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# Glossary

The glossary defines some of the most important terms used in this book. It does not present all forms or meanings of a particular word. Instead it focuses on the forms and meanings that are used in the book. For example, 'academic' is used in two ways, as an adjective, in 'academic culture', and as a noun, meaning a person who teaches and/or carries out research in a university. Other meanings and forms are not presented.

**academic**—An academic is a teacher who teaches and/or carries out research in a university.

**academic culture**—*See* culture.

**active learner**—A student who thinks deeply about their learning and seeks to make connections between what they have learned and other related aspects of their lives.

**analysis**—Analysis involves evaluating a statement, a claim or a theory. It involves critical thinking and includes some or all of the following activities:

- identifying why something happens
- identifying how important something is
- comparing and contrasting different ideas or theories
- identifying the implications of a statement
- establishing the extent to which something is true
- establishing whether an approach is useful or not.

**analytical**—If an argument is analytical, it uses analysis.

**anime**—Anime is a style of film or television animation that is usually created in Japan.

**appendix (plural appendices; appendixes)**—An appendix consists of supplementary material which is placed at the end of a report.

**applied sciences**—*See* sciences.

**apprentice**—An apprentice is someone who is learning new knowledge and skills through studying theory and through hands-on practical experience.

**approach**—In academic debate, an approach refers to a set of theories, concepts and ideas that are used to analyse an issue or a problem.

**argument**—An argument is another word for a position. In an essay, you present a position, which is the same as saying you present an argument.

**deductive argument**—In academic writing, deductive argument involves stating a position, then presenting evidence and reasons that support the position.

**inductive argument**—In academic writing, inductive argument involves presenting evidence, reasons and so on, then drawing a conclusion from them.

**logical argument**—In a logical argument, each step is clearly linked to the preceding step and rises out of it.

**rational argument**—A rational argument is one in which the evidence is collected in ways that can be checked.

**article**—An article is a piece of writing that is published in a journal, a magazine or a newspaper.

**journal article**—A journal article is a piece of writing published in a journal.

**attitude marker**—*See* marker.

**audience**—The audience for a text are the people who listen to it if it is spoken, or read it if it is written.

**authoritative**—If a source is authoritative, the information it contains is reliable because it has been collected and analysed according to accepted methods by researchers working in recognised institutions.

**bibliography**—A bibliography is a list of books, articles and other documents that you have used in writing your assignment.

**blog**—In the university context, a blog is a website or a web page that the student writer uses to discuss issues of academic interest. The language used in a blog is more informal and personal than that used in most other academic writing.

**booster**—Boosters are terms that allow you to express certainty and increase the authority of your voice.

**brainstorming**—You use brainstorming at the beginning of the writing process when you write down everything that you intend to include in an assignment in no particular order.

**case study**—*See* study.

**categorical statement**—*See* statement.

**chancellor**—The chancellor is the formal head of the university, but is not involved in its day-to-day running.

**vice-chancellor**—The vice-chancellor (VC) is the executive head of the university, or its CEO.

**citation**—When you use a direct voice from a source, it is called a citation.

**citation system**—A citation system is a set of rules for citing sources in academic texts and in their bibliographies and reference lists. There are many different citation systems.

**cite**—When you cite a source, you refer to it using a direct, an indirect or an external voice.

**clause**—A clause is a grammatical unit that contains at least a verb (often it contains other grammatical elements, too). A clause may form a complete sentence or it may be grouped with other clauses to form a longer sentence.

**clause theme**—A clause theme is the first grammatical element in a clause. It works as a signpost that tells the reader what the rest of the clause is about.

**collection**—A collection is a number of articles published in a book.

**edited collection**—An edited collection is a book that deals with a specialised academic topic, but each chapter is written by a different person.

**concept**—A concept is an idea or an abstract principle.

**critical thinking**—*See* thinking.

**culture**—Culture refers to the attitudes, values and ways of behaving shared by a group of people.

**academic culture**—Academic culture refers to ways of thinking and behaving that are shared by people who teach, work or study at university.

