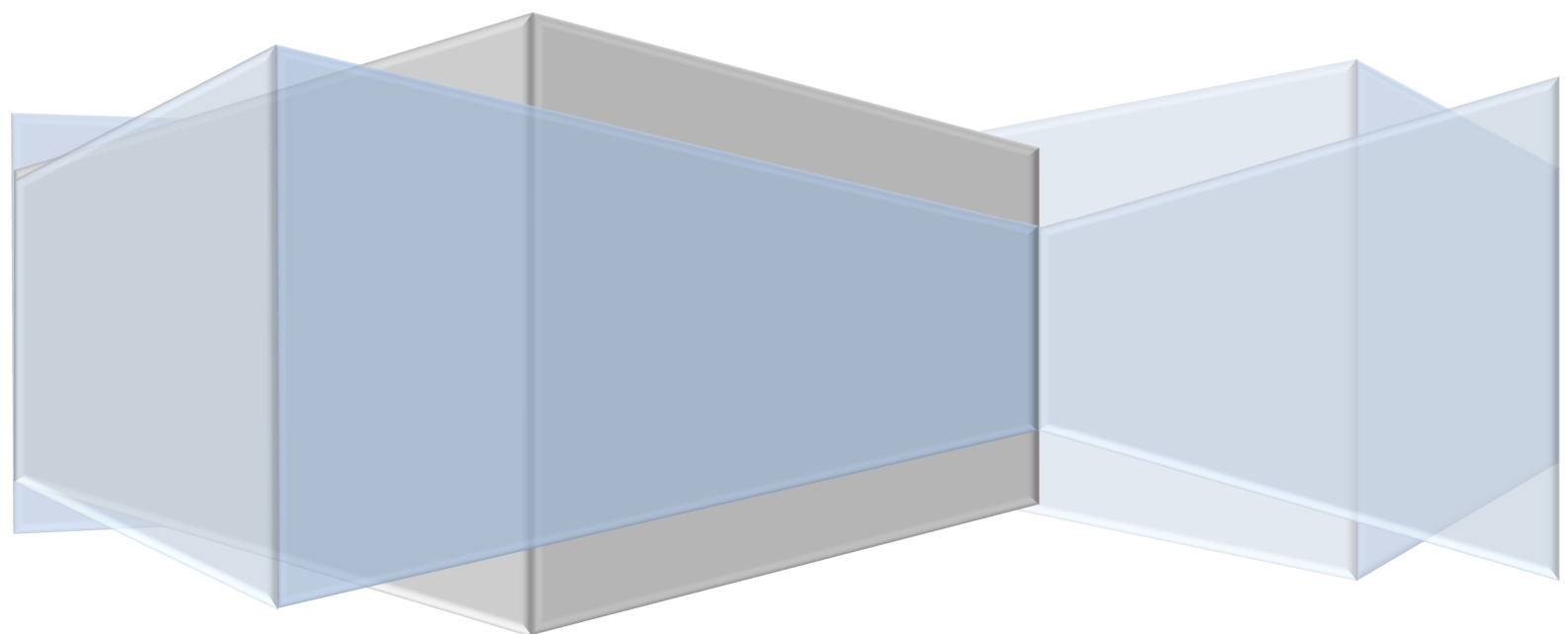


# **HOT TIPS ON HOW TO WRITE ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS AND DISSERTATIONS**

**OR**

**How not to waste your study time  
and still get good marks**



## HOT TIPS ON HOW TO WRITE ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS AND DISSERTATIONS (OR How not to waste your study time and still get good marks)

### DEDICATION

This small booklet is dedicated to all those international students who struggle with the English language which is not their mother tongue, the strangeness of our customs, the differences in expectations from your home country the peculiarity of the British weather. WE encourage you to embrace these differences. This is an important time in your life when you have the opportunity to examine the assumptions you have lived by without the pressure to conform to the norms of the society you have come from.

We understand that this is often hard work, but ultimately it is very rewarding.

This booklet is t

Our gift to you to help you do your very best in these strange surroundings.

