

Academic Writing: A Guide to Report Writing and Referencing



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- ❑ Coursework assignments and justification
- ❑ Academic writing: literature reviews and abstracts
- ❑ Differences between reports and essays (writing style)
- ❑ Referencing and plagiarism



MODULE COURSEWORK

- ❑ **Two** elements of coursework for this module:
- ❑ **Blog exercise** – individual blog piece addressing various professional issues and general topics associated with the creative industries(50%)
- ❑ **Technical Report** – individual report (50%)



COURSEWORK JUSTIFICATION: TECHNICAL REPORT

- ☐ Why are you being asked to undertake the coursework for this module?
- ☐ Addresses some of the key areas of accreditation as set down by the British Computing Society (BCS)
- ☐ Addresses key skill areas beneficial to graduates within the creative technologies sector:
 - ☐ 'soft skills' required in any job role
 - ☐ Report writing often required with colleagues in project environments
 - ☐ Writing invitation to tenders or documenting reports about project documentation
 - ☐ Academic writing skills essential for Honours Project
 - ☐ Knowing your subject area: demonstrating this knowledge to employers
 - ☐ Presenting your work, ideas or a product to employers to potential investors
 - ☐ Employability: communication skills required for job presentations & interviews

ACADEMIC WRITING: LITERATURE REVIEWS

- ❑ Literature Review: required for technical report and essay
- ❑ What is a literature review?
- ❑ A literature review can be viewed as a: *“Detailed and justified analysis and commentary of the merits and faults of the literature within a chosen area, which demonstrates familiarity with what is already known about your research topic”* (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p. 668)

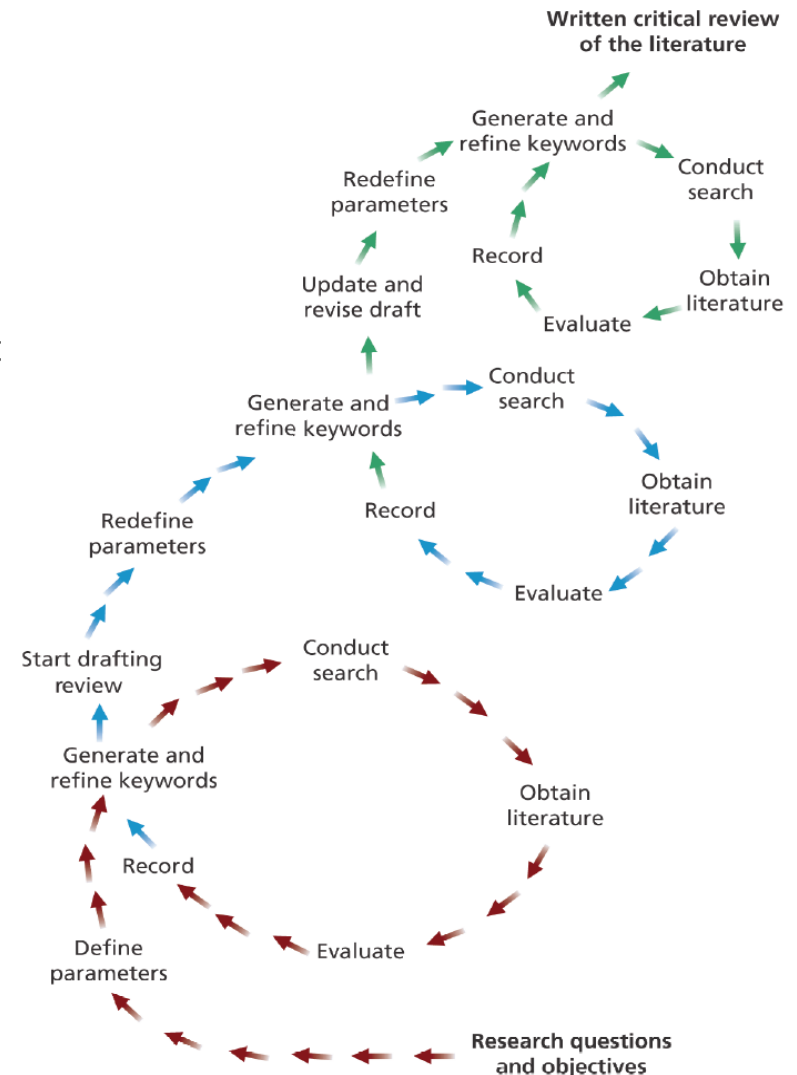


Source: Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012, 6th Edition). *Research Methods for Business Students*. Pearson Education Limited: Harlow.

