your learning. You can do this in many ways:
 - Read the information, then re-read and use a highlighter to pick out key points
 - Complete all the highly recommended activities; these will help you to develop your understanding as well as summarise information
 - Complete the glossary of key terms at the back of the workbook either as you go along or at the end as a revision task
 - If possible, supplement your knowledge by using a textbook or some of the Useful References at the end of the workbook
 - Try to complete all or some of the think deeper activities. These are extra activities to expand your knowledge and develop your interests. You will need to have a separate notebook or use an electronic file to record your notes and thoughts
2. Some areas of knowledge are difficult to grasp; you might get disheartened, but don't! Just ask for help. Talk to other students or your assessor/tutor; they are there to help you.
3. Web links and other resources featured in this workbook are suggestions only to support the delivery of this qualification and should be implemented at the centre's discretion. The hyperlinks provided were live at the time this workbook was last reviewed. Please kindly notify Ascentis if you find a link that is no longer active.
Please note: Ascentis is not responsible for the content of third-party websites and, whilst we check external links regularly, the owners of these sites may remove or amend these documents or web pages at any time.

Key



Activity

These activities are highly recommended. There is space in the workbook for you to record your answers.



Think deeper

These activities will expand your learning. They are optional, and it is suggested that you record your answers in a separate notebook or electronic file.



1. Planning

Assessment Criteria

- 1.1 Write an outline plan for a task/assignment relating to a specific topic/subject.
- 1.2 Identify possible sources for use in the task/assignment.
- 1.3 Extract relevant information from the source material.

In this section you will learn about planning assignments and tasks. You will have the opportunity to try out different planning and note-taking techniques.

a) Creating an outline

i) Working independently or in a group

Getting started on a task or assignment is often the most difficult part of the process. Knowing where and how to start is always a challenge, but if you follow the guidance below the process should become a little easier.

You will need to find out whether you can complete the task/assignment on your own or if a group effort is needed. Some tasks/assignments have specific requirements that you must follow, e.g. a group presentation.

Look at the following examples:

Example 1: Compare and contrast the types of muscle within the human body, giving examples to support your answer.

Example 2: Provide a multimedia presentation to your peer group explaining the different types of muscle within the human body.

Example 1 would be best achieved in a standard essay style, working independently. Example 2 would best be achieved in a group as there are a number of different aspects to planning a multimedia presentation.

If we now expand on Example 2 and plan to provide that multimedia presentation, we can outline how to plan an assignment.

Break the task down into sections, deciding who will be responsible for each task and in what timescale each task needs to be completed.



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3.

4.

5.

6.



There are a number of planning questions that need to be answered, and it is often easiest to write these down as a master plan on a single piece of paper as follows:

Immediate	First week	Second week	Third week	Prior to deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide task • Assign individuals to tasks • Decide which multimedia resources to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research topic • Meet up to pool knowledge and plan delivery • Plan content 	Write content in multimedia formats, e.g. film video or write PowerPoint presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet to discuss any problems • Present work to group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise presentation • Make amendments • Present in front of peers for feedback

The plan above is a template only, and you will be able to add your own details into it, but the structure is the same regardless of the task:

- **Timeline** – allows the task to be broken down into a number of different stages to ensure all of the work is completed on time.
- **Division of labour** – gives everyone in the group a task they are responsible for.
- **Regular meetings** – allows, for early identification of problems with any aspect of the task.
- **Practice run** – essential to the successful delivery of a presentation of any type.
- **Feedback** – here you have the opportunity to present your work in front of an audience, who will be able to critique your work and help identify aspects that may require improvement in time for you to adjust the presentation for the final audience.

Feedback is an essential part of improving performance. It is an important skill to be able to give feedback and also to be able to use feedback about your own work and convert that into positive changes to your work.

If you need to complete a task/assignment independently, you can follow similar steps, such as knowing your timeline, taking advantage of any opportunities to discuss your work with your tutor and leaving enough time to draft and proofread your work before the final deadline.

ii) Command words

To successfully create a plan for an assignment or task, you must know the meaning of 'command words'. Command words such as summarise, identify and describe, evaluate tell you how you need to answer a question or assignment.



Activity

Use the internet to look up command words (for exams and assignments) and complete the table below. There are lots of common command words. Include three additional words to the table that would be most useful to you in your own studies.

Command word	Meaning
Analyse	
Assess	
Compare and contrast	
Critically examine	
Define	
Describe	
Discuss	
Evaluate	

....continued



...continued

Select two of the command words above and write two questions for subjects you are studying, for example: Describe the role of the Crown Prosecution Service.

1.

2.

iii) Planning techniques

There are many different ways to plan a task or assignment. It is important to try different methods and find the ones that you like the best.

Assignment templates help you to organise your material and information. They also follow writing conventions that are expected in the subject. For example, in scientific subjects there are conventions and expectations regarding the way to report on, or 'write up', an experiment. An assignment template is a document that you may be given by your tutor. It will provide you with a structure – for instance, a structure for outlining an essay: introduction, theme 1, theme 2, conclusion.



Activity

The table below identifies different planning techniques. Use books, the internet and your friends on the course to complete the table below. You can add examples of your own.