DON'T GIVE UP

PLEASE PASS THIS DOCUMENT TO ANYONE WHO YOU THINK MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Nonhlanhla Dube (lecturer) who encouraged me to put this document together and two international students, Dr Aline Rodrigues (PhD student from Brazil) Janet Salento (postgraduate student from Kenya.) for checking it for its relevance to their own experience of studying at Lancaster University. UK.

They were kind enough to say

*"The content is good, relevant and easy to read and understand."(JS)*

*"Congratulations on this work; it is great! I wish you had written it 5 years ago before I started my own dissertation. It would have saved me loads of time. Well done!" (AF)*

Dr Peter Lingwood asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

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# HOT TIPS ON HOW TO WRITE ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS AND DISSERTATIONS (OR How not to waste your study time and still get good marks)

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## HOT TIPS ON HOW TO WRITE ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS AND DISSERTATIONS (OR How not to waste your study time and still get good marks)

### 1 Introduction

However clever you are, however bright your ideas nobody will listen to you if you cannot communicate.

Writing well is an essential skill.

We understand that for those for whom English is not their “mother” tongue writing essays, assignments and especially dissertations is very hard. We want to help you arrange your ideas, question what you read, and structure what you write.

We had planned to give 3 training sessions in 2020 but this was changed because of the Coronavirus.

We understand that essays and dissertations are still there and do not go away. We have therefore decided to put together a few notes on subjects that internationals have told us they have found difficult. If there are other subjects, please email Dr. Peter Lingwood with your suggestions.

These notes have been prepared by Dr. Lingwood. During his 30 years as an international consultant, Peter has written 100s of reports for governments, multinational and national organisations and companies.

These notes are free. And represent Dr Peter’s personal views in.

These notes have not been approved by the University of Lancaster.

The University and their departments will have their own requirements. Links are given in Appendix 1. We strongly recommend that you find out what these are. If you have any questions you should consult your supervisor for their advice.


This document may be downloaded free of charge from the web site of HOPE church.

The subjects looked at include the following:

1. How to write a relevant essay / dissertation
2. How to choose a subject and title for your dissertation
3. Structuring a dissertation
4. Writing style
5. The literature review and critical thinking
6. Plagiarism: Copying someone else work.
7. References

### 2 How do I write a relevant essay / assignment?

This assumes that you have been given a title for the essay. So this is what you do with the title

Actions	Explanations
<b>1. <u>Underline the key words in the title.</u></b>	The title defines the boundaries of what you should write about. Anything outside of these is irrelevant and a waste of your time and effort. Think of the title as a target. The title is the centre of the target. Whatever you write should be as close as possible to the target or support something that is closer to the target. 

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Actions	Explanations
<b>2. Do you understand the meaning of the words you have underlined</b>	You must understand these words especially if they are technical words
<b>3. What is the supervisor / examiner trying to find out?</b>	The supervisor / examiner does not usually want you to repeat facts that he has given you in the lecture. He wants you to show him: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How you can handle those facts</li> <li>• How you can organize them into a logical argument</li> <li>• How you can assess their importance</li> </ul> You will gain extra marks for independent thinking providing you can support them from what you have written.
<b>4. What is my instinctive response to the question?</b>	If your first thought is "I don't know anything about this" OR "I know all about this." SLOW DOWN. Neither of these is likely to be true.
<b>5. What have others written on this subject?</b>	Give reason for why you agree/disagree with them? (See section 6)
<b>6. What do I already know that is relevant to the question?</b>	By doing this you define what you don't know.
<b>7. What else do I need to find out?</b>	This identifies the work you need to do before you start writing.
<b>8. What is the main point I want to argue or put across?</b>	The examiner / supervisor does not want a repetition of facts. He wants to hear what you think. It does not matter if it is right or wrong as long as it is supported by evidence and argued well
<b>9. What reasons / evidence do I have to support my main argument message?</b>	The evidence or argument that will convince the reader
<b>10. Start writing</b>	Use the hot tips in the following section on dissertations
<b>11. Review</b>	Review what you have written to make sure it is relevant to the title.

### 3 How do I choose a subject and title for your dissertation?

A good title should be clear and informative, providing your reader with what they need to know the moment they look at your work.