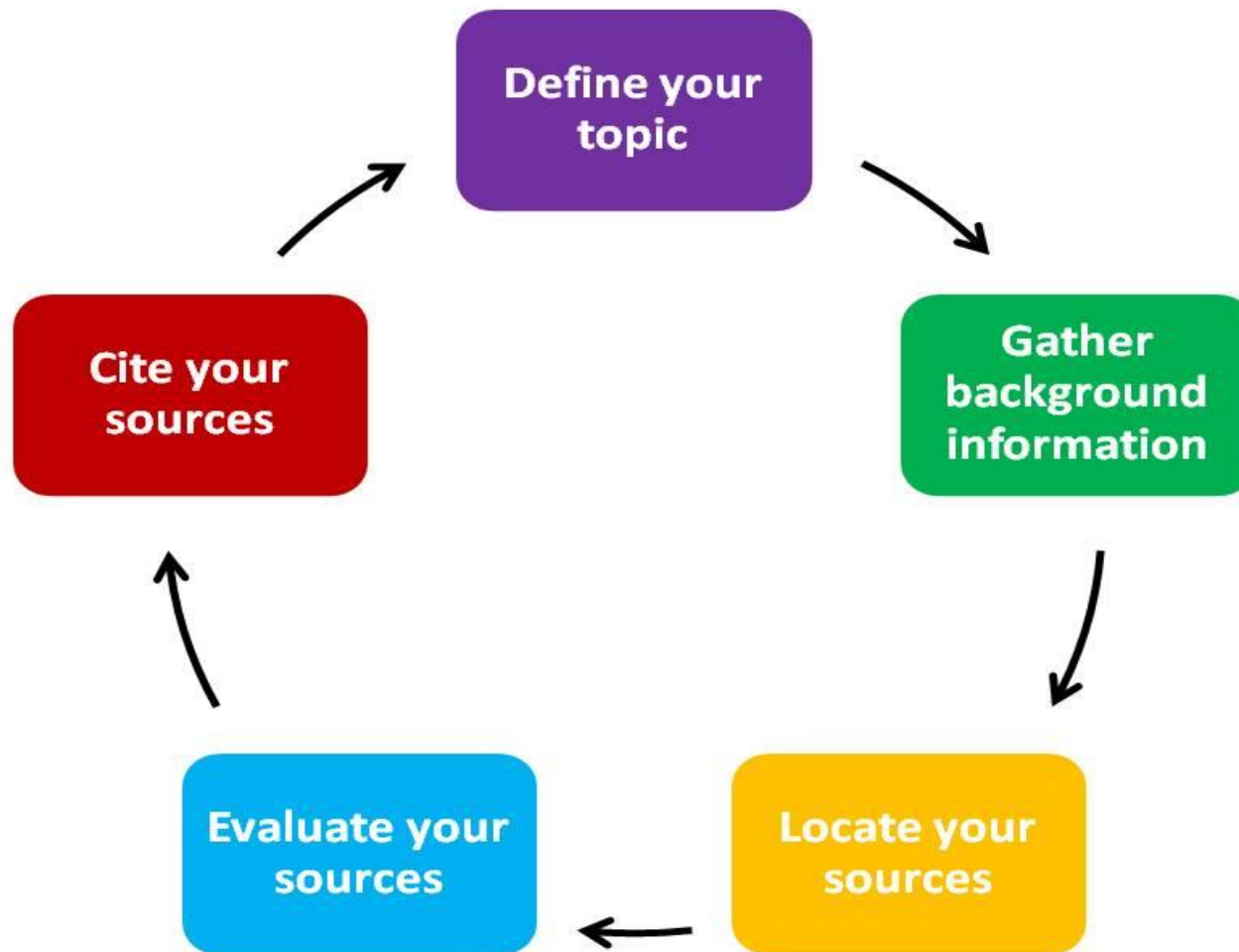
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PROCESS OF PERFORMING A LITERATURE SEARCH (2)

- ☐ Focus your question
- ☐ Decide on most appropriate sources
- ☐ Perform scoping study by
 - ☐ Dividing your search into series of “concepts”
 - ☐ Thinking of alternative terms for each concept
 - ☐ Searching each concept separately
 - ☐ Combining concepts using Boolean logic
 - ☐ Limiting your search
- ☐ Revise your search,
as necessary, and replicate in other
Sources



SIMPLIFIED VIEW OF LITERATURE REVIEW PROCESS



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A REPORT & ESSAY (1)

What is a report?