Planning technique	Brief description	Example
Hierarchy concept map	Concept maps help to organise information; they involve placing concepts in a hierarchy and show the relationship and links between ideas.	History may include concept maps to explore power. The map will start broadly with the concept of power, which may be broken down into the power of a) the church b) the king c) politicians, then further concepts below each of these.
Interpreting the requirements of the question		Breaking down an exam question to check understanding and planning to cover everything required.
Mind maps and spider diagrams		
Flow charts		

...continued



...continued

Paragraph topics		Useful for essays and reports. Plan the main theme of each paragraph, e.g. an English literature question: Use two of Shakespeare's plays to examine how the theme of love is conveyed.
Linear notes		



Think deeper

Practise using two of the planning tools listed in this section. This task will help you select the best format for the information you are dealing with and help you to practise different techniques. Try to use two contrasting tools such as mind maps and linear notes. You can choose material you have studied in the last two weeks and change it into different formats. Alternatively, find an article in a book or on the internet; for example, go to the BBC news website, select an article and recreate the information in two different formats. Make your own notes.



Think deeper

Find out what Tony Buzan has contributed to the development of thinking and planning skills. Have a look at his work and summarise three to four useful points. Make your own notes. Use the internet to see the range of books Tony Buzan has written.

b) Researching sources

Sources of Information

One of the first stages in answering a question or undertaking an assignment is to research the subject matter the assignment is asking about. Research is a way of collecting relevant information from a number of different places. These different places are called sources.

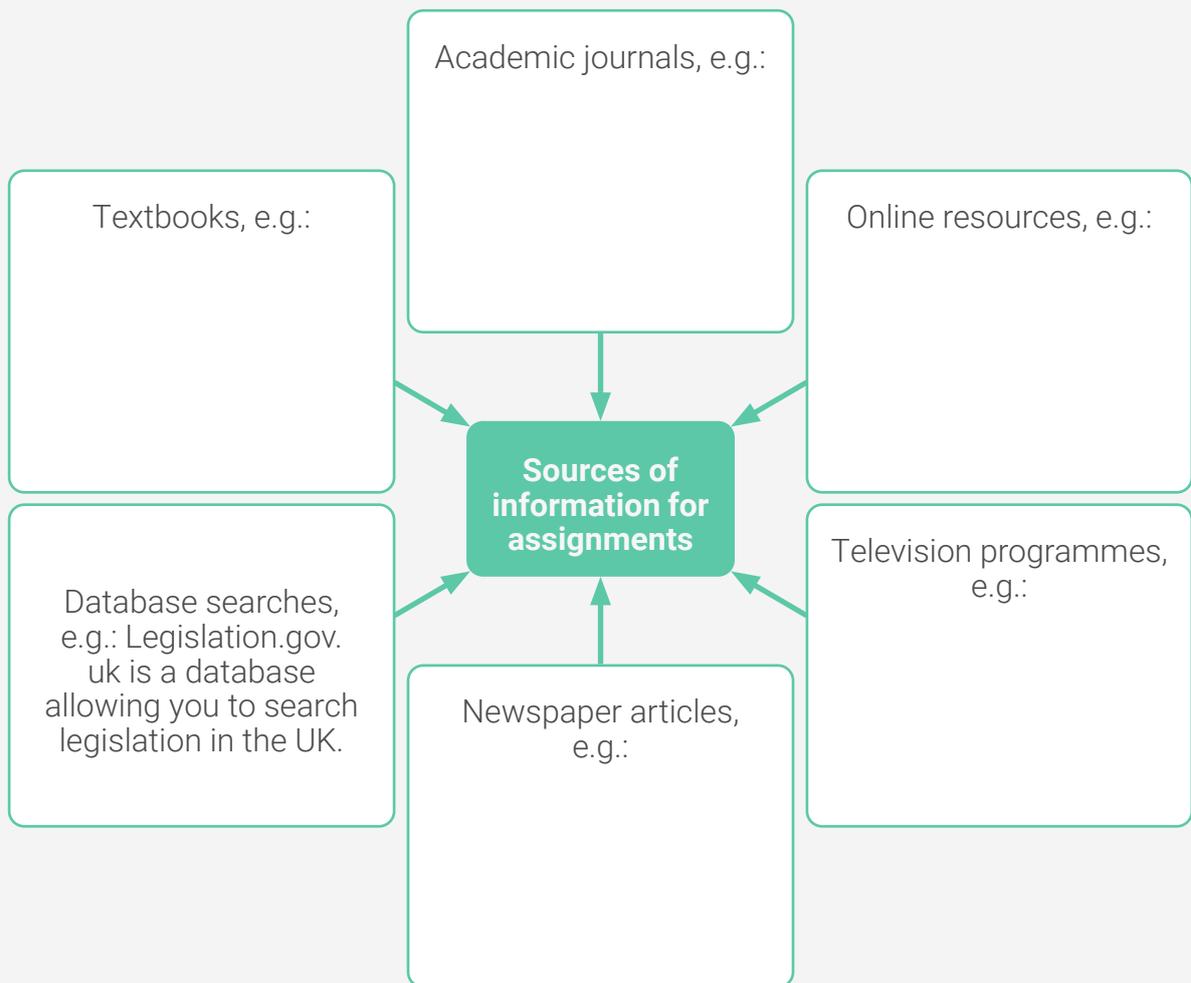
You will be able to identify sources in a range of ways, including:

- Course reading lists
- Course handout reference lists
- Book and journal abstracts
- Book summaries



Activity

The mind map below shows that source material can come in many different forms. For each type of source material, find an example that relates to your studies and identify it on the diagram below. One example has been completed for you.





Activity

Select three topics from the topics listed below. For each topic, identify two useful sources of information. Be as specific as you can. For example: Topic – UK population trends; Source 1 – Internet, Office for National Statistics; Source 2 – Book, The Population of the UK by Danny Dorling, published by the University of Oxford, UK, 2012.