Subject	Explanation
<b>Subject</b>	
<b>1. Choose a subject that you are interested in</b>	Writing is hard enough; there is no need to choose a subject that you are not passionate about. You will be spending many months/years of your life working on it.
<b>2. Make the subject as specific as possible</b>	You can make it specific by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the geographical area e.g. Taiwan</li> <li>• The methodology e.g. interviews,</li> <li>• The size of organization looked at e.g. smaller companies.</li> </ul>
<b>Title</b>	
<b>3. Choose a working title when you start</b>	This will help you focus on the subject. Keep referring back to it to make sure that what you are writing about is relevant to the title.

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Subject	Explanation
<b>4. Ask other people what they think of the title.</b>	Expect to change the title as you continue to write.
<b>5. The title should give the reader a good understanding of the subject you have written about</b>	With just a few words, the title has to highlight the general area, the specific topic you are writing about and the purpose of the dissertation.
<b>6. IF you want to attract attention</b>	<p>If you want to attract attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be provocative by saying something which seems untrue. (It encourages the reader to read on to see why you can say such a thing)</li> <li>• Ask a question in the title</li> <li>• Include something humorous</li> </ul> <p>But be aware that this may not please your supervisor and may not translate well in other cultures.</p>

### 4 How do I get started?

#### 4.1 Timing and programming

The very worst part of an essay or a dissertation is getting started. Once you have started the writing should just flow.

Subject	Explanation
<b>Starting</b>	
<b>1. When should I start</b>	<p><b>START NOW.</b></p> <p>I can't think of anyone who said they started too early. Don't delay by telling yourself that you work better under pressure.</p>
<b>2. Reread the title</b>	Make a list of all the key professional words that you should include in the text. Keep referring to this list. As you start each section
<b>3. How do I start?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I have a loose-leaf binder with cardboard dividers for each of the main headings (see section 5.1 ) and sometimes the sub sections</li> <li>2. Write down your thoughts that relate to that section and only that section. At this stage your thoughts can be in any order</li> <li>3. Then number these thoughts so that they are in a logical progression</li> <li>4. Write the technical terms that you think should be in the dissertation. But make sure you know what they mean and how to use them.</li> <li>5. Start with the easy sections first e.g. Introduction, methodology</li> <li>6. Do not be afraid to change the title of the sections so that they more accurately describe what they contain.</li> </ol>
<b>Setting a programme</b>	
<b>4. How do I set myself a programme to work to?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make a list of all the sections with the number of words they should contain</li> <li>2. Make a programme starting from now until 2 weeks before you need to hand in your work</li> <li>3. Make a programme showing the duration of time available and the date when you should start and complete each section</li> <li>4. Keep to this programme.</li> </ol>

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Subject	Explanation
5. How to I set myself a daily programme?	It is generally accepted that people work best in the first 90 mins of study. After that you become less productive <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have breaks of no more than 30 minutes.</li> <li>2. Give yourself rewards in your breaks – a biscuit, checking your texts.</li> </ol>
6. When should I start writing?	Assume that you will spend 50% of the total time you have in gathering the information and 50% in writing. The time for writing may seem too long but as you start to write you will find that you need more information to make a logical argument.

### 4.2 Study tips

Subject	Explanation
1. How to avoid being side-tracked?	4.
2. How to study	6.
3. How do I prepare to study	2.

## 5 How do I structure my essay or dissertation?

### 5.1 Structuring essays

Essays are similar to dissertations except that they are shorter and the subject is given to you. In an essay the title is the title and the content is defined by the title

Essays should broadly follow the same format as dissertations although, in an essay, you may not want to keep the subtitles in your final version.

### 5.2 Structuring dissertations <sup>3</sup>

The purpose of the dissertation is to tell a story. To lead the reader from his current understanding by evidence and logical argument to a new place of understanding. In many cultures this is not acceptable because either the reader does not want greater understanding unless it supports his existing views, or because having arrived at the new understanding they reject it because it does not agree with their original or generally accepted understanding.

This is a problem for the reader but not for the writer, as long as the arguments are well and convincingly proposed.

<sup>2</sup> During the period of lockdown during the Coronavirus pandemic some students used Microsoft Team (other platforms are available) to stay connected with other students who are studying at the same time. They all agree the time they will study and the time for breaks in-between. They turn the camera on themselves so that everyone can see if they are studying or doing something else. They found that being usually accountable to someone else is a great encouragement to study.