- ☐ Systematic, well organised document which defines and analyses a subject or problem.
- ☐ Aims to inform, as clearly and succinctly as possible.

A **report differs from an essay** in the following ways:

- ☐ presents information, not an argument
- ☐ reviewed quickly by reader
- ☐ uses numbered headings and sub-headings
- ☐ accurate, concise, well structured
- ☐ uses tables, graphs, illustrations
- ☐ abstract (executive summary)
- ☐ references and bibliography



Source: How To Write a Report (n.d.) [Online] <http://library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.02%20Reports.htm> [accessed 22nd September 2013]

Source: Writing a Report (n.d.) [Online] <http://learnonline.canberra.edu.au/mod/book/view.php?id=180631&chapterid=287> [accessed 14th September 2015]

Source: (2011) [Online] Available: <http://www.easylegalbilling.com/blog/new-legal-billing-reporting-features-launched/> [Accessed 12th September 2015]

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A REPORT & ESSAY (2)

What is the format of a report?

A report usually contains the following **structure**:

- ☐ **Title** (summarise what topic of report is about)
- ☐ **Abstract** (concise overview of entire report)
- ☐ **Introduction** (setting scene, background aims of report, signposting)
- ☐ **Body or Analysis** (analyse findings based on literature review)
- ☐ **Conclusion** (conclusions, future directions, summary of area)
- ☐ **References** (properly referenced)
- ☐ **Appendices** (additional information useful for reader)



Source: Writing a Report (n.d.) [Online] <http://learnonline.canberra.edu.au/mod/book/view.php?id=180631&chapterid=287> [accessed 14th September 2015]

Source: (n.d.) [Online] Available: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/142552/margalla-towers-collapse-report-kept-from-public-eye-since-2005/> [Accessed 12th September 2015]

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A REPORT & ESSAY (3)

Report	Essay
Information	Argument
Read quickly	Read carefully
Numbered headings, subheadings	Minimal sub-headings
Bibliography not always required	References & bibliography mandatory
Short, concise paragraphs (dot-points)	Ideas in interconnected paragraphs
Tables, graphs, illustrations	Does not use tables, graphs, illustrations
Abstract (executive summary)	Not applicable
Recommendations or appendices	Seldom used

WHY DO WE WRITE REPORTS?



- ☐ Reinforces and consolidates learning
- ☐ Demonstrates knowledge and understanding
- ☐ Evidence of evaluation and learning
- ☐ A valuable transferable skill

What do lecturers look for?

- ☐ An analysis of the topic
- ☐ Not just a synopsis of other writers work; a report should include information and opinions supported by evidence
- ☐ Evidence of research and reading
- ☐ Justification of claims/arguments/ conclusion
- ☐ Check department requirements on presentation and submission

PLANNING AND PREPARING YOUR REPORT

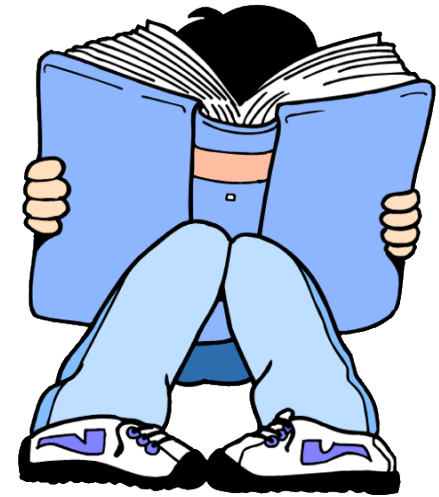
First – make sure you understand the task:

- ☐ Analyse the topic, and think about the rationale, scope and structure of the report, then:
- ☐ Create a work plan – brainstorm ideas on the topic
- ☐ Gather information – reading and focused note-taking
- ☐ Sort information into plan
- ☐ Develop outline – review and refine plan
- ☐ **First draft** – don't worry about detail
- ☐ Second and subsequent drafts – edit for structure, spelling and grammar, adhere to academic conventions, use formal language and referencing
- ☐ Remember to adhere to the word limit

READING AROUND YOUR CHOSEN TOPIC

To show evidence of research and reading:

- ☐ Read around the topic for background
- ☐ Keep topic in mind as you read
- ☐ Ask yourself questions
- ☐ Look for answers in your reading
- ☐ Reference correctly



REPORT WRITING STYLE

- ☐ Written in an objective formal written style
- ☐ Uses formal language
- ☐ Use of whole sentences and paragraphs

What makes a bad report?

