

## Academic Writing Skills



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## Learning Outcomes

Following this session the student will be able to:

- Develop confidence with writing assignments
- Employ strategies for beginning and developing an assignment
- Review and identify components of a title
- Identify the key components of a good assignment
- Identify ways of developing a style of writing

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## Part 1: Why do we need to write assignments?

- Reinforce and consolidate learning
- Evaluate learning
- Demonstrate knowledge & understanding
- Apply theoretical concepts to the 'real world'

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## The Experience of Writing

- Intense ambivalent experience
- Feeling of vulnerability, enthusiasm and satisfaction
- Very seldom spoken about
- Perceptions of how intelligent you are
- We only see the 'best'
- Public and private experience

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## The Experience of Writing

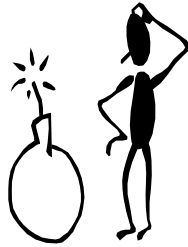
### Writers Block

#### Causes:

- Insisting on the perfect draft
- Waiting for inspiration

#### Useful Strategies:

- Make notes
- Brainstorming
- Piecework
- Satisficing



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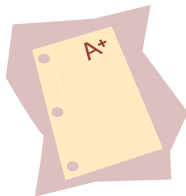
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## What is a good assignment?

- Answers the question asked
- Draws on the course material
- Shows a good grasp of the ideas in the course
- Presents a coherent argument
- Adopts an objective, analytical style
- Clearly written
- Appropriate and clearly structured
- Properly referenced, no typos, no grammar or spelling errors!



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## Part 2: How to write an assignment

The craft of writing

Making your essay flow

Making a convincing case

The experience of writing

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## The craft of writing

Writing as a craft?

Different stages in the PROCESS

- Thinking about the title
- Getting ideas onto paper
- Organizing the material
- Writing the first draft
- Review of work in the light of the essay title
- Writing the final draft



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## Writing Tools

- Computer
- Word count
- Spell & grammar check
- Brainstorming
- Information (data)



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## Thinking about the title

Think about it for a couple of days

- Clarify what the question is asking
- Shape a strategy for approaching it

Highlight/underline the keywords in the title



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## Answering the Question

- Analyze the question
- Read and re-read it at every stage
- Place a copy of the question beside you
- Note key instructions – describe, evaluate, illustrate

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## Question analysis

Discuss the four steps of the nursing process – assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Identify areas where you will use the nursing process in your own practice. **Word limit – 2,500.**



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## Analysis



Discuss  
Four steps of the nursing process -

- assessment
- planning
- implementation
- evaluation

Identify areas where you will use the nursing process in your own practice.

Word limit - 2,500.

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## Gathering material



Lots of time required

Go over what you have studied to check what might be relevant

Look up notes taken during lectures

Look up other resources - textbooks, articles, intranet, internet, newspapers, government publications, nursing bodies, etc.

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## Getting ideas on to paper



Start think in terms of what you are going to say

Jot down lots of thoughts relating to the title

Write down points *for* and *against* the title and any extra questions

Brainstorm and sift through

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## Organizing the material

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**Get started**

Write down points for and against the title

Organize the notes in order of priority (subgroups?)

Sketch a rough outline plan & keep it simple


**Classic structure**

- Introduction
- 3-4 Themes
  - Points against
  - Points for
- Conclusion

Mark each note into each paragraph and throw out what you doesn't fit

Prepare your first draft

*Make any mark rather than worry about a blank page*




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## Outline Plan

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- 1. Introduction (250 words)**  
*Tell them what you are going to do!*
- 2. Points (Themes) 2,000 words**  
*Do it!*

Four steps of the nursing process

  - assessment
  - planning
  - implementation
  - evaluation

**Practice**
- 3. Conclusion or Summary (250 words)**  
*Tell them what you have done!*

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## Introduction

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**Essay's**

- Approach the topic in a general way
- Limit the scope
- Define the topic
- Present a plan of coverage - a map

Should be concise, sharp, punchy, interesting and to the point.

**Literature Reviews**

Announce the topic of your review

State the purpose of your review

Explain the relevance of the topic

Preview the main points that you will make in the main body of the text

Sources - Medline, CINAHL, ect.

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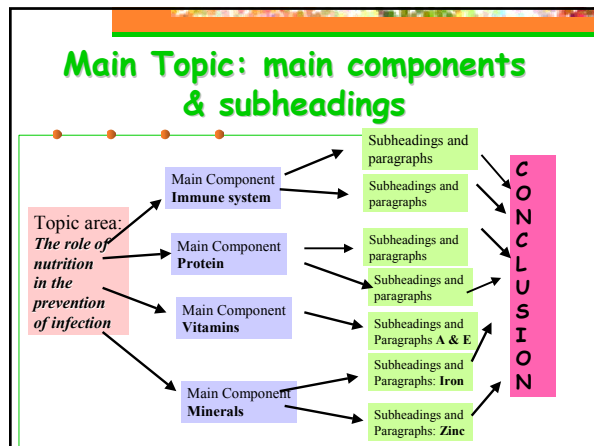
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## Conclusion

Summarises your argument and should be a reminder to the reader of the main areas discussed.

Do not introduce any new ideas which you have not discussed previously in the essay.

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## Why more than one draft?

- ✓ Produce a well presented essay
- ✓ No pressure on 1<sup>st</sup> draft = more creative and more fluent
- ✓ Avoids mental blocks
- ✓ More speedy