<sup>3</sup> Scribbr Writing and structuring your dissertation <https://www.scribbr.co.uk/category/thesis-dissertation/>

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Section	Content	Do's and Don'ts
<b>Title page</b>	The title page should usually include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The title of the dissertation,</li> <li>• Your name,</li> <li>• The name of the department and, institution.</li> <li>• The degree program</li> <li>• Submission date.</li> </ul> There may be strict requirements for formatting the dissertation	Do make sure that the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The title accurately reflects the contents of the dissertation</li> <li>• The title page is in the correct format for the university and department</li> </ul>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	This is your opportunity to thank those people, who have helped you the most, especially your supervisor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Do</u> thank those who helped you. (Everyone likes to be recognised)</li> <li>• Do keep the list short and relevant.</li> </ul>
<b>Abstract</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. State the main topic and aims of your research</li> <li>2. Describe the methods you used</li> <li>3. Summarise the main results</li> <li>4. State your conclusions</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do keep it short (250 – 300 words) and describe the whole of your work</li> <li>• Do remember that this section and the conclusions may be the only parts of your work that people read!</li> <li>• Do not include any facts / opinions / ideas that are not already in the dissertation.</li> <li>• Do not introduce and new ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	Easily created in Microsoft Word (references2 tab) by using the appropriate headings (home/ headings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do regularly update the table to make sure that you maintain a logical flow.</li> </ul>
<b>List of Figures and Tables</b>	Easily created in Microsoft Word (references tab)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do make sure that the titles are in the same format and that they appear in the contents.</li> </ul>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	List in alphabetical order with the accepted full meaning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do make sure that all the abbreviations are listed in this table.</li> <li>• Do make sure that every word to be abbreviated should be written in full with the abbreviations in brackets. Thereafter you use the abbreviation</li> </ul>
<b>Glossary</b>	Explain, in alphabetical order specialised terms with a brief description or definition.	
<b>Introduction</b>	This is your opportunity to define the subject of your dissertation, its purpose, and relevance, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State the topic, the general background.</li> <li>• Define the purpose and scope of the research</li> <li>• Discuss the existing research and the relevance of your work.</li> <li>• State your objectives and research questions, and describe briefly how you will answer them.</li> <li>• The theory (or theories) that underpin your research</li> </ul>	Do make sure that the reader should now understand the what, why and how of your research. Do explain the purpose of the dissertation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To fill a gap in the literature</li> <li>• To introduce and test a new method or approach.</li> <li>• Proposes a new solution to an existing problem</li> <li>• Develop a theoretical debate</li> <li>• Apply existing methods to a new situation.</li> </ul> Do not introduce any new ideas or results



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Section	Content	Do's and Don'ts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The variables you examined</li> <li>• Your research design (qualitative, quantitative, mixed)</li> <li>• The method adopted</li> <li>• The context and/or population studied</li> <li>• An overview of the structure of your dissertation.</li> </ul>	at this point.
<b>Literature review / Theoretical framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarise existing studies, but develop a logical structure which supports the reason for the dissertation</li> <li>• You need to know what others have said before you so that you can build on and strengthen existing knowledge with new information</li> </ul>	<b>See section 6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do make sure that this lays the foundation of what you want to say so that there is a logical progression to the methodology</li> </ul>
<b>Methodology</b>	<p>Describe what you did so that the reader can assess its validity. Your aim in the methodology is to accurately report what you did, as well as convincing the reader that this was the best approach to answering your research questions or objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do define the overall approach and type of research (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, experimental, ethnographic)</li> <li>• Do include the methods of collecting data (e.g. interviews, surveys, archives)</li> <li>• Do identify where, when, and with whom the data was collected</li> <li>• Do specify how the data was analysed (e.g. statistical analysis, discourse analysis)</li> <li>• Do detail the tools and materials used (e.g. computer programs, lab equipment)</li> <li>• Do describe obstacles encountered and overcome</li> <li>• Do describe the shortcomings of the method i.e. insufficient time, not representative location, untypical situation</li> </ul>
<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next, you report the results of your research. You can structure this section around sub-questions, hypotheses, or topics... In some disciplines, the results section is strictly separated from the discussion, while in others the two are combined.</li> </ul> <p><u>Qualitative methods</u> like in-depth interviews, the presentation of the data will often be woven together with discussion and analysis</p> <p><u>Quantitative and experimental research,</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do ask your supervisor and look at sample dissertations to find out the best structure for your research.</li> <li>• Do Include tables, graphs and charts to summarise your results to add extra information or helps the reader visualise the results</li> <li>• Do not use the text to repeat the information in the tables but to draw out further information.</li> <li>• Do not report results that are not relevant to your objectives and research questions</li> </ul>