- ☐ Poorly structured
- ☐ Inappropriate writing style
- ☐ Incorrect or inadequate referencing
- ☐ Too much/too little/irrelevant material
- ☐ Expression not clear
- ☐ Results not related to purpose
- ☐ **Always ensure that your report does what it is meant to do**



STRUCTURE OF A REPORT

- ❑ What does the structure of a report look like?
- ❑ Dependent on audience and purpose can follow the following format:

1. Title
2. Table of contents
3. Abstract (Executive summary)
4. Introduction
5. Main body of report (includes literature review)
 - 5.1 Sub heading
 - 5.1.1 sub sub heading
 - 5.1.2 Sub sub heading
 - 5.2 Sub heading
 - 5.2.1 sub sub heading
 - 5.2.2 sub sub heading
6. Discussion (Analysis)
7. Conclusion
8. References
9. Appendices



WHAT IS AN ABSTRACT?

Definition of an Abstract:

- ❑ An abstract is a **succinct summary of a longer piece of work**, usually academic in nature, which is **published in isolation from the main text** and should therefore **stand on its own** and be **understandable without reference to the longer piece**. It should report the latter's **essential facts**, and should not exaggerate or contain **material that is not there** (Emerald Publishers, n.d.).
- ❑ Classifications of abstract:
 - ❑ **Indicative abstracts**: describe content of entire paper. Short, simple and objective.
 - ❑ **Informative abstracts**: longer and more thorough. Summarise entire paper and provide overview of facts detailed in paper.
 - ❑ **Evaluative abstracts (critical abstracts)**: subjective and evaluate contents of article or publication.

PURPOSE OF ABSTRACTS

Purpose of writing abstracts:

- ☐ *Provides introduction to journal articles, reports*
- ☐ *Presents information about a particular research subject in a clear and concise manner*
- ☐ *Synthesises and communicates all the major sections of the larger text (in order)*
- ☐ *Provides a clear concise overview of research area for the reader (i.e. is your topic of interest to the reader)*
- ☐ *Useful to condense information in a short format for database searches*



Journal Title

Vol. No., Year, Page Range



example journal article.pdf

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com



Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 43 (2007) 489–496

Journal of
Experimental
Social Psychology

www.elsevier.com/locate/jesp

Article Title

The effect of video game violence on physiological desensitization to real-life violence ☆

Authors

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Available online 17 July 2006

Abstract

Past research shows that violent video game exposure increases aggressive thoughts, angry feelings, physiological arousal, aggressive behaviors, and decreases helpful behaviors. However, no research has experimentally examined violent video game effects on physiological desensitization, defined as showing less physiological arousal to violence in the real world after exposure to video game violence in the virtual world. This experiment attempts to fill this gap. Participants reported their media habits and then played one of eight violent or nonviolent video games for 20 min. Next, participants watched a 10-min videotape containing scenes of real-life violence while heart rate (HR) and galvanic skin response (GSR) were monitored. Participants who previously played a violent video game had lower HR and GSR while viewing filmed real violence, demonstrating a physiological desensitization to violence. Results are interpreted using an expanded version of the General Aggression Model. Links between desensitization, antisocial, and prosocial behavior are discussed.

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Concise informs you what the article is about , the empirical study and findings

Abstract

Past research shows that violent video game exposure increases aggressive thoughts, angry feelings, physiological arousal, aggressive behaviors, and decreases helpful behaviors. However, no research has experimentally examined violent video game effects on physiological desensitization, defined as showing less physiological arousal to violence in the real world after exposure to video game violence in the virtual world. This experiment attempts to fill this gap. Participants reported their media habits and then played one of eight violent or nonviolent video games for 20 min. Next, participants watched a 10-min videotape containing scenes of real-life violence while heart rate (HR) and galvanic skin response (GSR) were monitored. Participants who previously played a violent video game had lower HR and GSR while viewing filmed real violence, demonstrating a physiological desensitization to violence. Results are interpreted using an expanded version of the General Aggression Model. Links between desensitization, antisocial, and prosocial behavior are discussed.

