

ES1103

English for Academic Purposes



TUTORIAL 3 (PART B)

Centre for English Language Communication

Course Coordinator:
Dr Abdel Halim Sykes



The Essay Writing Process (2)

Tutorial Learning Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, you should be better able to:

- derive an essay outline from the essay prompt
- search for appropriate sources of information
- plan the structure of an essay

Introduction

As you saw in Tutorial 3 (Part A), the writing process does not begin with sitting at a keyboard and thinking about what to write. You saw how important it is to analyse and understand the prompt that guides the essay or other kinds of academic paper. Also, you were shown how essential it is for a piece of writing to be anchored around a well-constructed thesis.

In this tutorial, we will build upon and proceed from these steps in the essay writing process by focusing on how to gather and organise information from different sources, and by planning the most appropriate structure before putting words onto a page.

Steps in Writing an Essay

Previously, we identified six steps in the writing process. Tutorial 3 (Part A) focused on the first two steps. In this tutorial, we consider the remaining steps in the writing process. By making it a habit to follow these steps, you will be on your way to producing well-planned and well-written academic papers.

Key Steps in Writing an Essay

1. Interpreting the prompt

2. Planning the overall structure and constructing a working thesis

3. Searching for sources and constructing a sources grid

4. Planning the structure in detail: paragraphs (planning the citations) and progression across paragraphs. Aligning the scope, the paragraphs and the conclusion.

5. Drafting the introduction, the main paragraphs and the conclusion

6. Revising

Step 3: Searching for Sources and Constructing a Sources Grid

After determining what is required of the prompt and formulating a working thesis, the next step is to do some research and make sense of the information you collect from your reading.

Researching your Essay

The keywords in the essay prompt should give you some ideas for **keyword searches**. Although **Google** seems like a good place to start, consider also other sources of information such as **Google Scholar** and the **NUS library**, which have a huge resource of journals and research articles.

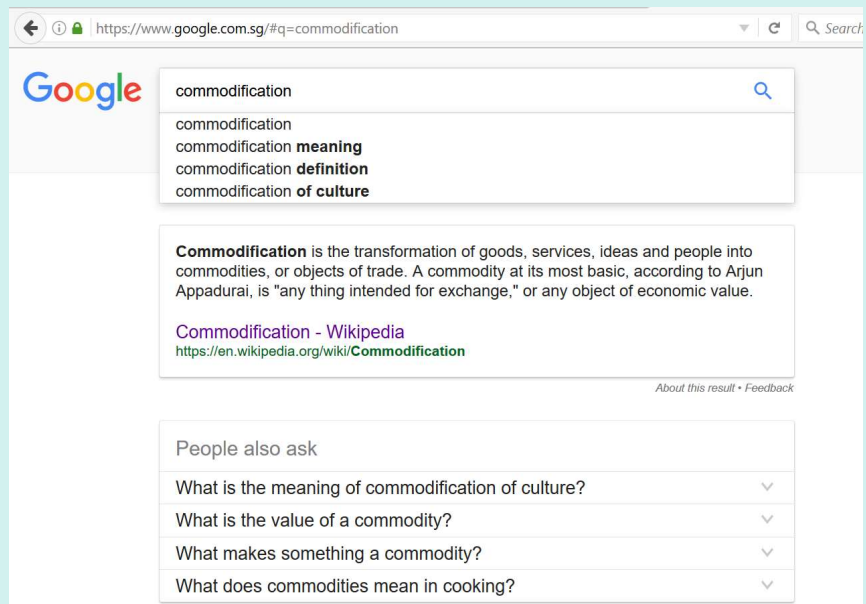
It is not necessary to read every source listed in the search results because it is very time-consuming. Instead, **quickly scan through the search results** and click on items that seem **credible**, such as those from **reputable** publications and websites.