Choose three topics from the list below:

Child development: language development	Equality and diversity in health care	The Periodic Table
Mental health and wellbeing	Political parties	Shakespeare's Macbeth

Answers

Topic 1:

Source 1:

Source 2:

Topic 2:

...continued



....continued

Source 1:

Source 2:

Topic 3:

Source 1:

Source 2:

Later in this workbook we will examine how to correctly refer to the sources of information that you use; in this workbook, we have called this 'acknowledging sources'.



c) Extracting relevant information

i) Using source material

When you have identified the source material that you want to use, you then have to go through a number of stages to allow you to convert that source material into information relevant to your assignment.

The following stages are required to successfully utilise source materials. These stages are known as reading purposes:

- Understand the meaning of the text you are reading.
 - You will find many sources of information, and not all of them will be relevant to the question you are trying to answer; the skill here is to sift through the large amount of information on a fairly superficial level, keeping only source material that is directly relevant to your assignment.
 - Extract parts of the source material that are relevant to your assignment. Read the source material you have selected more closely and pick out the parts that are relevant. This takes practice and patience.
- Understand the way in which the author has presented their ideas or information.
 - What background is the writer coming from (e.g. academic writing, opinion piece, own experience)? Which side of an argument is the writer coming from?
 - What kind of language does the writer use? Is the writing easy or difficult to follow and read. Are the writer's arguments clear?

All of these factors can be used to deepen your understanding of any piece of writing you are reading and can help to quickly determine whether or not the information is going to be useful for your assignment.



Activity

Being able to use relevant material from sources is a skill, and all skills require practice. Choose one of the following (of at least one page of A4): a) an article that you have been given on your course OR b) an article in a book, journal, magazine or newspaper that links to one of the subjects you are studying.

Use the space below to extract useful information from the source you have selected.

Insert the name of the topic you have chosen:

It is useful to keep track of the details or reference for the source you are using. To help you look for accurate details, answer the following questions for the source you have selected (e.g. website, journal, book).

What is the name of the author or organisation that wrote the text?

What is the article title?

What is the name of the website/journal/book the article was published in?

...continued



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When was the article published? If a website, when was the site last updated and when did you access the source?

What is the publishing company?

Use one of the planning tools, such as linear notes or a spider diagram, to extract relevant information for your topic.

ii) Reading skills

Researching any area takes time, and, as indicated above, there is often a lot of source material that needs to be looked at before a definitive list of sources can be decided upon.

It is important for the researcher to develop the skills to help them get through a large volume of material as efficiently as possible. The most important aspect of reading is to decide exactly why you are reading the texts and what you are looking for. The following is a list of methods that can be used to speed up reading:

- **Skimming** – looking over an entire text quickly without reading in detail, allowing you to quickly pick up the overall theme of a text (often used when reading through a large amount of material at the beginning of an assignment).



- **Scanning** – reading the text looking for any key words or phrases related to the subject you are interested in (used when you have a list of sources that appear relevant at first glance to help pick out the most relevant for more detailed assessment).
- **Detailed reading** – reading the text thoroughly and making notes (used for exam preparation or for essay writing).

Using these methods to improve the efficiency of your reading allows you to cover a large volume of source material in a much shorter space of time. By using the methods together, you can understand, sort and analyse a large amount of information.

Skim the whole text

Move your eyes over the text but don't actively read it. Ask the following questions as you skim:

- How many pages are in this particular source?
- How is the source material presented? Are there diagrams/tables?
- Is the source material organised into headings?
- Is there a summary or conclusion that will allow me to understand the main idea of the source?

Scan headings or subheadings

Locating these elements, reading them and then writing them down helps you to organise the content of the source material and assess its relevance.

Scan important paragraphs and sentences

Look specifically for key words or phrases related to your assignment/essay. Here you can highlight areas of the source material that are relevant and decide if you need to/have time to read in more detail.

Detailed reading of important paragraphs and sentences

When you are reading a source in detail, you can take notes for use in assignments and also keep an organised list of references you will use so you can avoid plagiarising someone else's work.

Analysing bias

During the reading of many sources, you will be able to get an impression of what an author is trying to say and whether their argument is leaning towards one opinion or another. This is called the bias of the source material. Academic writing in the form of textbooks, for example, is designed to be free from bias, but that is not always the case in other forms of writing.



For example, think about the possible bias in the following source material:

- Academic paper written in the Journal of Muscle Research and Cell Motility
- Title: 'Improved skeletal muscle strength and endurance using muscle-enhancing medication Zirtop'
- Research funded by pharmaceutical company producing Zirtop
- Methods – comparison of skeletal muscle function in athletes using Zirtop versus placebo
- Results – better skeletal muscle function after using Zirtop when compared to placebo

This is one example, but it shows that when reading any source material, it is important to ask:

- Who is writing the material?
- Why are they writing it?
- What does the study show in terms of methods and results?
- Who benefits from the results/opinions of the source material?

If you can answer all of these questions and keep them in the back of your mind, you can make sure you are aware of any bias and take this into account when using the source material in your work.



Think deeper

If these reading techniques are new to you or you would like some more practice, go to the Useful references section and try some of the suggested websites (e.g. the BBC or one of the university websites listed) to find out more.



Activity

Read the text below to practise the different reading skills outlined in this section. First, **skim** the text for the organisation. Then, **scan** for important paragraphs and sentences, as well as key words and phrases. Finally, do a **detailed reading** of the text, making notes of the message, purpose, and conclusions. Type your findings in the spaces below the text.

From small to large and back to small again: micro and small businesses

In the early stages of their lives, all businesses are small, although that is sometimes hard to imagine. For example, Honda, Facebook and Amazon are all very large businesses now but started as very small ones. Simon Marx, the founder of Marks and Spencer started his business career by standing in the street with a tray of items to sell, while Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple, started manufacturing in his parents' garage. We don't have to go very far back in history to get to a time when almost all businesses were small and large ones barely existed—other than banks, mines, breweries, big farms on country estates and not many more. Most other businesses were either individual people practising their trade or small family enterprises.

