

# Writing Skills

Developing your writing skills is important in producing a quality piece of work. Planning and research are important factors contributing to a successful assignment.

## Advantages of planning what you are writing:

Before you start writing, plan what you are going to write, it helps you to;

- Record your ideas,
- Come up with new ideas,
- Organise your thoughts,
- Check that you have all the information that you need

## Think about:

1. Why: Purpose  
Are you writing a letter, essay, report, short note...
2. What: Context  
Is it a formal or informal piece
3. Who: Audience  
Writing for different audiences affects the content, format and style

## Research and Note-Taking:

Conducting your research effectively is essential to ensure comprehensive and high-quality argument (for information and guidance on research skills please refer to the research skills chapter.)

It is useful to practise taking notes from different kinds of texts to develop your techniques. Newspapers are good examples of various styles with a mix of narrative, description, exposition and argument.

## Practising Note-Taking:

1. Skim –read each paragraph
2. Read in-depth to understand
3. Scan-read to decide on points and structure.

Taking notes as part of research can often be very difficult. This is because it is tough to decide whether or not something is useful.

The key to note taking is ensuring that you have...



Only  
what is  
**Important**  
but  
**Everything**  
that you need...



In addition to this, you must also ensure that the information selected is NUT.

- N** New
- U** Useful and Understandable
- T** "Tellable"

If you can understand the information used enough to be able to tell it to someone else, then it is appropriate for your research and will help substantiate claims.

# MILE

## Most Improvement for Least Effort

Quick guide to selecting and analysing information

- Identify facts
- Identify opinions
- Identify bias and attempts to persuade
- Select relevant information for the task
- Make simple notes
- Plan task
- Identify new information needed
- Find and select new information
- Identify fact, opinion and bias
- Select relevant information for task
- Make simple notes
- Complete task



# CARS

When taking notes from any source, especially the Internet, you must make sure that it is CARS.

## Credibility

- A trustworthy source
- Author's credentials
- Known or respected organisation
- Evidence of quality control

## Accuracy

- Up-to-date, factual, detailed exact
- Timelines – correct today (not yesterday)
- Audience and purpose fit your needs
- Comprehensive to the subject; the whole truth



## Support

- Listed sources
- Contact information
- Available corroboration
- Convincing evidence for claims made
- A source you can triangulate (find at least two other sources that support it)

## Reasonableness

- Fair, balanced
- Objective; lacks bias, fallacies, slanted tone
- No conflict of interest
- No inflammatory language
- Moderate – lacks exaggerated claims

# BARE INFORMATION

To ensure that something is CARS, you need to take on the bare facts.

By synthesising your own arguments from pure facts, you can prevent your work from being biased like the source you used.



## Methods of Planning

1. Making a list
2. Mind map
3. Diagrams
4. Prepare material
5. Flow charts

## After Planning Write a Draft:

A draft is a rough plan of your writing content. Check that the writing flows well, have you included everything that you want to? The layout depends upon the purpose and the audience that you are writing for and the context.

## Format and Structure:

Different forms and structures can be used to present and organise your written work appropriately, such as:

1. Writing personal letters,
2. Writing business letters
3. Writing a business or investigative report
4. Writing a newspaper report/Newspaper & magazine articles
5. Writing essays

## Proofread your draft:

It is imperative to proofread your draft for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

## Writing Introductions and Conclusions:

Introductions and conclusions highlight your personal contributions to the subject. Introductions should persuade the readers that what you are writing about is worth reading. Conclusions should indicate that you have discussed what your introduction sets out and that your findings and the conclusions that you have made, your overall contribution to the subject are worth remembering.