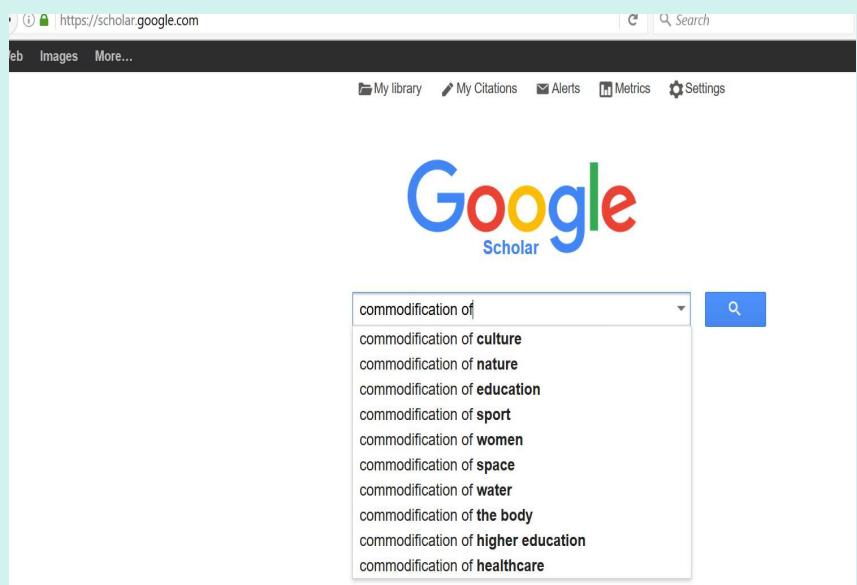
Google Scholar is more reliable and will provide better support for your essay than a Google search.

Compare these sample pages for an online search on the term 'commodification'. What differences do you notice between the Google and Google Scholar pages?

A **Google** search on 'commodification' makes these suggestions.



A **Google Scholar** search on 'commodification' makes these suggestions.



A Google search on 'commodification of culture' makes these suggestions.

https://www.google.com.sg/#q=commodification+of+culture

Commodification - Wikipedia
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commodification> ▼
 Jump to **Cultural commodification** - Commodification is the transformation of goods, services, ideas and people into commodities, or objects of trade. A commodity at its most basic, according to Arjun Appadurai, is "any thing intended for exchange," or any object of economic value.

Commodification - Tourism: Good or Bad?
tourismandculture.weebly.com/commodification.html ▼
Commodification. The dictionary definition of commodification is to make something into an object for commercial use. In terms of tourism, **commodification** refers to using a place's **culture** and the **cultural** artifacts to make a large enough profit to support part of the area's economy (Fiaux).

Cultural Commodification and Its Consequences in the Neoliberal ...
future-nonstop.org/c/ad9db1b8be23006e19e17520c542d298 ▼
 Namely, this **commodification of culture** has particular purpose – to exchange former mechanisms of social coherence or order into the new realm under the ...

[PDF] Commodification and Culture - MODUL University Vienna
<https://www.modul.ac.at/uploads/files/Theses/.../Thesis-2012-Proeschel-Natascha.pdf> ▼
 by N Pröschel - **Related articles**
 means of bringing economic and **cultural** aspects together in a united framework ... **commodification**, as consumers seem to approve of adapting **culture**.

A Google Scholar search on 'commodification of culture' makes these suggestions.

https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=commodification+of+culture&hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C58oq=comm

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☒ include patents ☒ include citations ☐ Create alert

[PDF] Commodification and Culture [\[PDF\] modul.ac.at](https://www.modul.ac.at)
 N Pröschel - modul.ac.at
 Abstract In this paper it is proposed that our highly **commodified** society can in fact provide a means of bringing economic and cultural aspects together in a united framework without allowing **culture** to be purely commercialised. As today's prosperity and quality of life can be

