Welcome

Here at Education for Health we have been developing and delivering education and training in long term conditions to meet the ever changing needs of primary care since 1987. We are the world’s leading charity that focuses on education as a powerful lever for improving healthcare and offer a specialist portfolio of accredited distance, blended and eLearning modules as well as tailor made bespoke learning solutions.

Our diploma and degree programmes are designed for healthcare professionals to understand treatment needs in some of the most important preventable and manageable Long Term Conditions (LTC). Courses are validated by The Open University and are mapped against Knowledge Skills Framework (KSF) and Skills for Health competencies, and are based on the most recent clinical guidelines.

As well as developing cutting edge educational resources, we at Education for Health also advocate on a range of crucial health issues. As such our voice is heard at the highest levels and we deliver training in the UK and internationally; establishing ourselves as a leading education, research and campaigning organisation. More courses are being added to the portfolio all the time. Contact the team on 01926 493313 to find out about new courses and the latest dates.

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Contents

1 Writing for success .................................................. Page 01
  1.1 Introduction .......................................................... 02
  1.2 Learning Outcomes .................................................. 02
  1.3 Organisation ........................................................... 02
    1.3.1 Introduction .................................................... 02
    1.3.2 Main body of the assignment .............................. 04
  1.4 Presentation ........................................................ 09
  1.5 References .......................................................... 12
  1.6 Plagiarism ............................................................ 16
    1.6.1 Citing references in your work and listing correctly in a reference list 18
  1.7 Appendices .......................................................... 21
  1.8 Knowledge and Comprehension .................................. 23
  1.9 Application and reflection ........................................ 26
  1.10 Analysis and synthesis ........................................... 26
  1.11 Evaluation and conclusion ...................................... 28
  1.12 Writing for Success Summary .................................... 28

Please click on the above section titles to be taken to the required page.
1 Writing for success

1.1 Introduction

Being successful at degree level requires the use of some fundamental academic writing skills that enable you to present a coherent academic argument. It is necessary, therefore, to understand the change in writing style that distinguishes degree level writing from that which you may have done at diploma level. Don’t worry though that all of this is beyond your capability as there is plenty of support available. There are certain tricks of the trade in terms of degree level writing and once you understand these, the prospect of degree level writing will not seem so unnerving; the most important thing is not to struggle alone but to ask for help when you need it.

This unit provides some simple tips and advice for producing academic essays and gives you the opportunity to practice some of the key skills involved in writing effectively for degree level. It draws on the information contained in the Student Guide and you will find it useful to refer to this whilst completing this unit and when writing your assignments. The Student Guide can be found online in the Student Support section which is reached via the Help link at the top right of the screen.

Also included in your learning materials online, under the Assessment tab, you will find a guide to the overall criteria by which your work will be assessed and a copy of the marking grid which shows you how marks are allocated for any of your written work that you send in for assessment. This grid is designed to enable markers to give a mark which accurately reflects the quality of your academic writing, as well as the clinical content of your work.

It is important to refer to this grid when writing your assignments and the exercises included in this unit are designed to help you understand what is needed in relation to the different elements in the grid.

These are:

- Organisation and presentation
- Knowledge and comprehension
- Application and reflection
- Analysis and synthesis
- Evaluation and conclusion

For those of you who have previously studied at diploma level with Education for Health you will see that although the marking grid comprises the same key sections, the allocation of marks between them is different. At degree level there is greater emphasis on the skills of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and conclusion and so there are more marks allocated to these parts of the grid than there were at diploma level.

Even if you have received good marks in other degree level courses and feel that you already know how to write at this level you may find it helpful to use these exercises as a reminder and to ensure that you are familiar with the writing style expected at Education for Health.
1.2 Learning Outcomes

Studying the information in the student guide and completing this unit will enable you to:

• Structure your ideas in a logical manner
• Identify what is required for a clear introductory paragraph
• Identify what is required to formulate a clear conclusion
• Link sentences or paragraphs together to clearly demonstrate the association between topics
• Understand the reasons for using references
• Identify circumstances that may lead to plagiarism
• Cite references clearly and accurately in the body of your essay and in a reference list at the end
• Recognise an appropriate style for academic writing
• Understand what is meant by the terms analysis, synthesis and evaluation and recognise how this differs from description
• Recognise the factors that markers are looking for when awarding marks.

1.3 Organisation

The way that you structure your assignment is very important. Your discussion should flow logically from a clear introduction through the content to a conclusion which draws together the key issues that have been explored.

1.3.1 Introduction

Every assignment must have an introduction; depending on the length of your assignment this should not normally need to be longer than one or two paragraphs. Your introduction must be clear and relevant to the topic set, so readers know exactly what to expect. An effective introduction outlines the different areas that will be explored in relation to the topic area and why they are important. It may also give readers a feeling of the ongoing political, scholarly, or professional discussion surrounding the issue (the bigger picture).