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Section	Content	Do's and Don'ts
	present results separately before you discuss their meaning. If you're unsure, consult with your supervisor and look at sample dissertations to find out the best structure for your research.	
<b>Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You explore the meaning and implications of your results</li> <li>Discuss whether the results were as expected and suggest the reasons that they did not, if relevant</li> <li>Discuss how they fit with the work of others that you said you were going to test or extend.</li> <li>It's a good idea to consider alternative interpretations of your data and discuss any limitations that might have influenced the results.</li> </ul> <p>The discussion should refer to other scholarly works to show how your results fit with existing knowledge. You can also make recommendations for future research or practical action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do evaluate the validity and significance of your results.</li> <li>Do consider alternative interpretations of your data and why you have not chosen these interpretations</li> <li>Do identify any limitations of the method that might have led to different conclusions. .g. sampling technique, people interviewed, biased data, specific period of time, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A concise summary of what you have done and why.</li> <li>Final thoughts on what and how you did</li> <li>Show how your findings have advance knowledge in the subject area and therefore why your research is important.</li> <li>If relevant recommendations for further research or action.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This, together with the abstract and recommendations may be the only part of the report read by most people. It needs to be clear and concise</li> <li>Do make is short and concise and that it relates directly to the title and introduction</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	In commercial reports this is often the most important section as it lists the actions required. Detailed proposal, often with the costs of implementation will be included in the Appendix.	Do examine options for further action
<b>References</b>	List <u>all</u> the documents you refer to using a consistent reference style. Your department will tell which referencing style you should use – Scribbr offers a free APA Citation Generator. Depending on the publication e.g. journal book report. <a href="https://www.scribbr.com/apa-citation-generator/#/">https://www.scribbr.com/apa-citation-generator/#/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do find out the style specified by your department. This is important because there are many styles and using the wrong one may cost you marks.</li> <li>Some departments allow references as footnotes if so this section is not needed</li> <li>So start using the appropriate style from the start because amending an existing style wastes a lot of time.</li> </ul>
<b>Appendices</b>	The dissertation should only contain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do put the appendices in the same</li> </ul>

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Section	Content	Do's and Don'ts
	essential information that relates the subject as defined in the title. Other information should be in the appendix e.g. format of questionnaire, interview transcripts, survey questions numerical data before analysis	order as the sections. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do use the appendices to keep the dissertation as focused as possible</li> <li>Do not include information that is not referred to in the main text</li> </ul>

## 6 Critical Thinking and the literature review<sup>4</sup>

### 6.1 What is critical thinking?

In many countries the educational system is based on two requirements;

- The ability to remember information. Whilst you do need to remember some information and principles for detailed information we now have many search engines that will give you information, although this is not always correct information (e.g. "Fake News").
- The acceptance of information given you by someone who is older or more senior than yourself. Unfortunately people are not perfect and are motivated by all sorts of motives many of which are not to your benefit.

This is most clearly shown in cultures and religions. The unquestioning acceptance of what you are told. Unfortunately questioning in many cultures is not acceptable and may lead to you being cut off from your family and society, physical harm and even death. Every year thousands of people are killed because what they believe is not acceptable to their friends, family or community<sup>5</sup>.

Critical thinking is the ability to think in an organized and rational manner in order to understand connections between ideas and/or facts. It helps you decide what to believe in. In other words, it's "thinking about thinking"—identifying, analyzing, assessing the importance, drawing conclusions and amending our original thoughts.