(De) commodification, consumer culture, and moral economy
 A Sayer - Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 2003 - epd.sagepub.com
 Abstract In this paper I attempt to develop understanding of **commodification** and consumption by relating ideas from the moral philosophy of Adam Smith and Alasdair MacIntyre to recent research on consumer **culture** by Pierre Bourdieu and Daniel Miller. I
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Copyright, commodification, and culture: Locating the public domain [\[PDF\] juliecohen.com](https://www.juliecohen.com)
 JE Cohen - 2006 - papers.ssrn.com
 Abstract: The relationship between increased **commodification** and the public domain in copyright law is the subject of considerable controversy, both political and theoretical. The paper argues that beliefs about what legal definition the public domain requires depend
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Market boundaries and the commodification of culture [\[PDF\] russellkeat.net](https://www.russellkeat.net)
 R Keat - Culture and economy after the cultural turn, 1999 - books.google.com
 Both in Britain and elsewhere over the past twenty years, governments have implemented radical programmes of institutional change imposing market or quasi-market principles and forms of organization into a wide range of social institutions and practices which had
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[BOOK] The socialness of things: essays on the socio-semiotics of objects
 SH Riggins - 1994 - books.google.com
 ... 173 Part II The built environment and the political ecology of artifacts.... 201 Rob Shields
 The logic of the mall.... 203 Adolf Ehrentraut The ideological **commodification of culture**:
 Architectural heritage and domestic tourism in Japan.... 231 Page 8. ...
 Cited by 86 Related articles All 2 versions Cite Save More

Task 1

- Do a **Google** search for *social media effects*.
- Do a **Google Scholar** search for *social media effects*.
- What do you notice about the two search pages?
- How are the two search pages different?
- Which search page is better as a source of information for an academic paper?

Searching for and Evaluating Sources

It is essential for you to be extremely discerning in your choice of sources. This means scanning through the search results and selecting sources that seem credible, then evaluating how suitable and useful they might be for inclusion in your writing.

However, to be selective in your choice of sources requires making careful and informed decisions about what you read. These are skills that take time to master.

So, let's consider some ways to identify and choose appropriate sources for good academic writing. First, view a very useful video via the link given below.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyMT08mD7Ds>

Now that you have a useful set of criteria to help in your choice of sources, try to apply it to a range of sources of information.

Task 2

Consider the following list of sources.

- How reliable is each of these sources of information?
- Categorise them according to the table below.

a research report

a forum page

a wiki

an academic journal

a book

a personal blog

a newspaper article

a government report

a professional journal

a discussion board

Reliable sources	Potentially reliable	Unreliable sources

It is essential that you **read sources critically**. One key skill in the selection of sources is to identify and determine whether a potential source is **presenting facts** or **offering opinions**. Always consider **how much evidence** a source provides to support the statements that are made.

Task 3

Read each of the following statements and decide which information is **fact** and which is **opinion**.

1. ASEAN has ten member states and Timor Leste is likely to become the eleventh.
2. Paris, the most romantic city in the world, is the capital of France.
3. China's land mass is larger than India's.
4. Cancer can take many forms and affects people of all ages.
5. Experts say house prices will rise by 12%.
6. The English Channel, which separates Britain from France, is 20.3 miles wide at the narrowest point.
7. Video games are popular with teenagers and lead to violent behaviour.
8. Gandhi led India's independence movement and was loved by all.
9. The best Olympics were held in Beijing.

Grouping Information

Once you have selected relevant information from credible sources, you need to make sense of all the information you have. There are several ways to do this. The key is to **organise** the information in a way that is **clear** and **logical** to both you and your readers.



Let's consider three of the most common and most effective techniques for grouping information in preparation for including it in an essay.

Graphic organisers are effective techniques for arranging information. The best method is to prepare a graphic organiser so that you have the key points from each source in the form of a table or graph.

Synthesis Grid

A **synthesis grid** allows you to enter information and evidence into a **table** which you can quickly scan to **identify initial relationships** between the information from different sources.