**current**—If information is current, it is up-to-date.

**data (plural)**—Data refers to a collection of facts from which you can draw conclusions.

**database**—A database is an index which tells you where to find journal articles, book chapters, conference papers and sometimes books. You use a database to locate readings for your essays, reports and so on. Some databases allow you to access the full text of an article. Others give an abstract only.

**date of publication**—*See* publication.

**deductive argument**—*See* argument.

**department**—A department is a part of the university that teaches and researches a specific discipline; for example, Department of Economics, Department of Information Technology. In some universities, departments have been replaced by *Schools* that incorporate one or several subjects (e.g. School of Law or School of English, Communication and Philosophy). In other universities, there may be departments within schools. For example, at the University of Edinburgh, the Department of Linguistics and English Language is within the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, which is within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. *See also* faculty.

**description**—Description, or descriptive writing, presents factual information. It focuses on defining, describing, summarising and exemplifying.

**dialogue**—A dialogue is a conversation or discussion between two or more people about a particular topic.

**digital divide**—The digital divide is the gap that exists between people who have access to technology (telephones, computers, internet access, etc.) and people who do not.

**direct voice**—*See* voice.

**discipline**—A discipline is an area of university study; for example, the discipline of economics or the scientific disciplines.

**discussion**—A discussion involves exchanging ideas about an issue in either talk or writing. In a written discussion, exchanging ideas involves commenting on other writers' ideas in an essay, report, blog or other text.

**discussion forum**—A discussion forum is a section of the Learning Management System that allows you to ask questions (in writing) and get responses from your fellow students.

**doctorate**—A doctorate is another name for a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), the highest formal academic qualification.

157 **drafting**—After you have brainstormed and organised the things that you want to discuss in an  
158 assignment, drafting means that you write out the assignment focusing on getting your ideas  
159 clear. You do not worry about details such as correct grammar and spelling.

160  
161 **edited collection**—*See* collection.

162 **editing**—Editing involves checking your drafted assignment to make sure that the ideas are  
163 clear and supported by evidence.

164 **email**—An email is a message sent to someone electronically using a device such as a computer,  
165 tablet or smart phone.

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167 **empirical study**—*See* study.

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169 **end notes**—End notes are a list of sources used in writing an article or book. They are placed  
170 at the end of the article or chapter, or at the end of the book. They may also be used to give the  
171 reader extra information.

172 **essay**—An essay is a text which presents an argument for a position. It may also argue against  
173 other positions.

174  
175 **examination**—A form assessment designed to measure a student's progress in a unit. Types of  
176 exams vary, however, all share one common factor: a restriction on the time allowed to complete  
177 the examination.

178 **closed-book examination**—A type of examination where students have no access to support  
179 materials. Closed-book examinations are often also invigilated examinations.

180 **invigilated examinations**—A type of exam that is supervised in order to ensure that students  
181 do not breach examination conditions. These can include restrictions on students' access to  
182 materials and the time allowed for completing the examination.

183 **open-book examination**—A type of examination where students have unlimited access to  
184 support materials. Often described as a take-home examination.

185  
186 **executive summary**—*See* summary.

187 **explicit**—If something is explicit, it is expressed openly and clearly.

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189 **external voice**—*See* voice.

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192 **facilitator**—A facilitator is someone who helps students to learn by discovering things for  
193 themselves.

194 **faculty**—A faculty is an administrative teaching and research division of a university; for  
195 example, Faculty of Business and Economics; Faculty of Social Science; Faculty of Arts. In  
196 some universities, the terms *college* or *division* are used for this level of organisation, although  
197 it has other meanings. (*See* department.) In North America, the faculty is the collective term for  
198 academic members of staff (e.g. lecturers, professors, etc.)

199 **family name**—In English, a person's family name is the name they inherit from their father. It is  
200 placed last, and so is often referred to as the last name. This is also called a surname.

