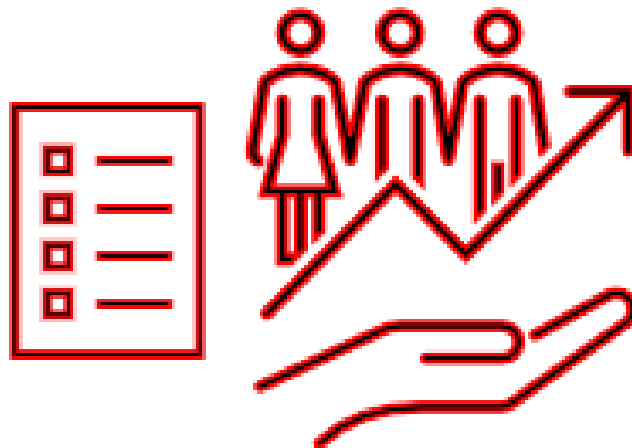


# Getting a headstart at university

## Training Manual

Requirements for the course  
Access to the Internet



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## Objectives

The student:

- Is able to write an academic essay with the correct structure
- Is able to create a meaningful thesis statement
- Is able to structure a paragraph for understanding
- Is able to write an academic essay which flows with transition words and phrases
- Is able to understand what is required in an essay question
- Is able to write an essay using the correct steps
- Is able to differentiate between formal and informal writing
- Is able to distinguish between comparing and contrasting essays
- Is able to write a clear heading
- Is able to search for information efficiently
- Is able to distinguish between a journal and a journal article
- Is able to evaluate the benefits of freely available journals on Google Scholar
- Is able to distinguish between paraphrasing, summarising, quotations and plagiarism
- Is able to explain how Turnitin works when it looks for similarity
- Is able to explain the difference between a bibliographic reference and an intext citation

## All about Getting a headstart at university

I have spent many years in education, first at school level, and then at university where I lectured in the B.Ed, B.Ed Hons, PGCE and M.Ed programmes.

There seems to be a disconnect between school and university. University thinks that certain topics are covered at school, but schools cover different topics. Academic literacy at university is a problem.

In this course, some topics that are problematic for students at university are covered:

- A. Structure of an academic essay
- B. Academic essay writing
- C. Finding information
- D. Plagiarism and referencing

The course is not 'for marks' but for understanding. There are videos, text, and quizzes that the student should do over and over again until they understand the work. They should do the quizzes today and then again the next day, and the following day. In most of the quizzes, the options are shuffled to check that the student actually knows the work. The different kinds of activities are used to help the student engage with the material.

The course can be done to help prepare one for studying at university, to prepare. This is not an easy course! Books have been written about the topics covered in this course – the information is very basic. One builds on this information at university, but this course provides the foundation.

The material here has been collected and developed over many years. I have tried to give the sources for any material that I may have copied, but where I have not done so please accept my apologies.

This course will take 20-30 hours to complete. Students can only be registered for the course for 30 days, after which the student will be removed from the system.

## **All about the course**

Welcome to the course on getting prepared, and getting an academic headstart.

There are 4 units in the course:

- A. Structure of an academic essay
- B. Academic essay writing
- C. Finding information
- D. Plagiarism and referencing

At the end of the course, an e-certificate will be awarded if all the activities in the course have been completed at a pass level.

The course has been designed to try and help the student remember the information, with many quizzes. There are links to information and then quizzes. One must be sure to do the quizzes again and again until one obtains a passing mark and then do them many more times again during the course to consolidate and internalise the information.

It is self-directed learning. Read the text, access and read the links, answer the quizzes, do the assignments and contribute to the forum. One works at one's own speed in one's own time.

The links are on the page with instructions. Follow the instructions. It is best to do the work in order.

Try, Click, Explore. Try, Click. Explore. Again welcome. Let's get prepared.

## **A Structure of an academic essay**

Keywords or concepts in this unit:

- Thesis statement
- Topic sentence or argument or point
- Support sentences, or evidence
- Paragraphs
- Transitioning phrases between paragraphs, or link
- Conclusion

This unit will take about 9 hours to complete.

A.1 Information on the essay structure

A.2 Information and then a quiz on the thesis statement

- A.3 Quiz on selecting thesis statements
- A.4 Information on using the PEEL method to write effective paragraphs
- A.5 Information and then a quiz on paragraphs and the topic/argument sentence
- A.6 Indicating the difference between the thesis statement and the topic/argument sentence
- A.7 Information and then a quiz on transition words, phrases and signals
- A.8 Information about the conclusion paragraph
- A.9 Indicating the differences between a body paragraph and a conclusion paragraph

## **B Academic essay writing**

This unit looks at essential aspects of the writing of an academic essay:

- The question
- Order of actions in the writing process
- Brainstorming and mind-mapping
- Academic writing style
- Comparing and contrasting essays
- Headings

This unit will take about 7 hours to complete.

- B.1 Information and then a quiz on understanding the question
- B.2 Information and then a quiz on the order of actions in the writing process
- B.3 Information and then a quiz on planning using brainstorming and mind-mapping
- B.4 Information and then a quiz on formal academic writing
- B.5 Information and then a quiz on formal writing vs informal writing styles
- B.6 Information and then a quiz on comparing and contrasting essays
- B.7 Quiz on headings

## **C Finding information**

At university, you use information from peer-reviewed or checked sources. That information is found in articles in accredited journals, or books. Articles on the Internet behind paywalls are usually of good quality, but in general university lecturers do not like information that comes from a website.

Books are found in libraries. Most universities now have libraries where you can read the book online, download certain pages, or download the whole book for a period of time. Those books are only available to their university students. Books can be freely borrowed from the online [Open Library](#).

Journal articles are found online in three distinct areas -

1. Freely available to the public
2. Available to the public but behind a paywall
3. To enrolled university students via their university websites.

This section focuses on finding sources in databases of journals, or books.

This unit will take about 5 hours to complete

- C.1 Information and then a quiz on online search functions
- C.2 Information and then a quiz all about journal articles
- C.3 Practical work on finding an educational journal article on a specific topic using Eric
- C.4 Information and then adding own opinion on the value of Google Scholar
- C.5 Information on the benefits of using academic journals online for scholarly research

## **D Plagiarism and referencing**

Paraphrasing, summarising, quotations and plagiarism are covered in this unit.

The concepts of bibliographies or list of references, and in-text referencing or citations are dealt with in general – the fine details are not covered here as each university/college seems to have their own system.

This unit will take about 8 hours to complete.

- D.1 Information and then a quiz on paraphrasing, summarising, quotations and plagiarism
- D.2 Information and then a quiz on plagiarism
- D.3 Information on what is Turnitin and how it is used
- D.4 Information and then a quiz on what is plagiarism
- D.5 Information and then a quiz on bibliographies or list of references
- D.6 Information and then a quiz on in-text referencing or citations
- D.7 Quiz on citations and referencing
- D.8 Discussion on what will you do to make sure you do not plagiarise

## **Grading**

The students can always locate and see their grades. They can redo activities in order to pass them. The purpose of the activities is to familiarise the student with the working of the activities, and are not difficult.

When all the activities have been done and the student has passed all the activities an e-certificate will be displayed that can be printed.



# Getting a headstart at university

20-30 hours

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**Student name**



6 October 2023

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