Exercise 1

Look at the introductions written by two different students on the following essay topic:

‘With reference to a patient you have cared for discuss the information it is important to cover when taking a clinical history to help establish a diagnosis in someone presenting with symptoms of increasing breathlessness’

How well do you think these students have outlined what their essay will be about? Do their introductions clearly relate to the topic they have been set? What advice could you offer these students to help them improve their introductions?
Introduction 1: This assignment seeks to explore key issues relating to the diagnosis of 61 year old gentleman complaining of shortness of breath on minimal exertion. He lived with his wife in a two storey house and was finding it increasingly difficult to get up and downstairs or to walk out to the gate.

Introduction 2: Breathlessness is an important and frightening symptom experienced by people who may be suffering from a range of different diseases. In order to decide on the most appropriate treatment it is important to make a clear diagnosis. Using a 61 year old man who was having increasing breathlessness on exertion this essay will look at how a history can help distinguish between these different causes and explore the objective tests that could be used to support this.

Feedback

Exercise 1

1. Suggested Answer: This student has given a good introduction to the patient they will discuss. They could improve this by adding a brief outline of the key issues that will be discussed in relation to taking his history. This would give the reader a clearer idea of what to expect. A further couple of sentences outlining the areas to be covered such as information about symptoms, past medical history, family history, and social history would enhance this and achieve higher marks. It is better to avoid saying ‘seeks’ or ‘aims to’ as it sounds a bit uncertain; be positive e.g. ‘this assignment will...’

2. Suggested Answer: This introduction clearly sets out the rationale for why it is important to distinguish between the different causes of breathlessness and briefly introduces the patient which is good. It does not actually outline how use of history will be explored in the essay. Again a further couple of sentences outlining the areas to be covered such as information about symptoms, past medical history, family history, social history would enhance this and achieve higher marks.

Mentioning the use of objective tests suggests that this student may be about to stray away from the topic set which was history. If you try to include extra information that was not asked for you will probably run out of words and will not be able to discuss the key issues fully. Remember to stick to the topic you have been asked to address.
Now try writing your own introduction (approx 100 words):

Introduction

Answer

This essay will consider the important areas to cover when taking a history in order to try to discover the possible causes for a patient becoming more breathless. Using the example of a 71 year old man who presented with increasing shortness of breath it will review the importance of obtaining detailed information about current symptoms and factors that may aggravate or relieve them. It will consider the relevance of personal and family history and examine the role of social factors such as smoking, alcohol intake, occupation, activity and hobbies. It will demonstrate how all these factors from the history contributed to the differential diagnosis of this patient.

Look at the suggested answer. You will have put things in your own words but you should have covered the same key issues. In the first sentence there is a clear link with the essay title/topic. It then briefly introduces the patient and outlines all the features that will be covered so the reader knows exactly what to expect. Finally it summarises the purpose of the history in helping the diagnostic process. This will provide a good link to the conclusion where the information revealed in the history can be drawn together and a working diagnosis proposed.

1.3.2 Main body of the assignment

Following on from the introduction your discussion must be coherent and be presented in such a way that it makes logical sense. You need to group similar ideas together into paragraphs making sure that your sentences connect together in a way that makes sense. You then need to make sure that your paragraphs are arranged in such a way that your discussion moves forward logically and does not jump about.

It is important not to assume that your reader will already know how your ideas are linked to each other. There are useful words or phrases that can help you when linking ideas together, but you must ensure that these are selected appropriately or they may confuse rather than help.
Example 1

Confusing: Nobody inquired about the purse found on the bus. Furthermore, it was given to charity.

(The word *furthermore* indicates that one action happened in addition to the other).

Helpful: Nobody inquired about the purse found on the bus, so it was given to charity.

(The word *so* indicates that one action happened as a result of the other).

Example 2

Henry didn’t understand his homework. His dad helped him.

Might be changed to

Since Henry didn’t understand his homework, his dad helped him.

Or

Henry didn’t understand his homework, so his dad helped him.

Exercise 2

Insert the best alternative

1. Despite being part of the UK the two largest Channel Islands, ____________, Jersey and Guernsey, are much closer to France than to England

   *for example*  *namely*  *in particular*

2. Sales of printed books have experienced a small but steady fall over the past 12 months, ____________, electronic books have seen an increase in their share of the market.

   *above all*  *in contrast*  *correspondingly*

3. The business manager explained that due to the current financial situation it would be necessary to hold current salary levels for all grades of staff, ____________, no one was getting a pay rise.

   *Nevertheless*  *In other words*  *Similarly*

In addition to linking sentences together, it is important to link paragraphs together logically to help your reader understand how they are related to each other. Without this it can be difficult for readers to understand how the different ideas all link together.
in relation to your main topic.

A good way to move from one paragraph to another can be to use old and new construction. When introducing the new topic you can refer back to the main idea of the previous paragraph to link the two together.

