

Academic Research & Writing

Finding & Critically Evaluating Appropriate Resources

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**Undergraduate Diploma in
Digital Marketing**

Module - Research and Academic Studies...

Helps you develop the skills to succeed in the writing task
(Using practical examples as much as possible)

- Learn to write as clearly and accurately as possible
- Learn to question and evaluate everything you read (is it relevant and reliable?)
- Learn to cite and refer carefully the sources that make up all your ideas
- Learn presenting your work through a standard system



TEXT Books for this module....

Core textbooks

- McMillan, K. and Weyers, J. (2013). How to Write for University: Academic Writing for Success. Pearson.
- Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2019). Cite Them Right. The Essential Referencing Guide. Macmillan Education

Supplementary textbooks

- Bailey, S. (2019). The Essentials of Academic Writing for International Students. 3rd ed. Routledge.
- Cottrell, S. (2019). The Study Skills Handbook. 5th ed. Red Globe Press.
- Locker, K. O., & Kaczmarek, S. K. (2014). Business Communication: Building Critical Skills. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Swetnam, D. and Swetnam, R. (2020). Writing Your Dissertation. 3rd ed. Plymouth: How to Books.



1. Types of Texts for Academic Writing

For academic research & writing, prioritise these types of words:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles – Provide current, credible, and thoroughly vetted research.
- Academic books & monographs – Offer in-depth coverage on specific topics.
- Conference papers – Present cutting-edge or developing research (AMA, ACM Digital Marketing conferences).
- Government and NGO reports – Useful for policy-related and statistical information.
- Thesis and dissertation – Useful for niche or emerging research areas (but not always peer-reviewed).
- Verified academic websites – e.g., JSTOR, PubMed, Google Scholar.

AVOID: Opinion pieces, blogs, Wikipedia, promotional content, unverified online sources.

Always evaluate credibility



2. How to Utilise Effective Strategies for Locating Relevant Material

- ❖ Use library search tools like EBSCO, ProQuest
- ❖ Search by keywords related to your topic
- ❖ Use Boolean operators to refine searches
 - AND – combine concepts
 - OR – include synonyms
 - NOT – exclude terms
- ❖ Browse subject-specific words
- ❖ Use reference lists in relevant books to discover additional materials



3. Electronic Resources for Efficient Academic Research

Tool	Purpose
Google Scholar	To find peer-reviewed material
WARC	Global marketing intelligence and campaign reports
Statista	Marketing statistics, trends, visual data
Business Source Complete	Scholarly business/marketing articles
Emerald Insight	Marketing and business case studies and journals

4. How to Enhance Reading Methods

➤ SQ3R Method

Survey – Skim the article: title, abstract, headings

Question – What do I want to learn?

Read – Carefully go through the main sections

Recite – Summarize key points in your own words

Review – Reflect and connect to your project or theory

- **Skimming and scanning:** Skim for structure, scan for facts or quotes.
- **Highlight and annotate:** Use digital tools like Hypothesis or PDF editors.
- **Take Cornell notes:** Divide notes into key points, definitions, and reflections.



5. Recognize and Interpret Standard Text Features

Abstract : Quick summary of purpose, method, findings, conclusion. Always read this first.

Introduction : Establishes topic, rationale, research question.

Literature Review : Discusses existing research, identifies gaps.

Methodology : Describes how the research was done (important for credibility).

Findings/Results : Presents data and evidence.

Discussion : Interprets results, links back to theory.

Conclusion : Wraps up with implications and suggestions for future research.

References : This list shows all the sources used by the author are referred to in the text. It may give you some suggestions for further reading. (In the USA, this is usually called the bibliography.)



Author: Is the writer well known in his/her field? What else has he/she published?

Index: An alphabetical list of all the topics and names mentioned in a book. If, for example, you are looking for information about a person, the index will tell you if that person is mentioned, and how often.

Contents: A list of the main chapters or sections.

Publication date and edition: Do not use a first edition if there is a (revised) second edition available.