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Keywords: Violent video games; Violent media; Desensitization; Helping; Prosocial

Keywords

QUALITIES OF A GOOD ABSTRACT

What makes a good abstract?

- ❑ ***Accuracy:*** *abstracts should clearly and correctly reflect the aims, objectives and contents of the article. Do not include facts or details in the abstract that is not reported in the main body of text. **Be specific.***
- ❑ ***Self-contained:*** *define all unique terms, jargons, abbreviations and acronyms in the abstract.*
- ❑ ***Concise and specific:*** *The lead sentence is the most important. Each sentence should be as informative as possible. Abstracts vary in length dependent on the journal or conference (usually 150 minimum or 500 maximum)*
- ❑ ***Coherent and readable:*** *Write clearly and succinctly. Remove or shorten any unnecessary words or phrases. Avoid the passive voice.*

AIMS OF THE INTRODUCTION

Introduction

- ☐ Introduce the report with reference to its rationale, scope and structure – **signpost** what the report is going to cover
- ☐ Include background information on why the report is being written
- ☐ State the aims and objectives of the report
- ☐ Make reference to the methodology used



MAIN BODY OF REPORT



Main body

- ☐ Should contain information, explanations and answers
- ☐ Findings should be broken down into discrete sections and subsections which are titled and/or numbered
- ☐ Support all evidence/examples/opinions with sources
- ☐ Develop each new point with evidence
- ☐ Ensure any direct quotes are clearly indicated and referenced correctly
- ☐ Number, title and reference all tables and diagrams
- ☐ Cite references in text and provide list of references at the end of the report

CONCLUSION



Conclusion

- ☐ Summarise key points raised in report and state conclusions – no new material
- ☐ Summary of key points should relate to the overall objective of the report
- ☐ Present evaluation and make recommendations if required – these may offer solutions to problems in the report. Each one should be listed and discussed separately
- ☐ Illustrate what your findings show and what this means for your readers
- ☐ State why your findings are important



APPENDICES

- ☐ Appendices should be numbered and placed at the end of the report
- ☐ They contain relevant information which is too detailed to be included in the main report (e.g. raw data, example questionnaires, interview transcripts)
- ☐ Each appendix should contain different information and be referred to within the report
- ☐ Information contained within the appendix should be of use to the reader
- ☐ Each item needs to be selected and have a purpose



ACTIVE AND PASSIVE TENSE

Avoiding 'I' and 'Me'

- ☐ In this report, I will show that....

Make the report the subject of your sentence, or use the **passive tense**:

- ☐ The evidence presented in this report will show that....

or

It is the contention here that...

or

The aim here is to show that...

Giving your opinion – indirectly

- ☐ Use cautious language:

- ☐ 'The Scots are often said to be friendlier than the English'

- ☐ Refer to the evidence:

- ☐ 'Government Statistics (HMSO, 1999) demonstrate that the Scots are friendlier than the English'

- ☐ Refer to an author who shares your opinion:

- ☐ 'Brown and Morrow (2000) conclude that the Scots are friendlier than the English'

HARVARD REFERENCING CITATIONS (1)

What is the difference between a citation and a reference?

- ☐ ***“A citation is an acknowledgement in the text of the original source from which information was obtained”***
- ☐ ***“References are a list containing bibliographic details of the sources cited in the text” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 96)***
- ☐ The Harvard Referencing System:
 - ☐ Applied in most business and management research
 - ☐ Uses author-date system to acknowledge sources of information
 - ☐ E.g. (1) Surname of author; (2) year of publication; (3) page number if quotation used
 - ☐ More than one source: author-year information in chronological order with oldest first
 - ☐ Two authors: both names appear in the citation
 - ☐ Four or more: all names should appear upon first reference to the publication – thereafter first author followed by *et al.* (*et alia* – ‘and the others’)

HARVARD REFERENCING CITATIONS (2)

Examples of Harvard Referencing:

Author's words are paraphrased:

- ❑ The availability of data is a key factor in determining the successful outcome of a research project (Collis and Hussey, 2003)
- ❑ Collis and Hussey (2003) argue that the availability of data is a key factor in determining the successful outcome of a research project

Author's words are quoted to emphasise authority of source:

- ❑ “The availability of data is crucial to the successful outcome of your research (Collis and Hussey, 2003, p.116)

First citation for three or more authors

- ❑ Exploratory research by Collis, Dugdale, Jones and Jarvis (2001) identified....