For example, if you were writing an essay about healthy lifestyle advice, you might want to move from a paragraph about exercise to one about diet by emphasizing that both are essential for a healthy lifestyle e.g.:

End of first paragraph:
So, establishing a daily exercise routine is important for maintaining good health.

Start of new paragraph:
In addition to exercise, a well-balanced diet is important to good health. Any well-balanced diet should include...

Exercise 3

In the following examples you are given the last sentence of a paragraph and need to choose which sentence you think would make the best start for the next paragraph.

1. So it can be seen that a detailed history can reveal a great deal of useful information.
   
a. The most suitable diagnostic tests in this case were....

   b. Taking a detailed history can help to guide healthcare professionals in choosing the most suitable diagnostic tests which in this case were...

2. It was now clear from the history that Mrs. S was not responding to the usual treatment.
   
a. When patients fail to respond to usual treatment the next steps are to consider other diagnoses and to organise tests such as...

   b. A further set of blood tests were arranged and a scan booked.

3. Having taken a full history and carried out spirometry John was diagnosed with COPD.
   
a. The next step was to discuss with John about stopping smoking.

   b. The only intervention shown to halt the progression of COPD is smoking cessation and so an important first step in his treatment was to discuss smoking cessation.
It is always important to use these techniques to link sentences or paragraphs together. It does not, however, guarantee a logical progression through your discussion. If sentences or paragraphs do not make sense in the order you have them then using these types of words or phrases won’t help much. If you find it difficult to make the connection between two ideas, check to see if there is a better place to put one of your ideas. If you cannot find a good place anywhere, check to see if that idea is clearly related to the topic you have been asked to discuss. If it does not, think about taking it out or changing it so that it clearly links to the essay topic and relates to your other ideas.

Exercise 4

Students were asked to write a case study about supporting someone giving up smoking. They brainstormed the topic and came up with all the following ideas to include in their essay. Can you put these topics into the following essay plan below so that they form a logical progression through the subject?

Ideas

• Outline of patients personal, social and medical background
• Explore reasons why he wants to stop now
• Find out what he understands about dangers of smoking
• Brief outline of why smoking cessation is important
• Brief outline of practice setting for this case study
• Outline of key points to be covered in this case study
• Assessing motivation to stop
• Assessing readiness to change
• Find out about previous quit attempts - what worked what didn’t
• What was less successful and why
• What could be learnt from this case and therefore what could be done differently in the future
• What went well and why
• Pharmacological support – choosing most appropriate based on assessment
• Individual support vs. group support
• Setting a quit date
• Referral to stop smoking service
• Psychological support/ lifestyle advice/ dealing with barriers to stopping
• Ongoing support/follow up
• What to do if quit attempt isn’t successful
• Summary of the approaches used with this patient
• How does he think smoking affects his life and health
• Level of dependence on nicotine
Introduction - General overview

Paragraph 4 - Interventions

Paragraph 1 - Introduce subject

Paragraph 5 - Maintaing change

Paragraph 2 - Assess desire to change

Conclusion

Paragraph 3 - Strengths and weaknesses

Exercise 4

Suggested Answer:

Introduction
Brief outline of why smoking cessation is important
Brief outline of practice setting for this case study
Outline of key points to be covered in this case study

Paragraph 1 (Introduce the case study subject)
Outline of patients personal, social and medical background
Find out what he understands about dangers of smoking
How does he think smoking affects his life and health

Paragraph 2 (Assess readiness to change)
Explore reasons why he wants to stop now
Assessing motivation to stop
Assessing readiness to change
Setting a quit date
Referral to stop smoking service

Paragraph 3 (Identify strengths and weaknesses of the quit attempt)
Level of dependence on nicotine
Find out about previous quit attempts - what worked what didn’t
Pharmacological support - choosing most appropriate based on assessment
Paragraph 4 (Pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions)
Psychological support/ lifestyle advice/ dealing with barriers to stopping
Individual support vs. group support

Paragraph 5 (Maintaining change)
On-going support/follow up
What to do if quit attempt isn’t successful

Conclusion
Summary of the approaches used with this patient
What went well and why
What was less successful and why
What could be learnt from this case and therefore what could be done differently in the future

See above for examples of ‘subject headings’ which explain why topics were grouped together. This can be useful when planning your essay. Sub-headings are not required in the final version of your essay.

1.4 Presentation
In order to give a professional appearance to your work and to make it easier for the reader to follow your discussions it is important to follow the instructions given about font size and line spacing (Arial size 12 and double spacing). You should also proof read carefully to ensure that you eliminate typing errors and to make sure that what you say makes sense.

Academic Language
It is also important to use appropriate academic language and to avoid slang terms or colloquial expressions. For example, rather than saying ‘the child’s mom and pop were worried’ you should say ‘the child’s parents’ or ‘mother and father’.

Unless you have been specifically told that it is acceptable for a particular assignment you should avoid writing in the first person.

