What is an academic piece of work?

Take TIME to write your assignment

- Writing an assignment takes time, more time than you may expect. Just because you find yourself spending many weeks on an assignment doesn’t mean that you’re approaching it in the wrong way.

- It also takes time to develop the skills to write well, so don’t be discouraged if your early marks aren’t what you’d hoped for. Use the feedback from your previous assignments to improve.

- Different types of assignments require different styles, so be prepared for the need to continue to develop your skills.

We’ve broken down TIME into 4 key elements of academic writing: **Targeted, In-depth, Measured and Evidence-based.**

**Targeted**

Your assignment needs to be **targeted**. It should:
- be focused on the questions and criteria
- make a decision
- follow an argument
Focused on the questions and criteria

- At Teesside, you’ll find your assessment criteria in your module handbook.

- If it’s not in the criteria, it doesn’t belong in your assignment. You won’t have enough space in your word count to cover it, and you won’t get any extra marks for it.
  - Criteria are there to guide you. They let you know what you should put into your assignment
  - You usually need to cover all the criteria to pass an assignment
  - Use the words from the criteria in your assignment to make it clear when you are covering them

- Your question or criteria will include keywords or ‘clue words’ – the verbs that tell you what you need to do in your assignment. As you develop through your studies, the keywords will change, from simpler terms such as ‘identify’ or ‘describe’ to more complex terms such as ‘critically analyse’ or ‘synthesise’. See http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/ld.php?content_id=14149964 for definitions of the more common terms.

Make a decision

If you are given a question, you need to provide an answer for that question, which means that your assignment needs a conclusion.

In planning your writing, it’s helpful for you to think where you are heading before you set out, so that everything you write can have that end-point in mind.

Follow an argument

You should take your lecturer on a journey to your conclusion, so that they can see how your case builds up through your assignment. This means that your assignment needs to have a logical structure. The WEED model for paragraphs (see p.11) can help you to develop this structure.