The early historical context

It was not until the 18th century that the Industrial Revolution got under way and the new factory system required large-scale investment and large workforces. By the 19th century, large manufacturing businesses were commonplace and a dominant feature of many cities, while over the next 100 years they were joined as large-scale employers by many other industries such as retailers, insurers, railways, and many more. There were numerous reasons for this trend towards larger businesses:

- Rapid economic growth, requiring continuous increases in production
- A pool of low-skilled and low-paid labour: many thousands of people moved from low-paid agricultural work and self-employment to the cities where the large employers were located
- Economies of scale: costs per unit of output decreasing with production volumes
- Increasing business size: competing businesses combined or bought competitors
- New capital-intensive industries such as mechanised textile manufacture, railways, and vehicle manufacture, required major investment and large-scale employment to operate
- Wartime production, in which many substantial contracts were awarded to large manufacturers which, in turn, placed large orders with suppliers, some of which also became large businesses

As a result of these trends, by the middle of the 20th century large businesses dominated the economies of the UK and many other countries.

The effects of global economic development

However, the 1970s saw the beginning of a change in the other direction, as other trends began to have the effect of reducing the average size of businesses. These included:

- The re-emergence of large manufacturers in countries whose industrial bases had been devastated in World War 2. For example, Japanese motorcycle manufacturers almost killed off the UK manufacturing industry, while Japanese, German and French car manufacturers gradually took over half of the UK market and increased their sales in many other regions.

...continued



....continued

- Global economic development, which enabled new industries to emerge as strong competitors in developing countries such as South Korea, whose shipbuilding, vehicle-building, and electronics industries took a lot of market share from UK businesses.
- Globalisation of business, whereby many larger businesses moved manufacturing from countries with high labour costs to lower-cost locations in developing countries.
- Increasing global competition, which has forced large businesses to reduce costs, such as employment costs which are among the most expensive cost categories for many businesses through reducing numbers, taking out levels of management, and other restructuring initiatives.

The combined effect of these trends was to greatly reduce the numbers of large businesses in the UK and the average sizes of those that remained. Many of the old industries that began or expanded rapidly during the Industrial Revolution had all but disappeared by 1990, and those that remained were much reduced in size.

Trends in self-employment

From the 1970s onwards, the number of new businesses that were created increased most years. This steadily increased the number of people who were self-employed or small employers, as well as the size of the UK business population. A few points to note:

- The big falls in self-employment during the world wars were due to self-employed people joining the armed forces or the businesses that manufactured military equipment and supplies.
- The other large falls in self-employment are due to periodic economic recessions.
- An important point to bear in mind is that recessions, even severe ones that result in substantial increases in unemployment, do not always cause reductions in self-employment because many people who find themselves unemployed decide to start a business. For example, the recession of 2008–12 did not cause a major decline in self-employment. One reason for this is the rise of the so-called gig economy, in which many people became self-employed as Uber drivers, Deliveroo riders or parcel delivery drivers for Hermes, Yodel, and other businesses.

As the historical context and more recent trends suggest, in every economy in the world, there are many more very small businesses than large ones.

Skimming

How is the article organised?

...continued



....continued

How many headings and subheadings are there? What are they?

Scanning

Which paragraphs present the most important information? Why are they important?

What are some of the key sentences, words, and phrases?

Detailed reading

What is the message of the text?

...continued



....continued

What is its purpose (e.g. inform or persuade readers)?

What are the conclusions of the text?

iii) Credibility of information sources

A credible source of information means that the source is trustworthy: it has integrity and is reliable. The opposite of a credible source is an untrustworthy, unbelievable source – information that is unlikely and/or not supported by evidence and is highly questionable.



Activity

Create a list of at least six points to help you decide on the credibility of a source (e.g. When was the research or book published? Is it still 'in date?').

To help you to complete this task, use the internet and search for 'evaluating sources for credibility'.

Deciding on the credibility of a source of information

1. When was the research or book published? Is it still 'in date'?
- 2.

...continued



....continued

3.

4.

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6.

7.

iv) Note-taking

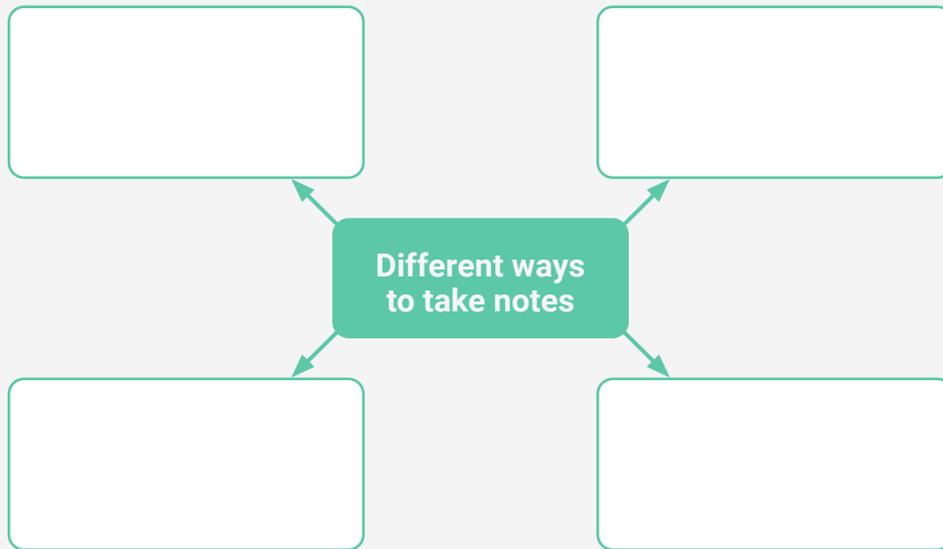
It is important to develop good note-taking skills. This takes time and practice. The activity below will introduce you to the different note-taking skills that you can use.