201 **field**—A field is a branch of knowledge; for example, the field of economics.

202  
203 **field study**—*See* study.

204 **finding(s)**—Findings are the conclusions that a person reaches as a result of research.

205  
206 **flipped classroom**—The flipped classroom is a learning and teaching approach that involves  
207 classes that are focused on material made available in advance, such as a video lecture or  
208 podcast. The class time uses this as a focal point of discussion. In effect, the flipped classroom is  
a way of removing lectures from the timetable.

**focused**—If something is focused, it has a clear purpose.

**footnote/end note referencing**—*See* referencing.

**generalisation**—A generalisation is a statement that is true in most cases and that is drawn from a number of examples.

**general-specific**—General-specific organisation refers to a way of organising information in which general statements are followed by specific examples.

**general-specific text**—*See* text.

**given information**—*See* information.

**group work**—Group work refers to assignments or tasks that are carried out by a number of people working together.

**hedge**—Hedges are terms used to modify positions and statements.

**humanities**—The humanities are subjects that are concerned with human ideas and behaviour, such as history, philosophy and literature.

**hyponym**—A hyponym refers to a specific member of a more general class. For example, the general class *vehicles* includes the hyponyms *car*, *bus*, *truck* and so on.

**hypothesis**—A hypothesis is a proposed explanation of a phenomenon.

**identity**—In academic writing, your identity refers to the way you present yourself to your reader. For example, the author of a research article presents himself or herself as an academic. As a student, you present yourself as an apprentice academic. Your identity determines the way you use language, especially pronouns, attitude markers and hedges.

**implicit**—If a concept or idea is implicit, it is expressed indirectly.

**independent learning**—*See* learning.

**independent learning skills**—*See* learning.

**indirect voice**—*See* voice.

**individual**—An individual is a single person. In cultures that value the individual very highly, each individual is seen as having their own unique interests and skills that need to be developed.

**inductive argument**—*See* argument.

**infer**—When you infer something, you establish it by logical deduction or draw a conclusion from something.

**information**—Information refers to facts, concepts and ideas that we know about a topic.

**given information**—In a clause, given information is information that the reader already knows. It is generally placed before the main verb in the clause.

**information literate**—A person is information literate if they have the skills needed to make effective use of information.

**new information**—In a clause, new information is information that the reader does not know. New information is usually placed at the end of the clause, after the main verb.

**information technology**—*See* technology.

261 **journal**—A journal is a magazine that is published regularly, usually once a week, once a month  
262 or once every three months. It deals with a specialised subject.

263 **journal article**—a journal article is a piece of writing published in a journal.

264 **professional journal**—A professional journal is a magazine which is published regularly and  
265 which deals with issues which are interesting to a particular profession.

266  
267  
268 **key word**—A key word is a word or phrase that refers to the main idea(s) in a talk, lecture or  
269 reading.

270  
271 **learning**—Learning is the process of gaining knowledge and skills through study.

272 **independent learning**—Independent learning involves students deciding for themselves  
273 what they will learn and when. It also involves deciding how and where they will learn.

274 **independent learning skills**—Independent learning skills are the skills that a student needs  
275 to learn independently.

276  
277 **learning style**—A person's learning style is the way that they prefer to learn new knowledge  
278 and skills.

279  
280 **Learning Management System**—A Learning Management System (LMS) is a collection  
281 of websites that a university uses to present learning materials to its students. Each course  
282 has a separate site on the LMS that stores the learning materials (lecture slides, readings,  
283 audio recordings of lectures, discussion boards, etc.) for that course. *See also* Virtual Learning  
284 Environment.

285 **learning outcome**—A learning outcome explains what you should be capable of after  
286 participating in a learning activity or module. A learning outcome is a statement that tends  
287 to begin 'Upon completion of this module, students will be able to...' You will find learning  
288 outcomes listed in the *syllabus*.

289 **lecture**—A lecture is a talk on a subject given by an academic to an audience of students or  
290 fellow academics.