Some students mistakenly believe that degree level writing means using complex language and the longest words possible in order to show how clever they are. A typical example of this may be a statement like this:

“In an analogous discussion regarding the amelioration of standards designed to augment the ability of staff to effectively eradicate suboptimal hand washing techniques it has been suggested that...”

Unfortunately simply using long words does not show your own understanding of the concepts or issues under discussion and will not gain you marks. In this case all that is being said is:

“In a similar discussion about the improvement of standards aimed at helping staff to
get rid of poor hand washing habits it has been suggested that..."

Look at the following examples of a student’s work who was discussing the use of spirometry in primary care. Try to answer the questions.

Exercise 5

Example 1

Disease management guidelines for COPD and asthma (NICE 2010; BTS/SIGN 2011) suggest spirometry as the preferred diagnostic test and for monitoring disease progression. This along with the incentives set out in QOF (NHS employers 2011) means that more spirometry is now being carried out in primary care. The quality of this procedure is debatable and there has been an observable trend demonstrating a significant level of disparity between specialist centres and primary care facilities. In the local area it has been that very few nurses have done proper spirometry training and most have just had sessions with a rep from the company supplying the machines. I don’t think this is an acceptable standard of training and having looked at the paper by Mark Levy et al in 2009 don’t think we can even meet the basic he proposes let alone the advance level.

Example 2

Recent disease management guidelines for COPD (NICE 2010) and Asthma (BTS/SIGN 2011) recommend the use of spirometry for diagnosis and monitoring of disease progression. They refer to the need for high quality spirometry performed by adequately trained personnel but do not specify standards for the performance of spirometry however Levy et al (2009) have developed proposed standards for use in primary care. With the advent of the quality outcomes framework as part of the GMS contract (2004) many more practice nurses are performing spirometry and Cooper (2007) emphasises that the outcomes from such spirometry services which may guide diagnosis or management are dependant on the quality and training of the spirometer operator.

It is important to remember that under the NMC code of conduct (NMC 2008) nurses are responsible for ensuring that they have adequate knowledge and competence to deliver appropriate care and yet a survey by Upton et al (2007) clearly demonstrated that many nurses in primary care working in a specialist respiratory role did not have formal education or training. This must surely call into question their competence in performing or interpreting spirometry accurately and might suggest that there is a lack of understanding of what constitutes appropriate knowledge or competence, referred to as ‘unconscious incompetence’ by Adams (2011). This reinforces the need for setting of acceptable standards and further training, a view echoed by Derom (2008) and Levy et al (2009).
In light of the concerns raised by the literature an audit of local practice (appendix 1) was undertaken which showed that the local picture was not dissimilar from the findings of these studies. Although there were pockets of good practice there were no consistent standards across the locality and levels of training ranged from fully accredited courses to a lunch time session with the equipment manufacturer. In order to address these issues a local steering group has been set up to develop and implement a local policy governing the performance of spirometry including the setting of minimum acceptable levels of competence for operators which will be assessed in line with ATS/ERS recommendations (Miller 2005).

**Question**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where does the evidence for lack of training in spirometry come from?</td>
<td>No source given</td>
<td>Upton 2007&lt;br&gt;Derom 2008, Levy 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why does the student think it is important that nurses have appropriate training?</td>
<td>Not clear</td>
<td>To comply with NMC code of conduct. Because it affects outcomes of spirometry service (Cooper 2007) which is important for diagnosis or management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where does the information about the local picture come from?</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Local audit provided as an appendix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Answer
The difference in the two pieces of work demonstrates how the student in the second example has been able to make use of a range of supporting literature to set the scene for their discussion and to underpin the points they make.

Extract 2 demonstrates the type of writing expected at degree level, because it has:

• Depth and breadth showing understanding of the background to the issue under discussion
• Extensive use of literature to support the ideas being presented
• A linking, “conversational” style, which shows the students own interpretation of what they have read and how it informs the argument being presented
• Applied the evidence to the local situation
• Looked at different elements and then drawn them together to make their own recommendations for practice developments.

1.5 References

In order to help you demonstrate how research and theory links to practice you will need to make use of correct referencing techniques.