### 6.2 Steps of critical thinking<sup>6</sup>

Section	Content	Do's and Don'ts
<b>1. Identify the problem or question.</b>	Be as precise as possible: the narrower the issue, the easier it is to find solutions or answers	The scope should be defined by the title. That is why the titles is so important
<b>2. Gather data, opinions, and arguments.</b>	Select the most important sources that present the main ideas and points of view.	
<b>3. Analyze and evaluate the data.</b>	Are the sources reliable? Are their conclusions data-backed or just argumentative? Is there enough information or data to support given hypotheses? How much importance is given to these sources	Evaluate whether these views are widely held. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the sources often referred to by widely accepted authors?</li> <li>Are the sources referred to by the standard text books</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Based on an outline developed by Nonhlanhla Dube (lecturer at the University of Lancaster)

<sup>6</sup> Based on a blog by Michael Tomaszewski <https://zety.com/blog/critical-thinking-skills>

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Section	Content	Do's and Don'ts
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your supervisor refer to them</li> </ul>
<b>4. Identify assumptions.</b>	Are you sure the sources you found are unbiased? Are you sure you weren't biased in your search for answers?	Evaluate whether the credibility of the author <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has he written widely on the subject</li> <li>Does he belong to a reputable, independent organisation?</li> </ul>
<b>5. Establish significance.</b>	What piece of information is most important? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the assumptions. Are they relevant to the question you are answering</li> <li>Is the sample size sufficient?</li> <li>Are the conclusions specific to a particular place / time/ age?</li> <li>Are all opinions and arguments supported by the evidence</li> </ul>	
<b>6. Make a decision/reach a conclusion.</b>	Identify the various conclusions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are they possible?</li> <li>Are they relevant?</li> <li>Weigh strengths and limitations of all possible options.</li> </ul>	
<b>7. Present your conclusions.</b>		

## 7 Presentation

### 7.1 Font, size and line spacing

The font, size and style should be that recommended by your department or as used in other dissertations.

It is unusual for a font size to be greater than 11 pt.

### 7.2 Writing style

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use simple sentences.</li> <li>Try to have only one conditions in one sentence</li> <li>Review sentences to see if they can be split into 2 or more sentences.</li> <li>State an abbreviation in full with the abbreviation in a bracket before you use the abbreviation by itself.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't use long sentences</li> <li>Don't say anything unless you can justify it either by refereeing to someone else's work or by having already justified it.</li> </ul>

### 7.3 Tables and figures and maps

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do give each Table Figure or Map a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put unanalyzed "raw" data in the tables in</li> </ul>

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Do	Don't
<p>descriptive title and a reference number (The first number is that of the chapter. The second is the consecutive number within that chapter)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do list the titles in numerical order after the List of Contents.</li> <li>• Do refer to the Table, Figure or Map in the text.</li> <li>• Insert the Table, Figure or Map close to where it is referred to</li> <li>• Do repeat the headings of each table on each new page.</li> <li>• Do treat photographs and diagrams as Figures</li> <li>• Make sure that all graphs and maps have a scale and the map a "North" direction which should usually be up the page</li> </ul>	<p>the text. These should be in the Appendices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't refer in the text to tables in the appendices. If they are referred to; they should be included within the text.</li> <li>• Don't put too much information into the Table, Figure or Map so it cOnfuses the point you are trying to make. If necessary repeat the Table, Figure or Map with different information. Eg one map shoes roads and towns, another rivers but keep the same scale.</li> </ul>

### 7.4 References

The reason for references is provide enough information for someone to find the book or the article you are referring to.

When referring to the work of others always say where it comes – usually from an academic book or journal.

All journals, Departments and publishers have their own "house" style. You can find out what this is can be discovered by the following:

- Reading the guidelines to authors produced by your department or journal
- Looking at the way other people have written essays / dissertations for your department or journal.

All references should include

- The authors name(s)
- The date of the publication
- The title of the book or article
- The publisher or Journal
- The volume or page number

### 7.5 Plagiarism: Copying someone else work.

Plagiarism or the use of other people's words or ideas and using them as if they were yours is not acceptable.

In many cultures this is not only acceptable but expected.

In the UK it is neither acceptable nor expected.

Plagiarism should be avoided at all cost for the following practical reasons.

