Evidence-based

Your assignment needs to be evidence-based. You should:
• reference all the ideas in your work
• paraphrase your evidence
• apply critical thinking to your evidence

Referencing
We’ve already discussed how you need to carry out research for your assignment. It’s not enough just to do the research. You also need to reference it correctly to show that your assignment is evidence-based.

In the libguide for your subject area, you’ll find a tab called ‘How to Reference’. This web page provides help on referencing. If your subject area uses Harvard, you should follow the guidance in Pears and Shields (2016). There are lots of copies in the library at 808.027/PEA and there is also an online version available at https://www.citethemrightonline.com

Paraphrasing
As you incorporate your references into your writing, you need to summarise what the relevant authors have said, and put it into your own words. This skill is known as paraphrasing. It’s better to paraphrase than to use long quotations, as this enables you to show your lecturer that you’ve understood what you’ve read, and also to reword the evidence so that it fits in with the case you’re making. Long quotations will use up too many words, and are not well-regarded in academic writing.

To paraphrase:
1. check that you understand all the terms in the sentence or paragraph
   • Use a dictionary to look them up
2. put the book or article away so you’re not looking at it. Write a summary from your own understanding.
   • Can you change the order of the words?
   • Are there synonyms for any of the terms?
3. check against the original to make sure your version uses different words

For more help with paraphrasing see our libguide on referencing which is available from: http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/referencing, Godfrey (2016) or the ‘How to reference’ tab on your libguide.
Applying critical thinking
As you progress through your studies, you’ll be required to evaluate the quality of the evidence that you find. Even articles published in quality journals can be based on poor argument, illogical reasoning and limited evidence. This skill of evaluating literature is often described as critical thinking. For advice on what it means to be a critical thinker, see the support materials at:
http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/critical_thinking

Students from SoH&SC will usually be required to apply a more structured critical appraisal approach. You should have been taught how to do this as part of your modules, but there are also supporting materials at:
http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/critical_appraisal

References