Exercise 5

1. Can you identify which of these are reasons for accurately providing references in your work and in a list at the end?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Yes/No</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To enable the reader to find the original source and read it for themselves.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To enable you to find the information for yourself in the future.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. To impress the marker.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. To provide evidence of the ideas you are discussing showing that you have not just made them up.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. To avoid the risk of plagiarism.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. To demonstrate wide reading.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. To provide the number of references asked for in the assignment brief.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
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<td>To demonstrate wide reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>To provide the number of references asked for in the assignment brief.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now you have established why you should use references can you identify when they should be used?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You want to quote directly some information taken from a journal article which has been written by somebody else.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are arguing a point in your essay using your own ideas and theories, which have not been expressed in earlier essays.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are summarising the thoughts of another writer, although not directly quoting from him/her.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have used an article as background reading but have not directly used information in your writing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You want to refer to your own previously published work.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>You want to include some statistics or other factual data.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Suggested Answer</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
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<tr>
<td>You want to quote directly some information taken from a journal article which has been written by somebody else.</td>
<td>Yes. If you use a direct quote you must put the words in quotation marks and indent on a new line. The page number as well as the authors name and date must be included in the text of your essay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are arguing a point in your essay using your own ideas and theories, which have not been expressed in earlier essays.</td>
<td>No, if these are your own ideas and views that have not been expressed elsewhere then there is no need for a reference. It is however, not acceptable to use exactly the same material for several different essays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are summarising the thoughts of another writer, although not directly quoting from him/her.</td>
<td>Yes, a reference is required to indicate that these are not your own original ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have used an article as background reading but have not directly used information in your writing.</td>
<td>No, it is not required to cite this in your essay or reference list. Background reading can be included in a separate list called a bibliography which lists any articles or books that you may have read as a part of your studies but have not directly referenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You want to refer to your own previously published work.</td>
<td>Yes, you must provide a reference to any published work even if it is your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You want to include some statistics or other factual data.</td>
<td>Yes, all factual data must have a reference indicating where it is was obtained. If this is unpublished data from your own practice you will not be able to give a reference but should indicate where it came from. If data comes from sources that cannot easily be referenced it can be included as an appendix.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.6 Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when the work of someone else is presented as one’s own and is not attributed to the other.

Exercise 6

Can you identify which of the three answers given (a, b, or c) is correct.

1. John is writing an essay. He has done a lot of reading from different journals and several books from the library. He is not sure however, from which ones the ideas he has used have come from. He lists the range of books and articles he thinks he used in his reference list.

a. Not plagiarism but he should have cited the books in the text
b. Plagiarism – he should have cited the books in the text
c. Not a problem – he cited the books in the reference list

2. Aziz knows that his colleague has done the same module previously. He asks if he can read through her essay so that he can see what type of answer is expected. His friend agrees but warns him not to copy anything as that would be collusion. Without his friend knowing, Aziz did copy part of it and presented it as his own.

a. Aziz plagiarised his friend's work
b. Aziz and his friend colluded
c. Aziz and his friend plagiarised

3. Mary uses the internet to find and read lots of relevant papers for her essay. During one of her searches she finds a free essay site which has an essay on a similar topic to the one she has been set. She downloads the essay and adds a few of her own ideas and puts her own introduction and conclusion into it and then submits it.

a. Mary has not plagiarised because she did not pay for the essay
b. Mary did not plagiarise because she added her own ideas
c. Mary has plagiarised

4. Deborah finds that an essay that she has done in a previous course is very similar to one she has to write for her current module. She uses her previous essay – but unfortunately she does not have the references properly recorded. She has names cited in the text, but not details of the sources. She makes up one or two and thinks that the tutor will probably not worry about the rest.

a. Because it was work from a different place, it was all right
b. It was all right because it had already been marked
c. Deborah plagiarised
5. Jane and Erica are working on the same essay. Jane finds a good website that is very helpful. It provides good material on the subject on which they are writing. She tells Erica about it. They both download chunks of it. Jane cuts and pastes into her essay and puts a reference to the site in her reference list. Erica paraphrases from the material, acknowledges it in the text and in her reference list. The tutor would not have noticed the similar material but for the fact that the two essays were adjacent to each other in the pile.

a. Jane and Erica colluded
b. Jane and Erica plagiarised
c. Only one of them plagiarised

6. Susan finds a helpful article in a journal. She photocopies it and copies sentences from it into her essay, alternating these with her own words. She never copies more than a line without adding her own words or changing words from the article slightly. She puts the article in a bibliography to show she has read it but does not cite it in the text or put it in a reference list because she does not feel that she makes a sufficiently specific reference to it.

a. Susan is not plagiarising because she has not copied more than a sentence at a time
b. Susan is plagiarising
c. Susan is writing a good essay. She has properly cited the reference in the bibliography

7. Lewis finds some information at a website that says exactly what he wants to say. It is six lines of text which he puts into quotation marks. He cuts and pastes it. He cites it in the text and puts the full reference including the website address in the reference list with the date of access.

a. Lewis cheated
b. He plagiarised
c. What Lewis did is all right.

Exercise 6

Answers

1. B he should have cited the books in the text. It is important when researching your work to keep a record of what ideas come from where so you can avoid this problem.
2. A Aziz plagiarised his friend’s work.
3. C Mary plagiarized – she falsely passed off someone else’s work as her own – it doesn’t matter that it was free it is still plagiarism.
4. C Deborah plagiarized – two reasons – it is not acceptable to submit work even if it is your own that has already been submitted in a previous module. Also sources were not correctly cited.
5. C Only one of them plagiarized – Jane because she did not paraphrase or cite it in the text.