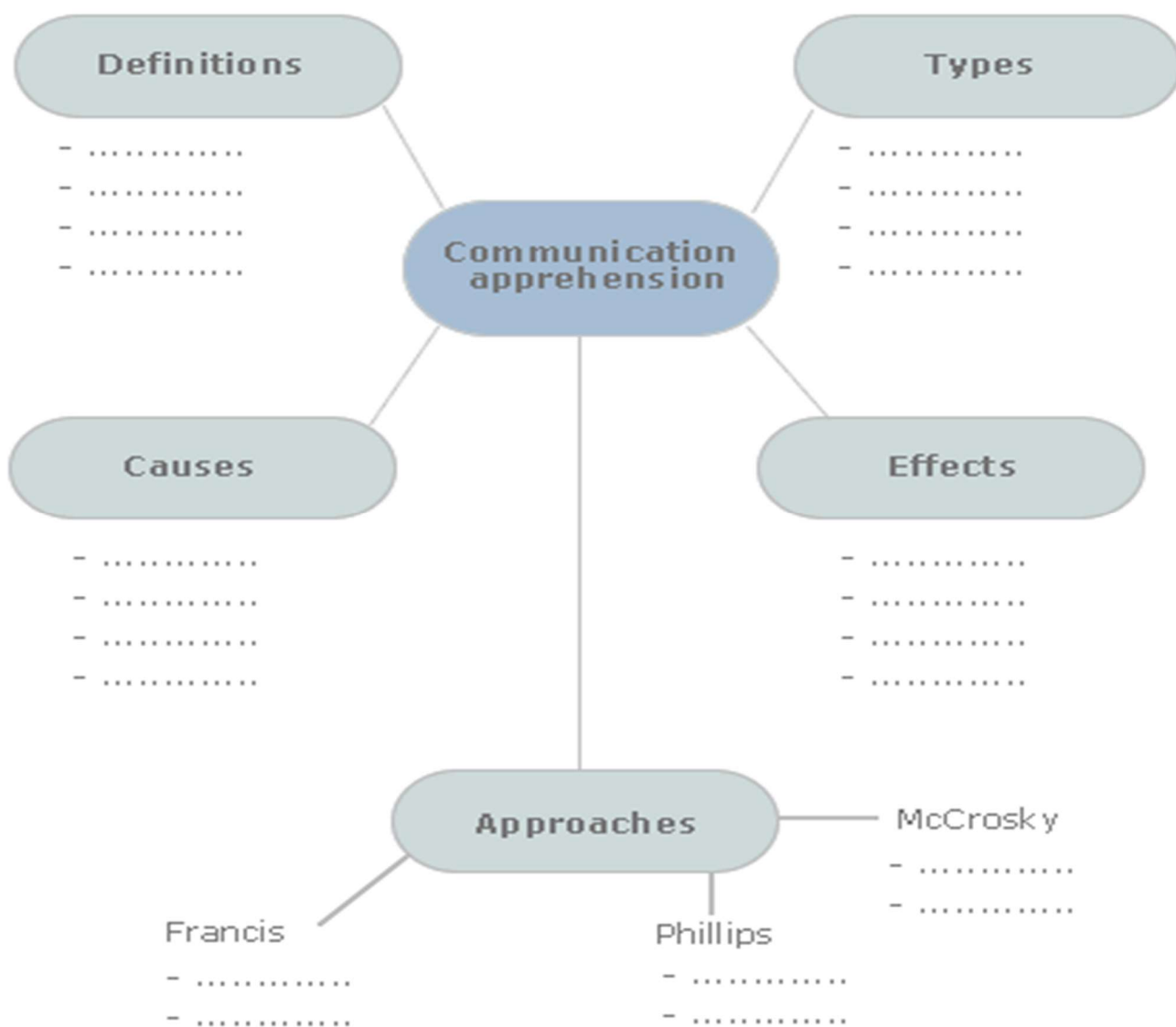
The synthesis grid below shows the categories of information selected to take notes for an essay. The prompt is on the causes of 'communication apprehension' and its impact on individuals.

