

The **Learning** **Development** *Unit*

LONDON
METROPOLITAN
UNIVERSITY

ESSAY WRITING PACK

[writing and communication workshop]
Learning Development Unit

PROGRAMME

Part 1: Introduction

- Reflecting on your own writing
 - What is good about it?
 - What do you want *to* change?
 - What do you want from the week?
- Understanding what is required in university writing
- Writing about a question

Part 2:

- Planning a piece of writing
- Structuring a paragraph
- Writing a paragraph

Part 3:

- SQR3
- Using sources – how to write about what you have read (Use your own book *or* article).

Part 4:

- Editing and proof reading your writing
- Writing an introduction or a conclusion
- Feedback on the week

Student Name	
Student ID	
Module Code	
Module Title	

Module Tutor	
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This essay writing pack is being used for the following assignment (Please tick):

Essay		Report		Presentation	
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WORKSHEET 1

Spend a few minutes thinking about your own work and feedback, then answer the following questions:-

- a) What is good about your writing?
- b) What do you feel you need to improve?
- c) What you want to get from this pack?

THE STRUCTURE OF AN ESSAY

Many students have difficulty structuring essays. The following is the basic essay structure which should help you plan your essay and organize your material.

Introduction

Your introduction should:

1. comment on the title or topic of the essay.
2. define or explain any difficult or ambiguous terms in the title.
3. direct the reader by stating which aspects of the topic you intend to cover and why.

The introduction should be roughly 7-8% of the total length of your essay, generally one paragraph.

Body

The body of the essay should develop your argument or theme through three or four main ideas.

Take each of your main points and support them with examples and illustrations, break your materials down into paragraphs, one paragraph for each aspect of the topic.

A paragraph may:

1. raise a particular issue.
- Or
2. develop a particular issue.

Often the first sentence is the topic sentence – that is, it explains what the paragraph is about.

As you develop your argument, you must move from point to point and from paragraph to paragraph. This involves transitions to smooth the way for the reader. It is important to remind the reader where you have been and where you are going.

Linking Words are used as ‘signposts’ to help the reader make the transition from one paragraph to the next. The linking words you use will depend on the way you are developing your argument. The following are ways to develop your essay from one paragraph to the next and common linking words for each.

1. Cause and Effect: You can discuss the cause in one paragraph and the effect in the next one, or the other way round. In this case you are expressing a relationship or drawing a conclusion.

Linking words: as a result, because of, therefore, consequently, thus, for this reason

2. Positive and Negative aspects: You can contrast the positive and negative aspects of something. You might discuss the positive aspects in one paragraph and the negative aspects in the next one.

Linking words: but, however, on the other hand, although nevertheless.

3. **Sequence of events:** i.e. before and after. You can show the next step or the previous step to the event you are discussing.

Linking words: then, after that, finally, ultimately, following, before, first, previously, firstly, ... secondly, ... thirdly.

4. Illustration: You can illustrate or give an example of what you have been talking about.

Linking words: for example, for instance, such as, that is.

5. Extension: You can extend an idea, add weight to your argument, give further examples.

Linking words: similarly, moreover, furthermore, in addition, not only...but also

Conclusions

Your conclusion should:

1. Summarise your main ideas.
2. Answer any specific question which was asked, though your answer maybe tentative.
3. Draw a general conclusion from your argument.

In your conclusion you may also:

4. Discuss wider implications.
5. Introduce your own views as based on arguments you have developed. You should **not** introduce any **new** arguments or information.

The conclusion should make up about 12-15% of the total length of your essay.

The Essay Structure

Body = 80% length

Answer the question!

In a chain of paragraphs that build and present a CASE.

Each paragraph should contain:

- 1 big idea
- Introduce
- Define
- Offer argument
- Offer evidence and discuss
- Make final point

The Reader is asking you – and your writing should answer – the following questions:

- What is this paragraph about?
- What exactly is that?
- What is your argument on this (in relation to the question)?
- What is your evidence? What does it mean?
- What is the final point (in relation to the question)?

Introduction = 5% length

Tells the reader how you will answer the Question. Write last, once you know where the essay is going

Plan Draft, Review, Revise & Edit

Conclusion = 15% length

- Re-state arguments
- Re-state points
- No new evidence
- Could make recommendation
- Proves that you have answered the whole question

(Some say you should write this first so you know where you are going – but re-write when you have finished changing your essay.)