6. B It is plagiarism.

7. C What Lewis did is all right. The text was properly cited and a reference put into the reference list.

**1.6.1 Citing references in your work and listing correctly in a reference list**

So that everyone can understand and find references a set of standard rules have been developed which should be followed. At Education for Health we encourage you to use the Harvard system.

**Exercise 7**

1. You are using a book called ‘Developing essential study skills’, published in 2006 and written by Elaine Payne and Lesley Whittaker. The publishers were Pearson Education Limited whose offices are in Harlow and it is a second edition.

Write the reference as it should appear in your reference list according to Harvard rules:


2. You have included a reference in your text to the document, Comprehensive Critical Care: a review of adult Critical Care services which was produced and published by the Department of Health in London 2000.

Write the reference as it should appear in your reference list according to Harvard rules:


3. You want to use an article from the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine in volume 160 number 5 pages S26-S28 published in 1999 called Childhood viral infection and the pathogenesis of asthma and chronic obstructive lung disease written by James C Hogg.

Write the reference as it should appear in your reference list according to Harvard rules:


Write the reference as it should appear in your reference list according to Harvard rules:

5. Look at the extract below and see if you can spot the referencing errors in this students work:

A previous family or personal history of asthma or atopic disease would raise the possibility of asthma as a cause of her problems (Bellamy D and Booker R 2004). She could, however recall having bronchitis at the age of 6 years and had 'mild' whooping cough in infancy. Lower respiratory tract infection in childhood has been reported by (Hogg 1999) and Johnston 1998 as a risk factor for respiratory disease in adulthood and Judith's childhood history could therefore increase her risk of COPD. Judith was a current smoker. She had started smoking in her late teens and smokes 20 cigarettes a day, giving a smoking history of approximately 40 pack years (BTS 1997). A smoking history of more than 15-20 pack years is generally considered to be significant for COPD (D Bellamy and R Booker). Bellamy and Booker also state that 'cigarette smoking is overwhelmingly the most important risk factor for the development of COPD'.


Exercise 7
Answers


5. A previous family or personal history of asthma or atopic disease would raise the possibility of asthma as a cause of her problems (Bellamy and Booker 2004 **initials are not necessary unless there are two authors with the same name**). She could, however recall having bronchitis at the age of 6 years and had ‘mild’ whooping cough in infancy. Lower respiratory tract infection in childhood has been reported by **authors name is part of the sentence so should not be bracketed (Hogg 1999) and Johnston 1998** needs brackets round date as a risk factor for respiratory disease in adulthood and Judith’s childhood history could therefore increase her risk of COPD. Judith was a current smoker. She had started smoking in her late teens and smokes 20 cigarettes a day, giving a smoking history of approximately 40 pack years (BTS **only use initials once you have introduced the name in full 1997**). A smoking history of more than 15-20 pack years is generally considered to be significant for COPD (Bellamy and R Booker **leave out initials but include date**). Bellamy and Booker also state that ‘cigarette smoking is overwhelmingly the most important risk factor for the development of COPD’**direct quotes should give the page number**.
1.7 Appendices

Appendices are used when material you want to refer to in your essay cannot be easily referenced or accessed by the reader. They should not be used to add extra discussion and to bypass the limitations imposed by the word count.

Exercise 8

Can you identify which of the following list would be appropriate to include as an appendix to an essay:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anonymised copy of a patient’s test results which you want to discuss in a case study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A section or table taken from nationally recognised and published guidelines such as NICE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A page of your own original writing explaining how you would assess a particular situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A copy of a protocol or patient leaflet used in your practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 8 Answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes/No</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymised copy of a patient’s test results which you want to discuss in a case study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A section or table taken from nationally recognised and published guidelines such as NICE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A page of your own original writing explaining how you would assess a particular situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A copy of a protocol or patient leaflet used in your practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.8 Knowledge and Comprehension

The key to success in achieving high marks in the knowledge section is to make sure that you have followed the assessment guidelines. It is important that you make sure you understand what is expected.

You need to make sure that you cover all areas as requested as you will lose marks by omitting key information. It is also important to ensure that you do not stray off the point and include information that was not required, as even if the information presented is factually correct and well-presented it will not be possible to award marks if it is not information that was required for the particular assignment.

Exercise 9

A student was asked to write a short paragraph outlining how they would explain an Electrocardiogram (ECG) to a patient. Can you identify the sentences where they stray off the point?

1. An electrocardiogram (ECG / EKG) is an electrical recording of the heart and is used in the investigation of heart disease. A) It is thought that Willem Einthoven in 1893 was the first to use the term Electrocardiogram. B) The word electrocardiogram comes from the Greek electro because it is related to electrical activity, cardio which is Greek for heart and graph meaning to write. C) An ECG is a painless non-invasive test where small sticky patches called electrodes are attached to the chest wall, arms and legs and connected to the ECG machine which records the pattern of the heartbeat. D) Before small electrodes were available, patients had to immerse each of their limbs into containers of salt solutions. E) It takes only a few minutes and can be done either at your GP’s surgery or at the hospital F) Sometimes blood tests are also needed to help the doctor make a diagnosis. G) Sometimes ECGs are carried out during exercise or are recorded over a 24 hour period using a small portable machine.