Source	Definitions of communication apprehension	Types of communication apprehension	Causes of communication apprehension	Effect on individual	Useful quotes & page no.
Source A					
Source B					
Source C					
Source D					
Source E					

https://writesite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/m3/m3u1/m3u1s3/m3u1s3_2_popa.htm

Mind Map

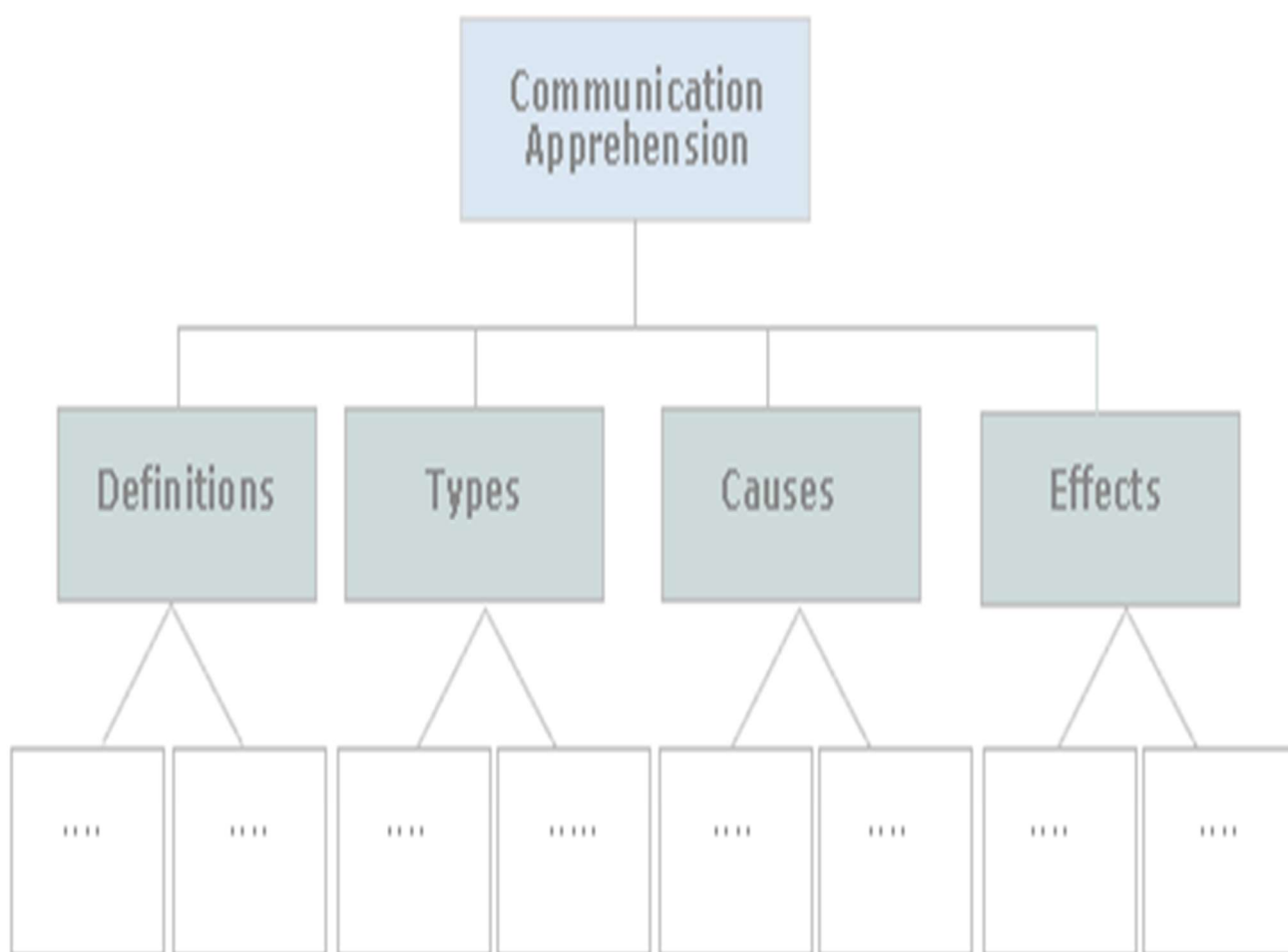
A **mind map** allows you to record information and evidence in a more free-flowing way by positioning your prompt or topic in the centre and drawing lines radiating out into points and sub-points or arguments and sub-arguments.



https://writesite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/m3/m3u1/m3u1s3/m3u1s3_2_popb.htm

Concept Map

A **concept map** allows you not only to record relevant information and evidence, but also to **organise it hierarchically**, beginning with the more **general** concepts at the top and working down to the more **specific** concepts at the bottom.