291 **lecturer**—A lecturer is a person who teaches at a university.

292 **literature**—The literature on a particular subject is all the articles, books and so on that have  
293 been written on the subject.

294 **literature review**—A literature review is a summary and analysis of the research findings on a  
295 particular topic.

296 **logical argument**—*See* argument.

297 **logical connector**—A logical connector is a word or phrase that indicates the relationship  
298 between two clauses. Examples include 'and', 'but', 'so', 'as a result', 'because' and 'while'.

299  
300 **marker**—A marker is a sign.

301 **attitude marker**—Attitude markers allow you to indicate how you feel about a particular  
302 position or piece of information.

303 **method**—In academic writing, a method is the way that you go about investigating a problem  
304 or testing a hypothesis.

305 **minutes**—Minutes are a written record of a meeting.

306  
307 **module**—In the UK, modules are topic-based units of study which involve classes and  
308 assessment and for which you receive an overall mark at the end of the term. They will have  
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topic-specific names such as 'Introduction to Accounting'. In other countries, different terms are used, for instance in Australia the term *unit*, means the same thing, while in New Zealand they use the term *paper*.

**natural sciences**—*See* sciences.

**new information**—*See* information.

**objective**—If information is objective, it is not altered by personal bias or commercial considerations.

**office hours**—Lecturers may specify their office hours. This means the time they have set aside in their schedules for meetings with students to discuss things like assessment, or if further explanation on a particular topic is needed. Some will operate an appointment-only policy, others will be open to drop-in meetings during this time.

**opinion**—An opinion is something you believe to be true. In this book, an opinion is something that you believe to be true but may not have evidence for.

**paper**—A paper is an academic article, report or research.

**peer-reviewed**—If a paper is peer-reviewed it has been read by several academics before publication to ensure that the standard is high, the argument is clear and the evidence has been collected in ways that are acceptable and appropriate.

**PhD**—An abbreviation for Doctor of Philosophy. *See* doctorate.

**plagiarism**—Plagiarism involves using the concepts, ideas and information presented by other writers without indicating the source.

**patchwork plagiarism**—Patchwork plagiarism involves stringing together many short quotations from one or more writers in order to stitch together an argument.

**position**—A position is an opinion that is supported by evidence.

**post**—A post is a written comment presented on a discussion board or in a blog.

**PowerPoint presentation**—*See* presentation.

**presentation**—A presentation is a talk in which you give information to an audience.

**seminar presentation**—A seminar presentation involves giving a talk on an academic topic at a seminar.

**PowerPoint presentation**—A PowerPoint presentation is a series of slides that accompany a lecture and that are created using a Microsoft computer program.

**problem-solution text**—*See* text.

**process**—When you say that the process is as important as the product, you mean what happens and how it happens is as important as the result.

**product**—The product is the end result of a process.

**profession**—A profession is a job that requires advanced education; for example, teaching, engineering, nursing, accounting.

**professional journal**—*See* journal.

**professor**—Professor is a title awarded to the most senior research and teaching staff in a university department.

365 **proofreading**—Once you have finished drafting and editing your assignment, proofreading  
366 involves checking the grammar and vocabulary of your writing for accuracy. You should also  
367 check that you have cited your sources correctly.

368 **publication**—A publication is a text that is printed and distributed to the public on paper or  
369 electronically.

370 **date of publication**—The date of publication refers to the year a book was published, or to  
371 the month and year in which an article was published.

372 **purpose**—A purpose is a reason for doing something.  
373

374  
375 **quotation**—A quotation refers to the exact words of a source reproduced in an assignment. It can  
376 be either spoken or written.  
377

378 **quote**—When you quote something, you repeat the exact words used by a source.  
379

380  
381 **rational argument**—*See* argument.

382 **reading(s)**—Readings are the books, articles and other documents that you read to supplement  
383 a lecture or to complete an assignment.