Activity

Use books or the internet to find out some of the different ways in which you can take notes.

- a) Create a mind map in the space below to help you remember different techniques.
- b) Evaluate the different note-taking techniques in the table below. Use the Useful References section to help you to get started.



Note-taking technique	Advantages	Disadvantages



Summary

In this section we have looked at a range of skills and techniques involved in planning an assignment: getting started, working independently or as a group, understanding command words, planning techniques, assessing credible sources of information, reading skills and note-taking. In the next section we will look at how to draft an assignment.



2. Drafting

Assessment Criteria

- 2.1 Use a format appropriate to the subject.
- 2.2 Provide evidence of source acknowledgement, if relevant.
- 2.3 Produce a final draft to fulfil the brief.

In this section you will learn about different formats for assignments. You will also be introduced to using a range of sources appropriately.

a) Using appropriate formats

As mentioned at the beginning of this workbook, the choice of format to complete an assignment is extremely important. It might be specified by your tutor or guided by the question being asked.

As with any academic work, the clue is always in the question. By reading through each question thoroughly you can pick out the important words that will guide your work.

Example 1

Compare and contrast the types of muscle within the human body **giving examples** to support your answer.

Example 2

Provide a **multimedia presentation** to your **peer group explaining** the different types of muscle within the human body.

The words highlighted in bold help you to understand what is required for each task. Example 1 is asking you to go into detail about the types of muscle in the body, giving examples, and this type of assignment lends itself well to a piece of essay writing. It could also be designed as an oral presentation.



Example 2 has specific instructions about the way the presentation is to be delivered, although it leaves the details of the type of multimedia resources to be used up to the student. The other very important piece of information in this task is the audience – peer group. This means you are going to have to keep the presentation at a level that is understandable to your peers.

In addition to essays and presentations, there are other formats to use, for example, reports, magazine articles, posters and video recordings.



Activity

For each of the scenarios below, suggest which of the following formats is the most appropriate for the assignment and why: report, magazine article, poster, video recording.

- 1. Assignment:** Describe two internet security systems and explain which system would best suit your work placement organisation and why. Provide your work placement mentor with a copy of your findings.

Format to use and why:

- 2. Assignment:** Identify and explain the stages of grief to a group of young adults. Include three examples of ways to access help.

Format to use and why:

...continued



Activity

3. Assignment: Carry out a mock interview for a job of your choice.

Format to use and why:

4. Assignment: Read two books from the list provided by your teacher. For each book, write a 300-word book review that will be used by your college's Learning Resource Centre.

Format to use and why:

Top tip

Always read the question thoroughly; all the information you will need to fulfil the task will be present in the question.

b) Acknowledging sources

i) Plagiarism

When source material has been read thoroughly, and the useful parts of that material are used in a task or assignment, it is very important that the work of others is not directly copied and passed off as your own work. This is called plagiarism and is not acceptable. Plagiarism is an extremely serious act of academic dishonesty.



The potential consequences of plagiarising someone else's work can be far-reaching. They include:

- Failing the assignment you have worked towards
- Having to redo the work
- Failing the course you are studying
- Losing your place at the academic institution in which you are studying
- Losing your job
- Being sued by the original author of the work under copyright laws

Plagiarism can be easily avoided by adequately referencing any source material that you use.



Think deeper

If you want to find out more about plagiarism, test your knowledge and think about different scenarios, try this online quiz: www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-quiz/. If possible, compare your answers with your peers on the course.

ii) Referencing

It is acceptable, however, to critically appraise someone else's work or to incorporate the work of others and use it to support your own argument. To do this, the source material must be clearly identified in your work and described in your reference list.

Depending on who you are writing the piece of work for, they will have rules on which type of referencing method they want you to use. One well-known example of a referencing style is Harvard Referencing. Harvard Referencing is frequently used in higher education and is, therefore, a useful skill to develop.

The Harvard system involves two parts: firstly, what is known as a citation in the text; secondly, a reference list. We will now look at what each of these mean.

Citation in the text: this is a clear but brief identification of the source being referred to, which you include within the text of your work. In Harvard Referencing, you must cite the name of the author(s) or editor(s) and the year of publication every time you paraphrase or summarise a source.



The citation can be placed:

In the beginning: Newman (2008) introduces the idea ...

In the middle: ... central to better life expectancy was an early diagnosis (Campbell, 2009), even though...

At the end: ... was the best measure of performance (Kennerley and Neely, 2003).

After a direct quote, you must add a page number in the citation: '...' (Newman, 2008, p. 21).

Reference list: this is an accurate list of all the references you have cited. The references include the full details of each source. This enables a reader to follow up these references and consult the original texts.

In the Harvard system, a reference list is provided at the end of your work, and details are organised alphabetically by the surname of the author or editor. Usually, sources are divided up into texts such as books and journals and websites are listed separately.

A **reference list** includes all works that have been referred to in the assignment.

A **bibliography** includes all the materials you have researched in order to complete your assignment, but you may not have cited them all. Quite often a bibliography is not required; therefore, it is necessary to check with your tutor what is expected for your assignment.

To see how the Harvard system works, we will look at how to refer to books, journals and the internet.