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Task 4

Consider these questions.

- Which of the suggested ways of organising information (synthesis grid, mind map, concept map) do you think is better for you?
- Can you suggest some other ways to group information from the sources you have gathered?

You will see from the three techniques for organising information from sources that they **provide you with a structure** around which you can build your essay. Having a lot of information is not sufficient to ensure the writing is of an acceptable academic standard. You must **show your understanding** of the source material by grouping it in such a way that it is **clear, logical** and **purposeful** in meeting the requirements of the essay prompt.



Step 4: Planning the Structure in Detail

In Step 1-3, by reading and analysing the prompt, constructing a working thesis, and selecting and organising appropriate sources, you should already have a rough idea of the main parts of your essay.

However, after gathering additional sources and fine-tuning the thesis, the initial rough structure may change. It is at this point that you should plan the overall structure of the essay in more detail.

Analysing the Prompt

Remember that by reading and analysing the prompt, you should have a general idea of the main sections of your essay. So, let's remind ourselves of the essay prompt for ES1103.

CA2 CA3, CA4, CA5 Problem-Solution Essay

Using your disciplinary content (or any other theme you choose), describe ONE specific problem connected with an issue of interest to you, explaining what, in your view, the problem is. Your problem should focus on a particular community or country. Where possible, evaluate one or more existing approaches which address your chosen problem and suggest one or more new or improved measures which may further mitigate it.

Allow the words in the prompt to suggest how the essay might be organised.

CA2 CA3, CA4, CA5 Problem-Solution Essay

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content words

instruction words

scoping words

Here’s one possible structure for the essay responding to the prompt above.

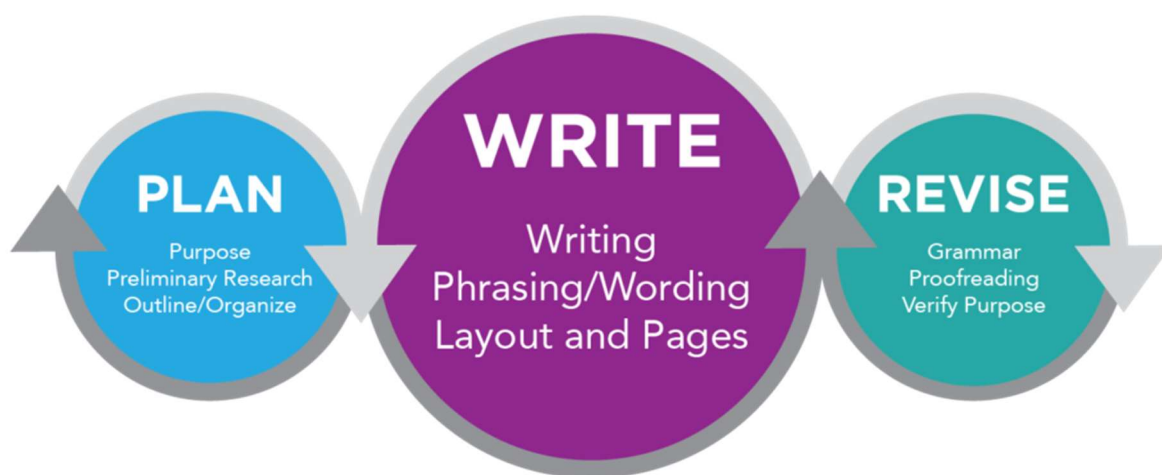
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Briefly describe a situation.• Identify a problem in the situation.• State the significance of the issue.• State your thesis.
Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the situation in detail by providing information about it.
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe a major problem in the situation.• Provide facts, figures and authoritative comments to establish the problem.
Measures+Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe specific measures addressing the problem.• Provide evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures.
Suggestion+Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggest a further measure or solution.• Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed solution.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restate the problem and the solution.• Make a concluding remark on why the proposed solution is the best.