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- It is unfair because it makes you look better than you really are and prevents those who have done the work being recognized.
- You would not like it if it happened to you.
- You may be asked to give evidence of the work that led you to these conclusions
- It is often discovered. The university has software which can easily detect plagiarism
- If discovered it will lose you marks and you may have your work rejected completely
- It destroys your credibility amongst your colleagues.

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### Appendix 1 Resources for international students at Lancaster University on effective study practices, academic writing and English language development.

1. Do you know who the Learning Developer is for your Faculty? You can find out on this link: <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/library/learning-development/>
2. Go to your Faculty Learning Development Moodle site to find out what provision is available: you may need to self-enrol with your usual Lancaster log-in. The Moodle sites have information about drop-in sessions, one-to-ones, classes and courses as well as contact details for the Faculty Learning Developer.

[Science and Technology \(FST\) Learning Development Moodle site](https://modules.lancaster.ac.uk/enrol/index.php?id=282)  
<https://modules.lancaster.ac.uk/enrol/index.php?id=282>

[Management School \(LUMS\) Learning Development Moodle site](https://modules.lancaster.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=281)  
<https://modules.lancaster.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=281>

[Arts and Social Sciences \(FASS\) Learning Development Moodle site](https://modules.lancaster.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=283)  
<https://modules.lancaster.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=283>

[Health and Medicine Learning Development Moodle site](https://modules.lancaster.ac.uk/enrol/index.php?id=7580)  
<https://modules.lancaster.ac.uk/enrol/index.php?id=7580>

3. The [English Language Development Moodle site](https://modules.lancaster.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=22878) <https://modules.lancaster.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=22878> has information about a whole range of centrally based provision co-ordinated by Dr Helen Hargreaves, Learning Developer for EAP.

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### Appendix 2 Example of the dissertation structure applied to a 2, 000 year old story

The structure of the dissertation outlined in section 5 has been around for a long time. We have applied it to the record of a well known story from 2,000 years ago to illustrate this point.

It is a record of two conversations; one nested (ie one story inside another) inside the other. The main conversation is with a young man, the second is within a wider conversation of Jesus with his disciples (followers). The original text can be found in The Bible The Book of Mathew (ch 19 verse 16 - 26).

Notice how the story flows; each sentence introduces the next sentence or section. It is like a tower of bricks. The first question (brick) is gradually built on throughout the story, one brick on another, so that the reader is led from the initial question, through logical steps, until the question is finally answered.

Notice how the story flows; each sentence introduces the next sentence or section. It is like a tower of bricks. The first question (brick) is gradually built on through the story, one brick on another, so that the reader is led from the initial question, through logical steps, until it is finally answered by Jesus in his conclusion.

Section	Text	Explanation
<b>Title</b>	“What good deed must I do to get eternal life?”	The first sentence acts as the Title An Abstract, List of Contents or Glossary as this is a very short story.
<b>Introduction</b>	“Someone came to Jesus with this question: “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”	The scene has already been set in the earlier part of the chapter. Where it happened, who was Jesus talking to and what about.
<b>Literature Review and Methodolgy</b>	“Why ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. But to answer your question—if you want to receive eternal life, keep the commandments.”	Establishing that the authority of Jesus is enough to answer this question. Introduces the methodology of two propositions which are presented and then discussed first with the young man and then with the disciples.
<b>Results of Proposition 1</b>	“But to answer your question—if you want to receive eternal life, keep the commandments. Which ones?” the man asked. And Jesus replied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘You must not murder.</li> <li>• You must not commit adultery.</li> <li>• You must not steal.</li> <li>• You must not testify falsely.</li> <li>• Honour your father and mother.</li> <li>• Love your neighbor as yourself.</li> </ul>	Proposition 1 : Description of what he needs to do. By referring to existing literature on the subject (the Bible . The Book of Exodus ch 20.)
<b>Discussion of Proposition 1</b>	“I’ve obeyed all these commandments,” the young man replied. “What else must I do?”	Proposition 1: Arguments for and against. The young man justifies himself by