Thereafter

- ❑ Building on Collis *et al.* (2001) Collis and Jarvis (2002) and Collis, Jarvis and Skerratt (2004) studied...

HARVARD REFERENCING CITATIONS (3)

Examples of Harvard Referencing (cont'd):

More than one source:

- ❑ A number of studies (Carsberg, Page, Sindall and Waring, 1985; Barker and Noonan, 1996; Pratten, 1998) have investigated...

Author with more than one publication in the same year:

- ❑ Quarterly surveys by Business Monitor (2005a, 2005b, 2005c and 2005d) indicated that...

Secondary citation:

- ❑ Findings from a case study by Bloomfield (cited in Melrose, 2009) suggest that...

Distinguishing authors with the same name:

- ❑ R.Hussey (2006) and A. Hussey (2006) examined the effect of...

HARVARD REFERENCING: REFERENCES

Examples of Harvard References:

Article in a printed journal:

- ❑ Collis, J. and Jarvis, R. (2002). "Financial information and the management of small private companies". Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development. Vol. 6(4), pp. 101-113.

On-line report:

- ❑ Collis, J. (2003) Directors' Views on Exemption from Statutory Audit. URN 03/1342, October, London: DTI. [Online] Available: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file25971.pdf> [Accessed 30 June 2008]

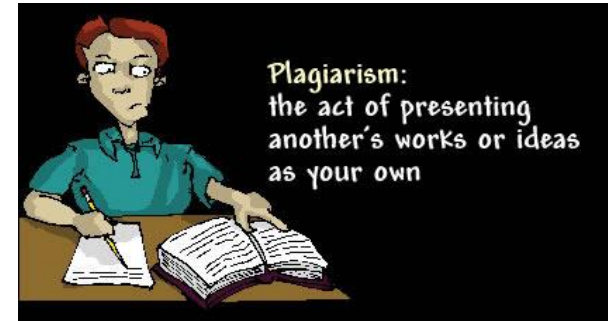
Book:

- ❑ Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2002). Business Research. (2nd ed.) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chapter in a Book:

- ❑ Collis, Dugdale, D. and Jarvis, R. (2001). "Deregulation of Small Company Reporting in the UK" in McLeay, S. and Riccaboni, A. (eds.) Contemporary Issues in Accounting Regulation. Boston: Kluwer, pp. 167-85.

PLAGARISM (1)



What is plagiarism?

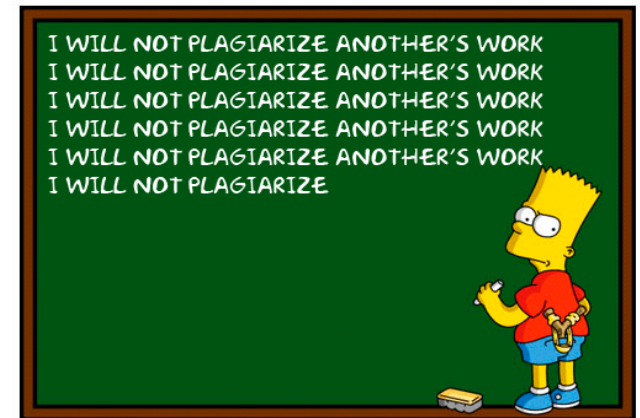
- ❑ “Presenting work or ideas as if they are your own when in reality they are the work or ideas of someone else, and failing to acknowledge the original source” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p.678)
- ❑ “Plagiarism is the act of taking someone’s words, ideas or other information and passing them off as your own because you fail to acknowledge the source. It is a form of academic misconduct that is taken very seriously, as it is the equivalent of stealing intellectual property” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 103)

Source: Saunders, M., Lewis, P. And Thornhill, A. (2012, 6th Edition). Research Methods for Business Students. Pearson Education Limited: Harlow.

Source: Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2009, 3rd Edition). Business Research: A Practical Guide For undergraduate & Postgraduate Students. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.