5.1 Reading abstracts

- Normally found in peer-reviewed journal articles
- A kind of summary which will help the reader decide whether to read the whole article
- Normally not written by undergraduate students
- It is important we are able to read them effectively

let's practice...



Let's study this abstract together.....

CITIZENSHIP NORMS AND THE EXPANSION OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION. Russell J. Dalton

A growing chorus of scholars laments the decline of political participation in America, and the negative implications of this trend for American democracy. This article questions this position – arguing that previous studies misdiagnosed the sources of political change and the consequences of changing norms of citizenship for Americans' political engagement. Citizenship norms are shifting from a pattern of duty-based citizenship to engaged citizenship. Using data from the 2005 'Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy' survey of the Center for Democracy and Civil Society (CDACS) I describe these two faces of citizenship and trace their impact on political participation. Rather than the erosion of participation, this norm shift is altering and expanding the patterns of political participation in America.

(Dalton, R.J. (2008) Political Studies 56 (1) 76–98.

Abstracts normally have a standard structure

- **Title-author-summary** - Indicate the main components of the abstract above
- **Background position** - The decline of political participation in America, and the negative implications of this trend for American Democracy
- **Aim and thesis of article** - This research questions the laments of scholars about the decline of political participation in America, and the negative implications of this trend for American democracy.
- **Method of research** - Analysed data from the 2005 'Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy' survey of the Center for Democracy and Civil Society (CDACS)
- **Results of the research** - Rather than the erosion of participation, this norm shift is altering and expanding the patterns of political participation in America.



6. How to Conduct Critical Analysis of Text

Authority: Who wrote this? What's their expertise?

Relevancy: Is the data up-to-date? (Especially important in fast-moving areas like digital platforms)

Purpose: Is this informational or promotional?

Bias: Is the author selling a product or service?

Evidence: Are claims supported by data or research?

Relevance: Does this apply to your academic work or real-world case study?



Written task 1

Assessing texts critically

1. Probably unreliable. The adjectives used (easily, quickly) and the lack of concrete information suggest that this text is not to be trusted.
2. Probably reliable. The advice the writer is giving appears common sense, although not everyone might agree with all of it (e.g., cooking is fun).
3. Probably reliable. The facts given can be confirmed by students' own experience



Developing a critical attitude ...

List any statements from the articles that you find unreliable and add comments to explain your doubts in the table below. Then decide which article you find more reliable overall.

A. Statements

nearly half of Harvard's history professors were on sabbatical leave

they (students) currently study for 14 hours per week

A. Comments

This seems to be the writer's feeling rather than a fact

Who says so? Which study?

(Most of the facts given probably were taken from the AEI report or from the book by Hacker and Dreifus, published in 2010)

B. Statements

the average UK university graduate will earn £400,000 (\$600,000) more over his or her lifetime compared to a non-graduate.

B. Comments

How can one tell? How is this being predicted?

- Discussion vocabulary used Essay titles commonly ask students to 'discuss' a topic

Essay titles commonly ask students to
'discuss' a topic

e.g., 'Working from home can be positive for many companies and their employees – discuss'.

This requires an evaluation of both the **benefits** and **disadvantages** of the topic, with a section of the essay, sometimes headed 'Discussion', in which a summary of these is made.



Discussion vocabulary...

+	-
benefit	drawback
advantage	disadvantage
a positive aspect	a negative aspect
pro (informal)	con (informal)
plus (informal)	minus (informal)
one major advantage	a serious drawback
A significant benefit of working from home is the saving of time by not commuting.	One negative aspect of homeworking can be the loss of regular contact with colleagues.

➤ Organization...

The discussion section can be organised in two ways:

- i. grouping the benefits and disadvantages together
- ii. examining the subject from different viewpoints.

e.g.: **‘Environmental considerations have no place in a company’s strategy – discuss.’**

- (a) Grouping all the drawbacks together in one or more paragraphs, then treating the benefits in the same way
(drawbacks, benefits, discussion)
- (b) Examining the subject from different viewpoints (economic, ethical or social)

LET’S PRACTICE



‘Environmental considerations have no place in a company’s strategy – discuss.’