Books

In general, the following must be included in your list of references:

- Author – surname, initial
- Year of publication
- Title – article/chapter/section titles in regular type, and book/journal/website titles in italics
- Publication – edition (if not the first edition), city of publication (if available), publisher
- Page numbers – if referencing a chapter in a book, this is for the page range of the chapter

Example

In-text citation: Cottrell (2019), e.g. 'Cottrell (2019) believes good study skills ...'

In the reference list: Cottrell, S. (2019) *The Study Skills Handbook*. London: Macmillan International Higher Education.



Journals

In general, the following must be included in your list of references:

- Author of article – surname, initial(s)
- Year of publication
- Title of article
- Journal title
- Volume number (including issue number, if applicable)
- Page range

Example

In-text citation: Ellis (1984)

In the reference list: Ellis, D. (1984) 'The psychology of computer use', *Social Science Information Studies*, 4(4), pp. 326–327.

Websites

In general, the following must be included in your list of references:

- Author of section: surname, initial(s)/corporate author
- Year
- Title [Online]
- Name of website
- Available at: URL [Accessed date]

Example

In-text citation: Ashley Strickland (2021)

In the reference list: Ashley Strickland, C. (2021) The Perseverance rover is on its way to Mars. What's next? [Online]. CNN. Available at: www.cnn.com/2020/07/31/world/perseverance-rover-landing-mission-scn/index.html [Accessed 19 February 2021].



There are many different rules to follow **BUT** there is a lot of help available, including:

- College and university library staff, who are experts
- Your teachers, who will guide you on the process you need to follow
- Online reference guides, together with many examples; there are a few listed in the Useful references section at the end of this workbook.

As we have seen, the rules change slightly if you are referencing a book, journal or internet source.



Activity

For each of the questions below, decide what is missing or how the information could be improved. For example, in a Psychology essay, a study by Smith and Jones should also include the date when the work was published, i.e. 'Smith and Jones (2019)'. The full reference will appear in the bibliography.

Questions:

1. What is missing from this reference?

Cottrell S. The Study Skills Handbook (Macmillan Study Skills) Paperback

Answer:

2. What is missing from this reference?

Pears R. Shields G Cite Them Right: The Essential Referencing Guide 2019

Answer:

...continued



....continued

3. What is missing from the information presented below?

- In 2017 graduates were more likely to be employed than non-graduates.
- Non-graduates aged 21 to 30 have consistently higher unemployment rates than all other groups.
- 40% of graduates worked in the public administration, education and health industries.
- Graduates were more likely to work in high-skilled posts than non-graduates.
- Annual earnings for graduates are higher than for non-graduates and reach a peak at a later age.

Answer:

c) Producing a final draft

The planning phases have allowed you to do the following:

- Analyse the question and pick out all of the most important points
- Decide if you are going to work alone or in a group
- Decide on the format of your work and explain why you have chosen that format

Now you are ready to break the task/assignment down into component parts:

- **Introduction** – this section should set out your argument and/or key question/purpose of research
- **Paragraph headings** – these allow you to produce a logical progression in your argument/explanation



- **Discussion** – this section allows you to demonstrate your research into the subject and puts what you are saying into a wider context
- **Conclusion** – this is the final summary of your work and allows you to come full circle and relate the work you have produced to the original question asked
- **References** – a complete list of all source material used to avoid any suggestion of plagiarism

Decide how you are going to achieve each of your components or section headings. Your plan can be expanded from note form into a more detailed manuscript, and each section heading will now contain the following:

- Point to be made and evidence to support that point
- The flow of your key points and a logical order
- Information you still need to support your argument
- Any diagrams or charts you might need to illustrate your points

It is important to make sure your work has a logical progression of ideas. For example, if we use Example 2 from the beginning of this workbook, a logical presentation of those ideas could look like this:

Example 2

Provide a multimedia presentation to your peer group explaining the different types of muscle within the human body.

Introduction

- What is muscle?
- What functions do muscles perform?
- Basic structure of a muscle unit in diagram form

Muscle used for movement – skeletal muscle

- The structure of skeletal muscle
- Where is skeletal muscle found?



Muscle used for constant, repetitive movements – smooth and cardiac muscle

- The structure of cardiac muscle
- The structure of smooth muscle
- Where are these two types of muscle found?

What are the differences between these muscle types?

Why are there differences between these muscle types?

Conclusions

Summarise the presentation and reinforce why we have different types of muscle – this completes the logical circular argument.

What opinions have you drawn from the research you have performed?

References

Acknowledges the work of others that has contributed to your presentation.

Summary

In this section we have looked at different formats for assignments, the importance of acknowledging sources, plagiarism and planning how to draft an assignment. In the next section we will look at how to edit an assignment.



3. Drafting

Assessment Criteria

- 3.1** Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- 3.2** Check work for errors in language and style.
- 3.3** Check that all work is original or acknowledged.

In this section you will be introduced to the importance of using correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. You will have the opportunity to consider some techniques to help you produce your assignments to a good standard..

a) Using correct spelling, grammar and punctuation

It is important when writing an essay or any other piece of academic work that standard spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary are used. There are a number of rules for the writer to follow and these are summarised below:

i) Paragraphing

- A paragraph is a collection of sentences linked together by a common theme. Think of a paragraph as one idea within a bigger piece of work, each paragraph illustrating an individual part of an answer or argument.
- Paragraphs can be linked to one another by the use of a sentence at the end or beginning of the paragraph which leads from one idea to the next.

ii) Punctuation

In written material, it is the punctuation that allows the reader to fully understand the meaning of the writer's words. It allows the spoken language to be translated clearly onto the page.