Bibliography

Author (date) *Title* Town; Publisher.
Page numbers

In alphabetical order by author's surname

JUDGEMENTAL CRITERIA

Here is an example of criteria for a good essay:

Structure

- Essay relevant to topic
- Topic covered in depth

Argument

- Accurate presentation of evidence
- Logically developed argument
- Originally and creative thought

Style

- Fluent piece of writing
- Succinct writing

Presentation

- Legible and well set out work
- Reasonable length

Sources

- Adequate acknowledgement of sources
- Correct citation of references

Mechanics

- Grammatical sentences
- Correct spelling throughout
- Effective use of figures and tables
- Correct use of units and quantities

ANALYSING THE ASSIGNMENT

Before you begin to work on reading and writing for your assignment it is useful to have a clear picture of what the assignment is asking you to do. To this end you may find it useful to work through the following tasks:

Write down in your own words what you think the assignment is asking you to do.

What do you already know about the subject matter of the assignment?

What background information do you need to help you to complete this assignment?

How do you think this assignment differs from or is similar to other assignments that you are working on at the moment?

How are you going to choose your reading material?

As you begin to read your assignment, try to read and take notes with the assignment in mind.

Analysing the question

You should aim first of all to understand the question. This means understanding both the individual words, and also the general thrust or nub of the question. The question will have been set in such a way as to raise a complex of issues. Try to separate out the various issues raised - whether raised explicitly or implicitly - by the question and then see how these issues fit together.

Keywords - analyse them

Terminology - make sure you know what it means

Ask questions - what will you need to do in this essay?

In general the results of your reflections and brainstorming in this phase should ultimately become the introduction to your assignment.

You should also start to think about your overall answer to the question: this will become the conclusion to your assignment. **Be absolutely sure that you are answering the question asked, and not another question which you would have liked to have been asked.**

The most common key words/phrases used in essay questions are:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Compare: | Requires an answer which sets items side by side and shows their similarities and differences. A balanced (fair, objective) answer is expected. |
| Contrast: | Requires an answer that points out only the difference between two items. |
| Criticise:
which | Requires an answer that points out mistakes or weaknesses, and also indicates any favourable aspects of the subject of the question. It requires a balanced answer. |
| Define: | Requires an answer that explains the precise meaning of a concept. |
| Discuss: | Requires an answer that explains an item or concept, and then gives details about it with supportive information, examples, points for and against, and explanations for the facts put forward. |
| Evaluate: | Requires an answer which is similar to one with the key-word " Discuss ", but the conclusion in this type is expected to make a judgement, either "pro" or "contra" (for or against) the concept being discussed and evaluated. |

Illustrate:	Requires an answer that consists mainly of examples to demonstrate or prove the subject of the question. It is often added to another instruction.
Justify:	Requires an answer that gives only the reasons for a position or argument. Note, however, that the proposition to be argued may be a negative one (e.g. Justify the use of nuclear power).
Prove/ Disprove	Both of these require answers which demonstrate the logical arguments and/or evidence connected with a proposition: prove requires the "pro" points, and disprove requires the "contra" points.
Summarise/ Outline	Requires an answer that contains a summary of all the available information about a subject, i.e. only the main points and not the details should be included. Questions of this type often require short answers.
Trace:	is found most frequently in historical questions (but not only in History courses); it requires the statement and brief description in logical or chronological order of the stages (steps) in the development of e.g. a theory, a person's life, a process.
State:	Requires an answer that expresses the relevant points briefly and clearly without lengthy discussion or minor details.
Explain:	Requires an answer that offers a rather detailed and exact explanation of an idea or principle, or a set of reasons for a situation or attitude.

Activity

Now try to define these: -

Analyse:	
Assess:	
Examine:	
To what extent...:	

WORKSHEET 2

a) **Brainstorm**

Choose a topic you have been asked to write about and write down all the ideas that come into your head:

b) Plan

Now try and sort out those ideas into a plan:

Ten steps to assignment success

1. **Prepare:**

- Check you know the task (the whole question) and the form (essay, report, presentation, seminar etc)
- Open a research folder
- Have the overview – fit the task to the module aims & learning outcomes
- Analyse the question – all of it
- Use creative brainstorming strategies to generate ideas
- Action plan - work out what to research, why, where and when!

