Structuring your assignment: using the criteria

Student & Library Services
Content

• Identifying what the assessment criteria is asking you to do

• This information is:
  • an introduction to planning and structuring an assignment
  • not discipline-specific
  • based on working through an example question
Using the **TIME Model** (This guide will concentrate on Targeted and In-Depth)

**Targeted**
Your assignment should be focused on the questions and criteria, make a decision and follow an argument.

**In-Depth**
You should consider your topics thoroughly, thinking about all possible aspects, and including the argument for and against different viewpoints.

**Measured**
Your work needs to be cautious, emotionally neutral and formal – written in the third person and in full sentences.

**Evidence-Based**
You should reference all the ideas in your work, and apply critical thinking to your evidence.
Unpick assignment title

• What are you being asked to do?
• Check assignment criteria
• Look for clue words
• Define subject – it is important to define your subjects as this can limit your assignment
• This forms your draft introduction
Assessment criteria

• You’ll find your assessment criteria in your Module Handbook (You may also have lectures which explain the criteria in more detail)

• If it’s not in the criteria, it doesn’t belong – you won’t have the word count – you won’t get extra marks
  • Criteria are there to guide you. They will 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
Look for clue words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyse</td>
<td>Pick out the key points of a topic. Consider those key points in depth, including how they relate to each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply</td>
<td>Transfer evidence from your reading to real life, or to a case study. How would the theory work in practice?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Look at the similarities and differences between two aspects. Say if any are more important than others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Look at the similarities and differences between two aspects, but focus on the differences between them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Give the exact meaning of a topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>Show how, with examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Give a detailed explanation of a topic or issue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Write about both sides of a topic in depth, pointing out advantages and disadvantages. Come to a conclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Consider the strength of an idea, looking for both positives and negatives. Come to a conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Point out what a topic covers</td>
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Example assignment

Title
Discuss whether the British high street is dying

Assessment Criteria
• Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the economic issues affecting the British high street
• Explain the reasoning behind your opinion on the British high street
• Adhere to the School guidelines for presentation and referencing
Resources


Found this useful? Why not look at:

• Academic Writing – for writing style
• Critical Writing
• How to Use References
• Different styles of writing
  • Report Writing
  • Reflective Writing
  • Writing a Literature Review
• How to Read an Academic Article
• How to Proofread
• Available from the Learning Hub LibGuide