Drawbacks: May increase costs (e.g., ‘green’ electricity)/delay projects/extra work for managers	Economic: Initial investment in energy-saving measures may increase costs but long-term benefits should follow
Benefits: May save money (e.g., reduced packaging)/good PR = increased sales/employee job satisfaction may also be increased	Ethical: Responsible companies should play a part in combating climate change
Discussion: Depends on nature of business/some costs will rise, others fall/important long-term benefits as consumers place more weight on ‘green’ considerations	Social: Consumer-facing companies benefit from ‘green’ credentials = increased sales/employee job satisfaction may also be increased

➤ Language of discussion-

Avoid personal phrases such as in my opinion or personally, I think . . .

- It is generally accepted that
- It is widely agreed that
- Most people appear
- It is probable that
- The evidence suggests that
- It can be argued that
- Some people believe that
- According to Emerson (2011)

Use impersonal phrases instead such as:

suggests a minority viewpoint

supporting your opinions with sources



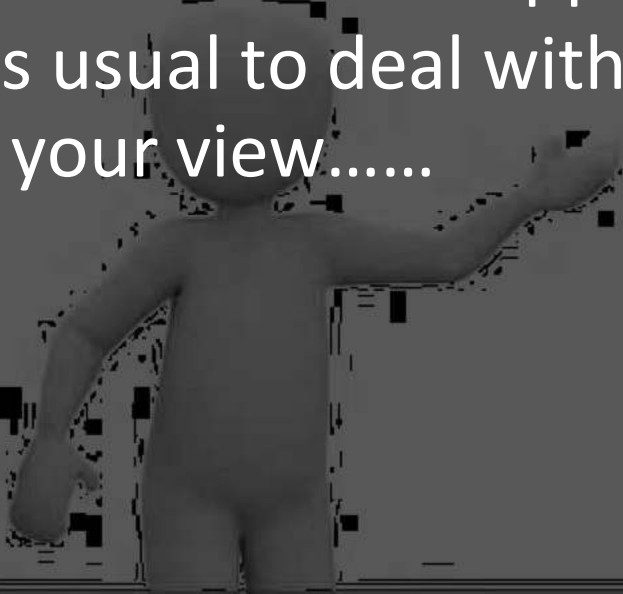
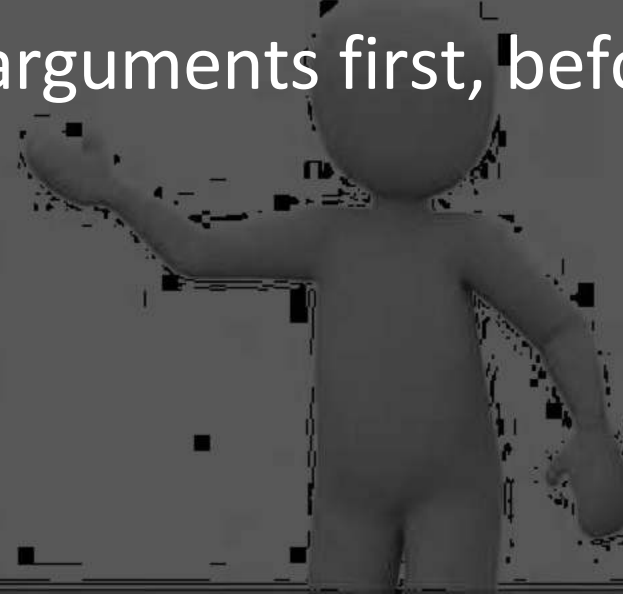
➤ Counter arguments...

I am right

Me too

In a discussion essay one must

- show that one is familiar with both sides of the argument
 - provide reasons to support your position
- i.e., it is usual to deal with the counterarguments first, before giving your view.....





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