Step 5: Drafting the Essay

Once you have completed Steps 1-4, you are ready to work on your introduction. After that is written and your thesis and scope are finalised, you will be ready to proceed with the rest of your first draft. At any point beyond this step, it is possible and advisable to revise the structure and the content if you notice gaps in the logical development or the quality of the points or arguments in your writing.

The remaining tutorials in this module will focus specifically on different aspects of crafting the content, structure and flow of your academic essays. These aspects include:

- writing cohesive texts
- writing introductions
- logical relations and complex sentences
- noun groups and nominalisation
- evaluating, recommending and concluding

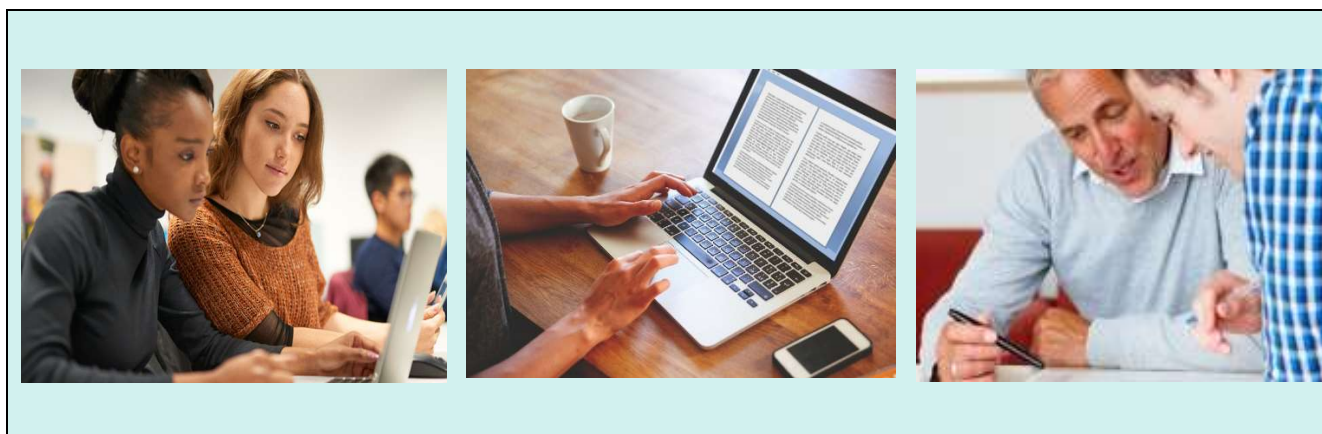


Step 6: Revising the Drafts

Reviewing and revising writing are essential parts of the writing process. They deepen your understanding of the paper you are writing and make you think more about the readers and what sense they make of your writing. They also improve the accuracy and precision of expression and strengthen the structure and flow of the writing.

While you must become skilled in reviewing and revising your own written work, it is also important for you to adopt the habit of sharing your drafts with trusted peers, who can provide valuable and meaningful feedback. Listening to and accepting feedback on your work is an integral part of good academic writing.

For these reasons, throughout this module, **you will have your drafts reviewed** and **you will review your peers' draft essays**. Also, **you will receive detailed review and feedback from your tutor**, who will provide advice based on experience and good knowledge of the requirements of good academic writing.



In this tutorial, we have considered the key steps in the process of writing a good academic essay. By following these steps for all of your academic writing, you will be able to develop the skills you need to produce written work that is focused, informative, clearly directed, well-structured and accurate.

In subsequent tutorials, we will address more specific techniques and skills to develop your abilities and boost your confidence to be a competent, independent academic writer.