

International Student Orientation:

TASK 1. Your previous academic experience

This activity will encourage you to reflect on some of the differences between your academic experience so far and the experience awaiting you in the UK.

Consider the following questions:

In your previous studies:

1. How many modules/subjects did you study?
(Lots of short modules, or a limited number of in-depth modules?)
2. What was the relationship between class time and independent study time?
(Did you have a lot of time in class and less time for independent reading and writing, or were you expected to spend much more time in independent study and preparation than time spent in class?)
3. How much did you participate in class?
(Were you expected to speak, and ask questions, and present ideas and arguments in front of the class?)
4. How were you expected to respond to material that you studied?
(Did you have to memorise information? Were you expected to analyse and critique material that you read?)
5. What type of assessment was normal?
(Did you have to write coursework essays, and do presentations, or was all your assessment exam-based?)
6. Have you used a referencing system before?
(What referencing system did you use?)

TASK 2: Reading Critically

Read the text below and then answer the questions on the next page.

Intelligence

Intelligence depends on study habits and study skills which can be learnt.

This book is based on the premise that what we regard as intelligence is often a question of good study habits, strategies and skills that you can develop. For example, research shows that students who do best at problem-solving spend longer than other students in working out exactly what the problem is before trying to solve it. Other students look at the surface of the problem and do not see the underlying structure which connects it to problems they already know how to solve. Some students fail because they don't spend enough time considering the examples and information they are given; others copy out examples without reflecting on the underlying purpose of the activity (Keane, Kahney and Brayshaw 1989). Successful students use strategies that can be learnt.

Although the research mentioned above referred to a particular *kind* of problem-solving, its findings apply to university study in general. Some students skim across the surface of their learning, copying a bit from one book and a line from another, without really looking at why the work was set, what the information means, or its relevance to themselves. With most university assignments you will benefit from taking time to reflect, clarifying what is really being asked, the issues within the title, the reasons for that piece of work being set, and the best strategy to use. Over time, this way of working becomes a habit.

Cottrell, S. (2003:51-52) *The Study Skills Handbook*. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Task 2: Questions

Consider the following questions in relation to the text you are reading:

1. What is the main purpose of this text?
(i.e. what is the author trying to argue?)
2. What kind of evidence does the author use to support their argument?
3. Is the evidence up-to-date and reliable?
4. What agenda(s) might the author have?
(Note: having an agenda means having a hidden motive).
5. What are the implications of the text?

TASK 3: When Should I Reference?

Quiz: Decide if a reference to a source is needed in the following situations

Situation	Yes	No
1. When quoting directly from a published source.		
2. When using statistics or other data that is freely available from a publicly accessible website.		
3. When stating freely available and undisputed facts about a topic in the public domain.		
4. When paraphrasing a definition found on a website and when no writer, editor or author's name is shown.		
5. When summarizing or paraphrasing ideas which you have read in a core text book from your course.		
6. When summarizing in a concluding paragraph of your assignment what you discussed and referenced earlier in your text.		
7. When including in your assignment photographs or graphics that are freely available on the Internet and where no named photographer or originator is shown.		
8. When including an idea that you have read that makes an important contribution to the points made in your assignment.		

Adapted from materials designed by Colin Neville (2008) which are available on the LearnHigher website www.learnhigher.ac.uk

Referencing: important things to know

Early in your course you need to find out:

1. Which referencing system your department uses.
2. How to use this system correctly.
3. Why we reference.
4. When to reference.
5. The consequences of not referencing correctly.
6. Where to find further information.

Some Useful Sources of Information

- **Course Handbook**

Your course handbook should contain advice on the referencing system used by your department.

- **Further resources**

ELE resources under Student Resources, Study Zone Digital – a range of academic skills resources.

- **Two useful books**

Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2013) *Cite Them Right*. Basingstoke: Palgrave

Neville, C. (2010) *The Complete Guide to Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism 2nd Edition*. Maidenhead: Open University Press

- **A useful website**

Learnhigher has materials for supporting staff and students in Higher Education. This link will take you to the materials for students on referencing and avoiding plagiarism:

<http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/writing-for-university/referencing/>