The common conventions are as follows:

Punctuation	When to use	Example
Full stop ●	At the end of a sentence to denote the end of one idea and the beginning of the next. A capital letter should be used after a full stop to show that a new sentence has started.	There is a house in London which is 150 years old and measures 6ft at its widest point.
Comma ,	This allows for additional information to be included into a sentence and breaks up the sentence as the reader reads it.	Children are provided with meals at some nurseries, although this is not a national requirement.
Semicolon ;	This links two related parts or clauses that are of similar importance. The semicolon can be used to replace words like 'and' or 'but' to make the sentence more effective.	It is a cold frosty day; winter has nearly arrived.
Colon :	This can be used to indicate that a list follows the colon. Colons are used to announce, introduce or direct attention to a list, a quotation or an example/ explanation.	There are three types of joke: slapstick, one-liners and observational.

iii) Spelling

Dividing your work into paragraphs and adding punctuation improves your communication with the reader. Accurate spelling is another important communication tool that should not be underestimated.



Activity

You can use different techniques to check your spelling, grammar and punctuation. Complete the table below. You may wish to research ideas on the internet or discuss with peers on your course. The first example has been completed for you.

Different techniques to use to check your spelling, grammar and punctuation

Technique	Uses	Advantages	Disadvantages
IT spell checkers	IT software such as Word and some email packages have a speller checker that you can use. Misspelt words can be highlighted, and usually the software package will suggest alternatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Picks up many misspelt or mistyped words that can be quickly and easily corrected.• Helps to keep work professional and at a good standard.• If you lack confidence in spelling, an IT spell checker tool helps to overcome this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes words are spelt correctly but the wrong spelling has been used, e.g. weather might be used instead of whether.• Writers become reliant on the IT tool and do not learn to spell words correctly. Sometimes writers skip proofreading their work because they assume the IT package will have picked up the words that need correcting.

...continued



continued

Word processing packages, e.g. Word			
Dictionaries			

...continued



...continued

Peer reading			
Reading limited sections at a time			



Activity

Look at the misspelt words below and write the correct spelling next to each one. Be aware of any words that you find difficult to spell.

Misspelt Word	Correct Spelling
Absense	
Acheive	
Arguement	
Begining	
Buisness	
Definately	
Enviroment	
Finaly	
Futher	
Goverment	
Independant	
Knowlege	
Noticable	
Opertunity	
Prefered	

...continued



....continued

Misspelt Word	Correct Spelling
Recieve	
Recomend	
Therefor	
Tomorrow	
Unfortunetely	
Untill	
Wich	



Think deeper

If you want to improve your written work further, use the internet to search for more information. Many universities have useful study skills sites. Try using the following phrases in your internet research: improving spelling, grammar and punctuation; improving academic writing.

b) Proofreading, language and style

Using the correct spelling of words in essays and presentations is extremely important. It is also important to punctuate your work accurately, otherwise the meaning of your words may be misinterpreted. Correct spelling and grammar denote a degree of care in your work and allows your work to be read easily.

There are many spell-checking and grammar-checking programmes, such as those on Microsoft Word, and as long as these are set to standard UK English spelling, they should pick up most spelling errors.



In addition to these checks, you should also:

- Make sure that you have used the same style consistently throughout your work, e.g. all bulleted lists have a capital first letter and a full stop at the end, or a lower case first letter and no full stop at the end; the same font and text size has been used; section headers are formatted in the same way.
- Check your work very carefully for instances of slang, which should be removed.
- Check your work for any instances of informal words, e.g. contractions: use 'is not' instead of 'isn't'.
- Avoid using personal pronouns, e.g. 'I researched ...'; instead use 'Research was performed to find out ...'
- When using abbreviations, don't include full stops (e.g. 20 kg, BBC). For acronyms, spell the whole word/set of words in the first instance and put the abbreviation in brackets after (e.g. the Automobile Association (AA)), and then use the abbreviation in all subsequent instances ('According to the AA ...').

Top Tip

Re-read your work closely, even after the spell-checker has been used; it will not pick up all errors, such as writing 'from' in a sentence instead of 'form'.

Another excellent method of identifying mistakes is to have someone else read your writing or watch your presentation. They will not be as familiar with the work as you are and will be able to see if there are any areas that do not make sense or if the spelling/grammar is incorrect.

c) Checking references

The concept and consequences of plagiarism have been mentioned already in this workbook. It is your responsibility to ensure that the work you present is yours alone, and that any source material you have used is accurately referenced.

The referencing method will usually be specified by the person setting the assignment, but if it is not clear, then ask. Each time a source is used in your work, an annotation should be added to your text and the correct source material linked to that annotation in your reference list at the end of your work.