2. Follow the **action plan** – attend lectures and seminars in a positive frame of mind - undertake targeted research and active reading

3. **Review** your findings – identify and plug the gaps

4. Plan the outline – of the essay, report, seminar, presentation ...

5. Write the **rough** draft – go with the flow - leave gaps

6. Leave a time lag - allow the brain to close the gaps

7. Review, revise and edit – struggle to write - decide on a final draft

8. Proof read – (rehearse if it involves a presentation)

9. Hand work in on or before a deadline

10. **SWOT your progress!**

The paragraph as dialogue - an example

Writing is about communicating with a READER. It can help if we write to answer questions that an intelligent reader might ask.

Below is one possible simple paragraph that could be constructed on pattern notes to fit into an essay entitled *Evaluate the usefulness of pattern notes to you as a student*.

See how the writing has attempted to answer the following questions:

1. So what is this paragraph about then?
 2. And what exactly is that?
 3. What is your argument on this topic (in relation to the essay question)?
 4. What is your evidence? What does it mean?
 5. What is your final point? How does this relate to the question?
-

Pattern notes, which have been an important part of our Study Skills course, are designed to help students both select and learn key information. Pattern notes are actively generated by the notemaker and are non-linear in form, often having a key idea placed centrally, with subsidiary ideas branching out and connecting as the notemaker sees fit. It is argued that it is the very selection/reduction/connection processes involved that make this notemaking system an effective part of active learning. Buzan (1984) calls this process 'mindmapping', positing that it mirrors the lateral way that the brain actually works, engaging both halves of the brain, creative right and logical left, in the creation of successful notes. Whilst traditional linear notes are said to be literally monotonous, monotone, only involving half the brain in one's learning, the pattern notemaking process engages the learner in more productive and more successful whole brain learning. Buzan recommends an active revision system in conjunction with the notemaking to firmly fix the information gathered in the long-term memory.

In effect pattern notes engage the student in the production of very structured and condensed information, with less in quantity to learn, but more in quality. Thus, if it is true that the more active we are in our learning (Burns and Sinfield 2003), the more we learn, it seems logical to use an active notemaking system, coupled with an active revision process, to record and learn material and to become more effective and successful students.

Activities:

- Mark the different parts of the paragraph in different coloured highlighters.
- Find another source, apart from Buzan, who would support the arguments in this paragraph.
- Find one or more sources that might counter or disagree with the arguments in this paragraph.
- Re-write the paragraph to build in the additional supporting sources and/or to take account of the counter evidence.

Re-write the paragraph here:

The paragraph as dialogue – writing your second paragraph (after intro.)

Now choose a topic for your second paragraph. Write a draft of that paragraph, answering the following questions:

6. What is this paragraph about then?
7. And what exactly is that?
8. What is your argument on this topic (in relation to the essay question)?
9. What is your evidence? What does it mean?
10. What is your final point? How does this relate to the question?

Activities:

- Put the paragraph aside and write another paragraph
- After a day or two review your writing and make it better – checking that you have discussed your evidence – and that you have taken your argument back to the whole question
- When you have at least three paragraphs written, print them off and move them around – see what looks like the best order, now that you have written them.
- Once you have a good order – check that the paragraphs FLOW one to the other
- When you are happy with the content and order of the paragraphs – and the way that they link up – you are ready to write your Introduction and your Conclusion

The paragraph as dialogue – writing your third paragraph (after intro.)

Now choose a topic for your second paragraph. Write a draft of that paragraph, answering the following questions:

11. What is this paragraph about then?
12. And what exactly is that?
13. What is your argument on this topic (in relation to the essay question)?
14. What is your evidence? What does it mean?
15. What is your final point? How does this relate to the question?

Activities:

- Put the paragraph aside and write another paragraph
- After a day or two review your writing and make it better – checking that you have discussed your evidence – and that you have taken your argument back to the whole question
- When you have at least three paragraphs written, print them off and move them around – see what looks like the best order, now that you have written them.
- Once you have a good order – check that the paragraphs FLOW one to the other
- When you are happy with the content and order of the paragraphs – and the way that they link up – you are ready to write your Introduction and your Conclusion

A PARAGRAPH PLAN

Each topic in your essay will be dealt with in a paragraph. This may be structured as follows:

1. Start with the topic sentence
 - to express the main idea.
2. Explain or define any abstract or problematic terms
 - to clarify the topic sentence.
3. Show your evidence
 - to support your main, idea or argument in the topic sentence.
4. Comment on the evidence
 - to show how it supports or develops the main idea. If appropriate, mention other evidence (examples/studies/experiments/interpretations) to widen the discussion.
5. Conclude
 - to explain consequences or implications
 - to show the development of the argument
 - to link back to the idea in the topic sentence
 - to link forward to the main idea in the next paragraph
 - (in the first and last paragraphs of an essay or section) to show the link with the title or section heading.