Answers: __________________________________________

Exercise 9

Answer

1. A, B, D, F

An electrocardiogram (ECG / EKG) is an electrical recording of the heart and is used in the investigation of heart disease. A) It is thought that Willem Einthoven in 1893 was the first to use the term Electrocardiogram. B) The word electrocardiogram comes from the Greek electro because it is related to electrical activity, cardio which is Greek for heart and graph meaning to write. C) An ECG is a painless non-invasive test where small sticky patches called electrodes are attached to the chest wall, arms and legs and connected to the ECG machine. D) Before small electrodes were available, patients had to immerse each of their limbs into containers of salt solutions. E) It takes only a few minutes and can be done either at your GP’s surgery or at the hospital F) Sometimes blood tests are also needed to help the doctor make a diagnosis.
G) Sometimes ECGs are carried out during exercise or are recorded over a 24 hour period using a small portable machine.

**Exercise 10**

Now think about the essay title we looked at in Exercise 1:

‘With reference to a patient you have cared for discuss the information it is important to cover when taking a clinical history to help establish a diagnosis in someone presenting with symptoms of increasing breathlessness’

Look at the following paragraphs that some students have written as part of their answer. Do you think that they are answering the question or are they deviating from the topic? Underline/highlight the sections that you do not think are relevant for this essay.

**Extract 1**

So from the information obtained from the history it was most likely that his symptoms were due to COPD which was caused primarily by his long smoking history of at least 55 pack years. A key part of his treatment would be to explore his willingness to give up smoking and to advise him of the different types of support available to him. In the UK it is estimated that up to 80,000 deaths annually are due to smoking related diseases (DH 2010) and so developing services to assist people in their quit attempts is of paramount importance.

**Extract 2**

Good communication skills are essential when taking a patient history as it is important to ensure that as full a picture as possible is established. The use of open questions can enable patients to give more details than questions that simply require yes or no answers. It is important that the healthcare professional retains an open and non-judgemental approach which will encourage a patient to fully disclose issues that they may be reluctant to reveal such as the amount of alcohol they drink or number of cigarettes they smoke.

**Extract 3**

From the history it was identified that this patient had several risk factors for the development of Heart Failure. It is suggested that heart failure affects at least one in every 100 people in the UK, increasing suddenly with age to about 7 per cent in men and women over 75 years. It has been suggested that the number of patients with heart failure is set to rise over the next twenty years; this is due to the improved survival in patients who develop cardiovascular disease, such as heart attacks, and an ageing population.
Exercise 10
Answers

Extract 1
So from the information obtained from the history it was most likely that his symptoms were due to COPD which was caused primarily by his long smoking history of at least 55 pack years. A key part of his treatment would be to explore his willingness to give up smoking and to advise him of the different types of support available to him. In the UK it is estimated that up to 80,000 deaths annually are due to smoking related diseases (DH 2010) and so developing services to assist people in their quit attempts is of paramount importance.

By starting to discuss treatment for this patient and to describe the data related to smoking and discuss importance of smoking cessation services this student is starting to go off the point.

Extract 2
Good communication skills are essential when taking a patient history as it is important to ensure that as full a picture as possible is established. The use of open questions can enable patients to give more details than questions that simply require yes or no answers. It is important that the healthcare professional retains an open and non-judgemental approach which will encourage a patient to fully disclose issues that they may be reluctant to reveal such as the amount of alcohol they drink or number of cigarettes they smoke.

This is all really good information about communication skills and how to gather the information from a patient. This essay however asks the student to discuss the information they need to obtain rather than how they can obtain it. This paragraph would only be relevant if the essay had asked the student to consider the communication skills that would help in gathering the information required for a history.

Extract 3
From the history it was identified that this patient had several risk factors for the development of Heart Failure. It is suggested that heart failure affects at least one in every 100 people in the UK, increasing suddenly with age to about 7 per cent in men and women over 75 years. It has been suggested that the number of patients with heart failure is set to rise over the next twenty years: this is due to the improved survival in patients who develop cardiovascular disease, such as heart attacks, and an ageing population.

Whilst this information may be factually correct it does not contribute to the discussion on history taking and uses up valuable words that might be better used to say what the risk factors identified were and use evidence to say why they made a diagnosis of heart failure a likely cause for the symptoms. So this student has included irrelevant information on heart failure statistics and has not explored the risk factors identified in the history which was required.
1.9 Application and reflection

It is important in writing assignments for healthcare practice that you apply theory to practice. This unit has already discussed the conventions for when and how you can cite references. This section looks at how you can demonstrate that, not only do you understand the theory, but that you understand the implications for implementing this in practice. (For example, knowing about the dangers of smoking is a very different issue from actually empowering a patient to give up smoking for the good of their health).