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Section	Text	Explanation
		saying that he has done all this but has found that this is not enough. This introduces Proposition. 2
<b>Proposition 2</b>	“Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. “Then come, follow me.”	Proposition 2 ; Description of what the young man now needs to do.
<b>Discussion of Proposition 2</b>		Proposition 2: Arguments for and against. These are not stated but come before his conclusion.
<b>Conclusion by the young man</b>	“But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.”	The young man concludes that the cost of eternal life is too high for him. He prefers to keep his money.
<b>Conclusion by Jesus.</b>	“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. I’ll say it again—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!”	The disciples accept Jesus’s authority (see literature review) but review their own methodology. They had assumed that only the rich, the powerful and the religious people could get eternal Life.
<b>Discussion and conclusion by the by the disciples</b>	“The disciples were astounded. “Then who in the world can be saved?” they asked.”	Discussion not stated but the disciples concluded that no-one could get eternal life.
<b>Discussion and Final Conclusion by Jesus</b>	“Jesus looked at them intently and said, “Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.”	Jesus leaves his listeners to draw their own conclusion. If you want to have eternal life then follow my recommendations.
<b>Final Recommendation By Jesus</b>		Not stated but an invitation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the law</li> <li>• Give up what you value most</li> <li>• Follow Jesus</li> </ul>
<b>Further discussion with the disciple</b>	“Then Peter said to him, “We’ve given up everything to follow you. What will we get?”	Peter says we have done these things. This leads into another question and discussion.....

There is also a subtext to this story. This is contained within the Books of Mathew and indeed all the books of the Bible. New testament.

Jesus teaches that:

- There is nothing that anyone can do to “get” eternal life.
- It is impossible for anyone to “get” eternal life by his own actions.
- But with God all things are possible.
- Eternal life is a gift of God because only God has this authority.
- It therefore depends on God to whom he gives eternal Life.
- God has decided that he will give eternal life to those who follow certain conditions.
- Jesus outlines those conditions in this story.
- Following these conditions does not earn eternal life. It is a gift of God.

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### Appendix 3 Gathering data

Many dissertations require the gathering of new data. Without following a strict process your data, and therefore your discussion and conclusions, may be undermined

There are many things that you should think about before starting collecting data including the following :

- Sample size and its statistical validity.
- The development of a questionnaire and the neutrality of the questions.
- Avoiding bias in the method of communicating and retrieving the questionnaire.

Unfortunately we have not been able to look at the subject of data gathering , in this document, for the following reasons:

- How you collect data is often specific to the subject of the dissertation. There may be recognised and accepted ways of doing this which it would be pointless to ignore.
- Data collection is a much debated topic and many books have been written on this
- We could find little comprehensive advice that was easily available ie on the internet. So we could not recommend any one particular site.

Whatever the subject of your dissertation, it is wise to do the following before you start seriously collecting data:

- Review the methods used by others. This will make you aware of the shortcomings of the methods which, hopefully you can avoid.
- Undertake a Pilot or Trial study. This will show you the difficulties of collecting the data and in its interpretation. With this knowledge you can improve your final version. A good Pilot study will save you wasting a lot of time and can also be a useful Appendix to your dissertation to show that you have thought through the problems and hopefully avoided some of them.
- Remember that no data collection method is perfect. All data collection has problems. The skill is to minimise those problems.

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### **Appendix 4 Use of Matrices to evaluate, analyse and present data**

Unfortunately we have not been able to look at the subject of evaluation and analysis , in this document, for the following reasons:

- How you evaluate and analyse data is often specific to the subject of the dissertation. There may be recognised and accepted ways of doing this which it would be pointless to ignore.
- The evaluation and analysis of data is a huge topic. Many books have been written on this subject

The best starting point may be to review the methods used by others in dissertations on the same subject.

To get you started you may find the following links to web sites are useful. This is not a comprehensive list.

#### **Decision matrices**

Non mathematical matrices are often used to compare options or characteristics. You may have even used them on sales websites to compare products.

An introduction can be found [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED\\_03.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_03.htm)

<https://asq.org/quality-resources/decision-matrix>

<https://www.smartsheet.com/decision-matrix-templates>

#### **SWOT analysis**

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

<https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/STEM16/WK2SWOT.pdf>

For imaginative ways to present SWOT analysis

<https://www.smartsheet.com/14-free-swot-analysis-templates>

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