WRITING AS DIALOGUE

Another way of structuring a paragraph is to imagine a conversation:

Reader So, what is this paragraph about?

Writer This is my idea... (**introduce** the paragraph **topic**)

Reader And what exactly is that?

Writer Let me explain... (and **define**)

Reader Tell me more.

Writer Here's my argument... these studies... (**show** your evidence)

Reader And who supports this view? Is there any evidence?

Writer Like this... this point shows that... but this... (**comment** on evidence)

Reader And what would be your final point? Does this relate directly to the question?

Writer I've shown that the point I started with is... and the next thing we should be thinking about is... (**conclude**)

WORKSHEET 3

Paragraph

Now write a paragraph here:

PRESENTATIONS

What is a presentation?

A presentation is:

1. A formal talk
2. A performance
3. An interactive communications exercise

A presentation has a set form, similar to an essay or report. It must have a beginning, middle and an ending, followed by a question and answering session.

Preparing your presentation

There are eight stages to preparing a presentation.

1. Objectives

- Why are you giving this talk?
- Who will you be talking to?
- How much do they know about the subject already?
- What effect do you want your presentation to have?

2. Limitations

- How long have you got?
- Do you have to follow a certain format?
- Where will you be giving your presentation?
- Can you change the room around to suit your preferences?

3. Main points

- Decide on your main points: no more than three points in a 10-minute talk
- Is there a logical connection between these points?
- What evidence can you produce to support your points and make your case clear?

4. Beginning

- Briefly introduce yourself
- Check that they can all see and hear you
- Let them know if you are going to take questions as you proceed or invite discussion at the end?
- You may want to give an outline of the structure of the talk, so the audience know where it is going
- You'll need to gain the audience's attention, so think carefully how you will introduce your topic - for example, you could start with an anecdote, a question or some contradictory statements

5. Middle

Prepare your talk so you lead the audience through your main points in a logical and interesting fashion. It helps if you plan for variety in the ways you present your case.

Where they are appropriate, you could plan to use:

- examples, anecdotes and case histories
- charts and graphs
- handouts (will you issue them at the start? in the middle? at the end?)
- slides
- video clips
- artefacts which people can pass round.

6. End

Summarise what you have said: *'In this talk we have discussed...'*

Make your conclusions: *'It is clear that...'*

Plan to leave the audience a parting shot to stimulate their thoughts.

7. And then...

When you have written your presentation, look it over carefully, from the viewpoint of your intended audience.

- Does it meet the objectives?
- Is the structure as logical as can be?
- Is the content right for the audience?
- Is it too long?

Then revise the presentation.

8. Visuals

Prepare your visuals (PowerPoint slides, Overhead Projector foils, etc).

Make sure they are clear, and that any text is big enough (24 points or larger).

Don't forget! Check that the room you're presenting in meets your visual aid needs.

READING COMPREHENSION – SQR3

STEP 1 - SURVEY

Before you read a chapter (or book), try to get a general view of what lies ahead by **looking for the main points which will be covered**.

1. Examine the title and table of contents
2. Read the introduction or introductory paragraph
3. Look for headings, subheadings and **key sentences**
4. Read first and last sentences of paragraphs
5. Look at graphic aids (pictures, charts, graphs)
6. Read the final paragraph or summary and try to think how the author got there

Again, before you read, **ask yourself some questions**.

1. What do I already know about this subject?
2. What can I expect to learn from this chapter/book?
3. What should I look for when I read it more carefully? (Jot these down)

If you are reading something for a specific purpose, such as an essay, ask yourself "What information am I looking for?"

As you go back and read the chapter now, work through one **manageable** section at a time, using the next 4 steps: **QUESTION, READ, REFLECT, and REVIEW**.

STEP 2 - QUESTION

Constantly ask yourself questions as you read along by converting section headings and key sentences into questions. What questions is the author trying to answer?

Ask in depth questions as well as surface ones, e.g. for a chapter headed "Hitler's Rise to Power" you need to ask not only how he rose to power but also why and what lessons we might learn from this.

Asking questions helps you concentrate and cut through what's less important to find out the main points. A passage that you cannot make sense of may be easy to grasp if you approach it with a question.