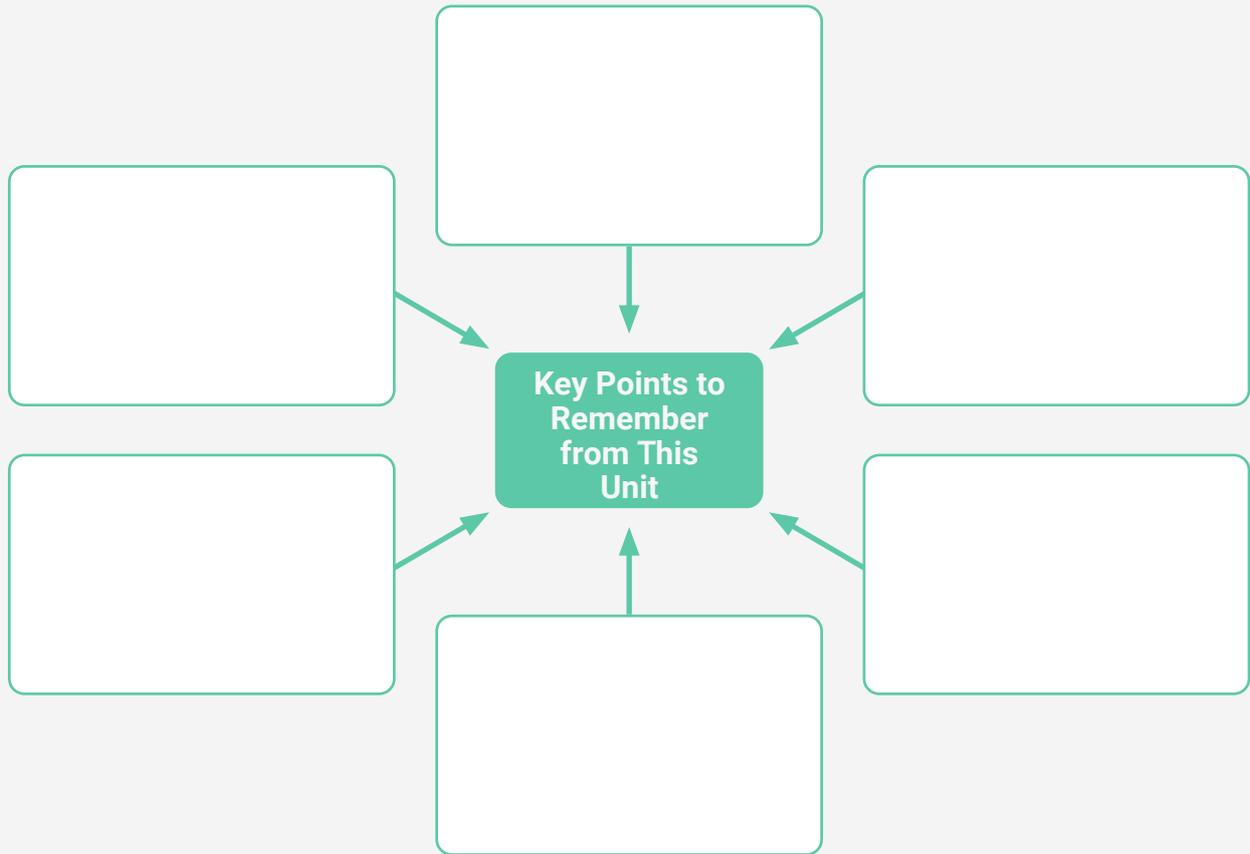
Top Tip

Do not assume your references will not be tested; many assessors will look through the reference lists and use your references to find the information you have used in your work.



Activity

Create a mind map in the space below showing at least six points you have learnt from this unit that will improve your study skills.



Summary

In this section we have looked at the importance of writing well, including paragraphing, spelling, grammar and punctuation. We have highlighted the value of checking assignments by proofreading and ensuring that references are completed accurately. In the final section of the workbook, there is a glossary of key terms for you to complete and a set of useful references.



Key terms

Instruction

This is a list of useful terms for the unit Academic Writing Skills. Use this workbook, books or the internet to find helpful definitions. Write out the definitions as you go through the workbook or at the end as a useful summary and check on your knowledge and understanding.

Acronyms

Bias

Bibliography

Command words

Credibility



Division of labour

Flow chart

Harvard Referencing

Lay person

Linear notes

Mind map



Multimedia presentation

Plagiarism

Reference List

Scanning (reading)

Skim reading

Slang



Useful references

Books

Buzan, T. (2013) *Mind map handbook*. London: Thorsons.

Cottrell, S. (2019) *The study skills handbook*. 5th ed. London: Red Globe Press / Macmillan International Higher Education.

Pears, R. and Shields, G.J. (2019) *Cite them right: the essential referencing guide*. London: Red Globe Press / Macmillan International Higher Education.

Websites

Mind maps and note-taking

warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/assessmentdesign/methods/6 – Useful explanation of hierarchy concept maps

www.biggerplate.com/mindmap-library – Examples of mind maps on topics such as business and education

www.oxfordlearning.com/5-effective-note-taking-methods/ – Note-taking methods

www.bbc.com/future/article/20191122-when-the-best-way-to-take-notes-is-by-hand – An article on note-taking

Reading techniques

www.bbc.co.uk/teach/skillswise/skimming-and-scanning/zd39f4j – A basic introduction to reading: skimming and scanning

www.sussex.ac.uk/skillshub/?id=334 – An example of a university's study skills support – skimming and scanning

www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/study-skills/everyday-skills/reading-techniques – Reading techniques

Referencing and plagiarism

www.plagiarism.org/ – Useful website covering the topic of plagiarism

www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-quiz/ – Online plagiarism quiz

www.canterbury.ac.uk/students/docs/study-skills/resource-1-Harvard-Referencing-Guide.pdf – A quick guide to Harvard Referencing



www.librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.html – Comprehensive guide to Harvard Referencing

Language

www.open.edu/openlearn/education-development/education/english-grammar-context/content-section-0?intro=1 – Free English grammar course by the Open University

www.lexico.com/grammar/common-misspellings – Commonly misspelt words with their correct spelling

Study skills

help.open.ac.uk/browse/study-skills/core-skills – Useful study skills information from the Open University

Material for download

www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/study-skills-guides – Useful study skills material on a range of topics

Workbook

Study Techniques



Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained within this learning material is accurate and reflects best practice. All information provided should be used as guidance only and adapted to reflect local practices and individual working environment protocols.

All legislation is correct at the time of printing, but it is liable to change, (please ensure when referencing legislation that you are working from the most recent edition/amendment).

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