You need to use the literature you have selected to try to explain the care delivered or the issue under discussion. This means you are not just simply copying information from books, but using your own critical skills to try to make a link between what you have read and what you have seen in your clinical practice.

1.10 Analysis and synthesis

Analysis is the examination of what relevant research/evidence says about a specific and may include discussion of opposing views. Synthesis is the ability to look at all the evidence and then to put this information together to make a reasoned argument for the actions you are recommending.

It is this discussion of why things are done that will lift your writing from the purely descriptive and demonstrate your ability to apply theory appropriately to practice.

Exercise 11

Example 1

Mary, who had heart failure, was unable to weigh herself daily so she was asked to restrict her fluids and to look out for increased ankle swelling and increased breathlessness. If this happened she needed to call her doctor or to contact her community heart failure nurse.

Example 2

In heart failure an increase in weight can indicate fluid retention and the need to increase diuretic therapy (While & Kiek 2009). Based on this, the advice to Mary would normally have been to weigh daily and contact her doctor or heart failure nurse if her weight went up by more than 2kg over three days. However, due to mobility problems, Mary wasn’t able to do this and alternative measures for monitoring her fluid load needed to be used.

Example 3

In heart failure an increase in weight can indicate fluid retention and the need to increase diuretic therapy (While & Kiek 2009). Based on this, the advice to Mary would normally have been to weigh daily and contact her doctor or heart failure nurse if her weight went up by more than 2kg over three days. However, due to mobility problems,
Mary wasn’t able to do this and alternative measures for monitoring her fluid load needed to be used. Although weighing is the preferred method for monitoring fluid load and for titrating diuretic therapy, in cases such as these less objective measures such as monitoring oedema and level of breathlessness can be useful (Bell 2010). Therefore Mary was asked to check her ankles regularly for signs of swelling which included measures such as tightness of her shoes and to note if her activity was more limited by her breathing than normal.

Answers

Which one is purely descriptive?

Which ones link theory and practice?

Which one gives you the best explanation of what was done for Mary and why it was done?

Which one would get the top mark?

Which one would not pass?

Exercise 11

Answers

Which one is purely descriptive?

1 The information given describes appropriate care but does not give any rationale for why it is done. There is no attempt to apply any theory.

Which ones link theory and practice?

2&3 Yes, both of these use evidence to show why actions are taken

Which one gives you the best explanation of what was done for Mary and why it was done?

3 This not only explains what would be normal practice but discusses the alternative for Mary based on evidence. It also explains the reason why it was important to find an alternative method for Mary to monitor her condition - because patient involvement and increased control results in better outcomes.

Which one would get the top mark?

3 Yes this is giving a good reasoned argument for the actions taken.
Which one would not pass?

1 At degree level it is not sufficient to describe care given. You must demonstrate your knowledge of the underpinning theory and try to use a range of sources to illustrate your points and to draw your own conclusions.

1.11 Evaluation and conclusion
Your conclusion should summarise for the reader what has been achieved in your essay. It is your opportunity to present, and comment on what you believe are the most important points. In general the conclusion should contain no new information and there should be no need to use references because it should be your personal interpretation of the arguments you have presented in your essay.

It is your opportunity to present and comment on what you believe are the most important points. It is your opportunity to summarise your interpretation of the facts in your own words and to make recommendations about the best way forward, key implications for practice or areas for further research. A well written conclusion, therefore, is very important in gaining both organisation and (especially) analysis, evaluation and synthesis marks.

Many students lose valuable marks in the conclusion, because they fail to understand how important it is to get it right. A common error is to simply write what you have done.

1.12 Writing for Success Summary

Now you have completed these exercises you should be feeling more confident about writing your assignments but don’t forget to keep referring to these and all the information in the Student Guide while you are working. Above all, leave plenty of time to write your assignments and remember we are here to help you. You can get further help by:

- Talking to your trainer on the study days
- Contacting student support on 01926 493313 or via email: studentsupport@educationforhealth.org
- Using the inbox in this VLE to contact your Education Co-ordinator
All our courses can be booked online via our shop www.educationforhealth.org/shop where you will also find our popular and broad range of educational products that are designed to support your education and training.

Asthma
Simply Asthma Pocket Book

COPD
Simply COPD Pocket Book

Allergy
Simply Allergy Pocket Book

Cardiovascular Disease
Simply Lipids Pocket Book
Simply Cardiovascular Risk Pocket Book

Respiratory
Simply Devices Pocket Book
Simply Smoking Cessation Pocket Book

Professional Development
Simply Evidence-Based Healthcare Pocket Book
Partners in Care - Five Steps to Better Consultation Booklet

Developed for clinicians by clinicians, our ‘Simply’ range of Pocket Books link across to websites and help to further improve the care our students deliver to patients. You can look inside any of the Pocket Books before you buy via our online shop.
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