STEPS 3 and 4 - READ and REFLECT

Keep at it! Successful students read difficult passages again and again.

Vary your approach and tempo. Read easy bits faster and slow down for difficult new material.

Read in short bits. **Stop when you need to and think about what you've been reading.** Ask yourself questions about what you've read.

Pauses give you a rest from visualising!

STEP 5 - REVIEW

Regain the broad view of the chapter by turning through it and trying to ~All the main points or themes.

Check important secondary points, (e.g. examples, facts)

Over learn to help you remember.

Space your reviews. The greater memory loss is within one day so if you review 12 -24 hours after you study you will remember much longer.

USING INFORMATION FROM SOURCES

It is important to use information from sources but to express it in your own words. The following steps may help you to do this.

- read or re-read the article or chapter you have chosen, focussing on the main points and on getting a general idea of what it is about.
- when you have finished reading, turn to the person next to you and, without looking back at your reading, tell her/him what it was about, tell her/him to ask you questions if she/he doesn't understand.
- listen to your partner's account of his/her reading; ask her/him questions if you do not understand.
- without going back to your reading write as much as you can about it in your own words (you can use Worksheet 4 on the next page if you want).
- re-read what you have written then show it to your partner and read hers/his.
- go back to the original reading and check whether you have left out anything important.

WORKSHEET 4

Writing about a source.

1.

WORKSHEET 5

Writing about a source.

2.

REFERENCES, QUOTATIONS & BIBLIOGRAPHIES

HARVARD SYSTEM

This is one correct way to include references and quotations in academic writing and how to compose a bibliography...

A. REFERENCE AND QUOTATIONS - in the body of the text

1. REFERENCES

- Definition: mentioning the source of your information by giving the **AUTHOR'S SURNAME AND DATE OF PUBLICATION**.
- How to write the reference:

Surname in sentence/date in brackets:
e.g. Kotler (1986) has described marketing concepts.

Surname and date both in brackets at the end of the sentence.
e.g. The marketing mix is composed of nine elements (Kotler 1986).

2. QUOTATIONS

- Definition: writing down the exact words of a writer, marked by quotation marks: " ", and followed by a reference.
- A short quotation: part of a sentence which you include in your own sentence e.g. Sinclair and Coulthard "used classroom verbal interaction as their data for research into discourse analysis" (Mal amah-Thomas 1987 p.45) but this wasn't intended to throw light on the interaction of teaching and learning.
- A long quotation: a complete sentence, begun on a new line, indented (space left on the left) e.g. Malamah- Thomas asks the question:

Do you think this sort of analysis of classroom language has anything to offer the classroom teacher? (Malamah-Thomas 1987 p.46)

B. BIBLIOGRAPHIES - at the end of a text

- Definition: a list of references in alphabetical order giving **FULL DETAILS** about the publication (see next page)
- The heading References usually means a list of all publications **MENTIONED** in the text.

- A Bibliography means a list of any publications read and referred to in the text.
- **Accuracy and consistency:** it is very important to be absolutely accurate in the DETAILS of **bibliographies** (e.g. date, name etc).
- For all bibliographies presentation in terms of ORDER, LAYOUT and PUNCTUATION must be absolutely consistent.

SAMPLE ENTRIES FOR BIBLIOGRAPHERS i.e. Full details

1. BOOKS

Example: Malamah- Thomas A. 1987 *Classroom Interaction* Oxford: Oxford University Press

There are the following parts:

1. Author's surname and initials
2. Date of publication
3. Title of book (underlined/in italics)
4. Place of publication (city not country)
5. Publisher (colon before place of publication)

2. JOURNAL ARTICLES

Example: MacLeod G. & McIntyre D. 1977 "Towards a model for microteaching" in *11ze British Journal of Teacher Education* Vol.3 no.2 pp.111-120

There are the following parts:

1. Author's surname and initials
2. Date of publication
3. Title of the article (in quotation marks)
4. IN + name journal (underlined/italics)
5. Volume number + issue number + page numbers (the abbreviations p. for page and pp. for pages are used)

3. CHAPTERS IN ESSAY COLLECTIONS

Long M.H. 1983 "Inside the Black Box: Methodological Issues in Classroom Research on Language Learning" in Seliger H. and Long M.H. (eds) 1983 *Classroom-oriented Research in Second Language Learning* Massachusetts: Newbury House

There are the following parts:

1. Author's surname and initials.
2. Date of publication of chapter
3. Title of chapter (in quotation marks)

4. Surname(s) and initial(s) of editor(s) + (ed.) / (eds.)
5. Title of book (underline/italics)
6. Date of publication of book
7. Place of publication (city not country)
8. Publisher (colon before place of publication)

Example of a reference in text

On first inspection, Tannen's (1990) book *You Just Don't Understand* looks like an antidote to earlier treatments of women's conversational incompetence. Unlike Jespersen (1922), Tannen avoids attributing observed differences in the ways women and men speak to 'instinctive' differences between females and males. And unlike Lakoff (1975), she explicitly recognises that even when women and men speak the same way, they are likely to be evaluated differently:

If a linguistic strategy is used by a woman, it is seen as powerless; if it is done by a man, it is seen as powerful. Often, the labelling of 'women's language' as 'powerless' language reflects the view of women's behaviour through the lens of men's: (Tannen, 1990: 225)

Tannen also draws on a great deal of empirical research to support her claims, instead of depending on her personal impressions.

The difficulty with this analysis, however, is that Tannen's (1990) conclusions are not based on any formal theory of conversational competence.

West, C. (1995) 'Women's Competence in Conversation', *Discourse and Society*, Vol. 6 No 1 pp.107-131

Example of a Bibliography

Jespersen, O. (1922) *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origins*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Lakoff, R. (1973) 'Language and Woman's Place', *Language in Society* 2: 45-79.

Lakoff, R. (1975) *Language and Women's Place*. New York: Harper Colophon.

Tannen, D. (1982) 'Ethnic Style in Male-Female Conversation', in J.J. Gumperz (ed.) *Language and Social Identity*, pp. 217-31. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tannen, D. (1990) *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York: William Morrow and Company.

WORKSHEET 7

1. Introduction

Now write an introduction to your essay here:

2. Conclusion

Now write a concluding paragraph:

PROOF READING

When you are proof-reading, you are asking yourself the following:

- Have I put full stops in the right places? Have I written a whole sentence or only part of one? Does my sentence sound weak because I have missed out words or put words in the wrong order?
- Have I used other punctuation marks correctly, for example commas, semicolons, quotation marks, question marks?
- When I have used a question mark, do I really mean it to be a question? Or should it be a statement? Am I asking too many questions?
- When I am making a point, is it my idea or somebody else's? I fit is somebody else's idea, refer *to* that person; if you are using a group of words directly *from* course material, then put quotation marks around the words you have taken *from* the text; give page number and block number, or book, title, for these quotes.
- Have I checked with a dictionary if I am unsure of *how to* spell a word? .Is my handwriting readable?
- Have I used verbs correctly? For example, have I used the past, present or future tenses correctly? Have I got verb endings right? (e.g. 'to say' not 'to saying'). *Do* the verb and subject agree? (e.g. 'the people were' not 'the people was'; 'they sell' not 'they sells'.)
- Have I used singular and plural correctly?

EDITING

When you are editing, you are asking yourself the following:

- Have I included the information, theories, arguments, etc. which I wanted to include?
- Have I left anything out? Have I put in too many examples, or too few? .Is it all relevant to the essay title?
- Have I put in quotations, page numbers, etc. correctly?
- Have I got an introduction and conclusion? Do they get the key points across?
- Do all my paragraphs Start and finish in the right place? Does each paragraph have a clear main point? (It is often good to put your main point at the beginning of each paragraph.) Can the reader see why I am moving from one paragraph to the next? Can I give the reader some signposts to help them follow my thinking?

It can be very difficult to express somebody else's ideas in your own words, or to re-phrase what you have read. Try covering the text (or your notes) and writing the point in your own words. Try imagining that you are explaining it to a friend or relative. Use spray notes or mind maps. Ask your tutor if you don't know what these are. Try putting key points on little pieces of paper, index cards or 'Post it' stickers.

PROOF READING: An Introduction

Proofreading your paper is like giving yourself a final look in the mirror before you leave home to make sure that you look the way you want. It is the final step before you send your writing off to your audience. When you proofread, instead of reading to see what ideas have been expressed, you read looking for errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation -errors that might distract your readers.

'When should you proofread something you have written? You should do so when you are satisfied with its content and its style -in other words, when you have a final draft. If you are working on a piece that you will not have the opportunity to rewrite, like an in-class essay, leave yourself about five minutes at the end of the writing time for proofreading. Corrections of punctuation marks and individual words can be made neatly on a final copy; even an entire sentence can be inserted if there is room to write it. Only if you need to insert several sentences or to change the order of several sentences will it be necessary to recopy the- manuscript.