Source: (n.d.) [Online] Available: <http://www.sodahead.com/living/kathryn-stockett-stole-intimate-details-of-a-maids-life-to-write-the-help-do-you-think-making-m/question-2678301/> [Accessed 8th September 2015]

PLAGARISM (2)



Types of Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves the following:

- ☐ Copying the words of another without both (1) putting the copied text in quotation marks and (2) citing the source
- ☐ Paraphrasing the words of another without citing the source
- ☐ Incorporating figures or drawings of another person without crediting the source
- ☐ Including facts that are not common knowledge without citing the source
- ☐ Use another person's ideas or theories without giving that person credit

Avoiding Plagiarism

- ☐ Place question marks around text you have obtained from another source citing the author, year and page number (e.g. Baxter, 2012, p. 312)
- ☐ When paraphrasing ensure you use your own words to express the ideas of another author
- ☐ Cite sources of illustrations, tables and figures you reproduce

Professionalism In the Creative T...
Essay Upload Link Part 1 (Moodle 11 / ...
What's New
Paper 3/ of 61

Originality
GradeMark
PeerMark

Prof in the CT coursework

turnitin
25%
SIMILAR
OUT OF 100

Anderson, PhD, indicates it is likely that violent video games may have even stronger effects on children's aggression because the games are highly engaging and interactive, the games reward violent behaviour, and because children repeat these behaviours over and over as they play (Gentile & Anderson, 2003). Psychologists know that each of these help learning - active involvement improves learning, rewards increase learning, and repeating something over and over increases learning. (American Psychological Association 2004)

6

Brad Bushman, a communications and psychology professor at Ohio State University, the link between video games and aggressive behavior is clear: 381 studies have been conducted on 130,295 around the world. Bushman says that these studies provide evidence the violent video games cause an increase in aggressive thought.

13

According to Brad Bushman, a communications and psychology professor at Ohio State University, the link between video games and aggressive behaviour is clear. "Over 130 studies have been conducted on over 130,000 participants around the world". (Association psychological sciences June 28, 2011)

Examples of violent video games

1. **Dead Space 2 (ESRB Rating: Mature)**

Dead Space 2 takes gamers through a horrifically scary battle for their lives in an alien-infested world. Players must fight scary aliens to stay alive and battle the Necromorph abominations using updated weapons and tools to defeat them. In the gaming environment referred to as "The Sprawl," players must avoid or kill the enemies that are manifested as "horrific corpse like creatures". (C. Sapieha, J L Tahnk 2012)

2. **Mortal Kombat (ESRB Rating: Mature)**

The name alone should be enough to keep you away. Mortal Kombat is a wildly popular franchise in the violent video game category that includes the most realistic and gory graphics that go way beyond what you'd expect. The latest version of the game features enhanced graphics, multiplayer functionality (for tag-team "kombat") and violent killing sprees. (C. Sapieha, J L Tahnk 2012)

3. **Resident evil 4 (ESRB Rating: Mature)**

Resident evil 4 The story of *Resident Evil 4* follows the U.S. government special agent Leon Kennedy, who is sent on a mission to rescue Ashley Graham, the President's daughter, who has been kidnapped by a sinister cult. Traveling to a remote rural area of Europe, Leon fights hordes of violent villagers and mutated

Match Overview
Match 1 of 1

1	www.nowgamer.com Internet source	5%
2	www.psychologymatter... Internet source	3%
3	www.geriatricspt.org Internet source	3%
4	mcclafircgams.com Internet source	2%
5	www.allvoices.com Internet source	2%
6	www.bazajaytee.com Internet source	2%
7	gamedipper.com Internet source	2%
8	www.bioconsultor.com Internet source	2%



USEFUL INFORMATION



Moodle

Username: Banner number, the same as your student network username

Password: Password is 6-digit date of birth, in ddmmyy format. This will remain your password unless you change it.

On-campus & off-campus: Go to <http://moodle.uws.ac.uk>

UWS Library Academic Electronic Databases

- ☐ You can access databases, electronic books & electronic journals with your Banner ID and password at **My UWS Library** on Moodle or via the Library website at: <http://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/services-for-students/library/e-resources-and-athens/computing/>
- ☐ Books for this module are predominately located on **Third Floor (South): Social Science & Health**