How to Proof Read

To learn to proofread, you need to learn to read in a different way. Since you began learning to read as a child, you've been taught to read for meaning: to focus on the idea behind the words more than on the words themselves. However, when you proofread, you need to do the opposite: to focus on the forms of your words and sentences instead of on the meaning behind them.

The following suggestions will help you concentrate on form when you proof read.

1. **Place a ruler under each line as you read it.** This practise isolates each line in turn and forces you to concentrate your attention on it. Professional proofreaders who help prepare copy for printing routinely use a ruler when they proofread. You should *always* use a ruler to proofread.
2. **Read your text in reverse order, beginning with the last paragraph.** By reading out of order in this way, you are more likely to concentrate on the form of what you have written instead of on its meaning.
3. **Read your writing out loud.** 'When you read out loud, you slow your reading rate down, which will help you concentrate. Also, since your ear is more used to hearing standard forms than your eye is to seeing them, if you read your writing out loud, you will probably hear errors that you don't see. This technique is especially useful for certain errors. If you tend to omit words, for instance, you can often catch these omissions if you read out loud, using your finger as a marker to ensure that you read only the words you've actually written.

4. **Focus on your most common errors.** It is overwhelming to search for every possible error you might make while writing. It is both easier and more efficient to concentrate on the errors you know you tend to make, since you are focusing on the areas in which you make 90 percent of your errors instead of on which you make the remaining 10 percent. If there's one type of error that's a real problem for you, then proofread your paper once for that one error by itself.

Standard Proofreading Symbols	Explanation
over ~~U~~ nited Kingdom.	Insert material (punctuation mark, word, or short sentence)
Comm ~~u~~ nicipating	Take out material (use for single letters and punctuation. If you wish to remove a word or more, use a single line to cross the unwanted text out).
possible. We	Start a new paragraph
ADVERTising	A circle around capital letters mean they should be in lowercase
wide	Three lines drawn under a lowercase letter means that it should be a capital letter
str ^o ive	Close the gap between the words
○	Insert a full stop

Now try proof reading the following passage:

I had kids for two reasons: one, I got pregnat, and two, when I did, I couldn't think of any good reasoun not go ahead and have the babies. It was only after i had kids that I discovered the reasons why one should go ahead and become a parent. There are only two as far as I'm concerned. The first reason is that It's fascinating to watch them grow. I love watching them learn everything how to walk, how to talk, how to roller skate, and how to make jokes. Watching them grow teaches me more than any course in psychology, educational theory, sociology, or human values ever could. .

My second reason is very simple: I've discovered that they love me, and in this wold, that's something I'll never get enough of. I knew I was supposed to love them; I just didn't realize that the return on my investment would be so bountiful. There love for me, unexpected as it was, is true serendipity -unsought, surprisnig, and worthwhile beyond belief.

From: Donnelly, R (1993, 1982) Sequence: *A Basic Writing Course*, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Fort Worth.

CHECKLIST FOR PROOF READING

PIECE OF WRITING

TYPE OF ERROR				
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION				
APOSTROPHES				
COMMAS				
CAPITAL LETTERS				
AGREEMENT				
USE OF TENSE				
ARTICLES				
SPELLING				
LAYOUT				
LOGICAL ORDER				

RECORD SHEET

Checklist for Essay Writing		Essay Titles			
Read through this checklist when you have chosen your title. Write the title on the right.					
Check off the points at each stage.					
Stage 1: Choosing a title	Have I identified the keywords in the title?				
Stage 2: Have Research	Have I completed the necessary research?				
Stage 3: Planning	Have I planned the essay?				
Stage 4: Writing	Have I written in the style required (analytical or factual)?				
	Is what I've written relevant to the title?				
	Is there a logical development and conclusion to the essay?				
	Are my facts and quotations accurate?				
Stage 5: Presentation	Have I quoted my sources?				
	Have I written enough?				
	Have I listed the books I have read, and referred to, in my bibliography?				
Stage 6: Checking	Is each major idea developed in a separate paragraph?				
	Have I avoided clichés, jargon and slang?				
	Have I checked carefully for mis-spellings?				
	Have I left any words out?				
	Have I used punctuation properly?				
	Have I kept a copy of the essay?				