384 **recommended reading(s)**—Recommended readings are the books, articles and other  
385 documents that supplement the required readings.  
386

387 **required reading(s)**—Required readings are the books, articles and other documents that you  
388 must read.

389 **supplementary reading(s)**—Supplementary readings are the books, articles and other  
390 documents which supplement the required readings.  
391

392 **recommendation**—A recommendation is a course of action that is suggested as useful or helpful.  
393

394 **recommended readings**—*See* readings.

395 **recursive**—A process is recursive if you go back over it more than once.  
396

397 **reference**

398 **i)** A reference is a book, journal article, chapter and so on that you use in writing an academic  
399 paper.

400 **ii)** Reference is also used to indicate the way in which one word refers to another; for example,  
401 the *book* → *it*.

402 **referencing**—Referencing involves referring to sources appropriately using a citation system.

403 **footnote/end note referencing**—When you use footnotes or end notes, you indicate the  
404 reference with a superscript number in the text and place full details of the source (author's  
405 name, date and place of publication, book or article title and so on) at the bottom of the page  
406 or the end of the essay, report, chapter or book.  
407

408 **in-text referencing**—In-text referencing involves placing the name of the author and the date  
409 of publication in the text.

410 **reflection**—Sometimes called a reflective text, a reflection is a text that involves you thinking  
411 about your learning and demonstrating that this process is transforming how you think about  
412 an issue.  
413

414 **reliable**—A reliable source is one that can be trusted because it contains information that has  
415 been collected and analysed in appropriate ways.

416 **report**—A report is a text that examines aspects of a problem or a solution.



**research report**—A research report describes a piece of research. It presents a research question or hypothesis, describes the methods used to explore it, and presents and discusses the results.

**reporting verbs**—Reporting verbs are used to present the direct or indirect voices of other sources; for example, *state, argue, claim, suggest*.

**required readings**—*See* readings.

**research**—Research is an attempt to develop knowledge using logical and rational methods which can be checked by others.

**research report**—*See* report.

**researcher**—A researcher is somebody who carries out research.

**scholar**—A scholar is a person who specialises in a particular field of research.

**school**—In the university context, a school is an administrative division of a university. *See also* faculty.

**science**—Science is the study of the nature and behaviour of natural things.

**sciences**—The sciences are the different branches of science: physics, chemistry, biology, geology and so on.

**applied sciences**—The applied sciences are sciences that are concerned with the practical application of knowledge. They are closely concerned with the development of technology.

**natural sciences**—The natural sciences include physics, chemistry, biology, geology and other traditional areas of scientific study.

**social sciences**—The social sciences include economics, psychology, sociology, education and other subjects which are concerned with describing and analysing human behaviour.

**seminar**—A seminar involves the presentation of a paper on an academic topic followed by discussion under the leadership of a lecturer or researcher. In teaching, seminar is the term often used for small group teaching. In some universities, it refers to the classes in the latter stages of a degree, in others it is synonymous with *tutorial*.

**seminar presentation**—A seminar presentation involves giving a talk on an academic topic at a seminar.

**skill(s)**—Skills refer to the knowledge and the abilities needed to do something well.

**independent learning skills**—*See* learning.

**social sciences**—*See* sciences.

**source**—A source is a book, article, research report or other text that you refer to in an academic argument.

**spam filter**—A spam filter is a program used to remove dangerous or malicious emails from an email account.

**statement**—A statement is a sentence that presents information.

**categorical statement**—A categorical statement expresses a concept in absolute terms; for example, 'All Australians think X' or 'Smoking causes cancer'.

**statement of position**—A statement of position is a sentence or sentences that tells the reader what the writer is going to argue in an essay.

**study**—A study is a piece of research on a particular topic.

**case study**—A case study is an in-depth study of a particular situation. It usually involves collecting data through observing, interviewing and collecting documents, then analysing the data to identify trends or suggest solutions to identified problems.

**empirical study**—An empirical study is based on experiment and observation, not on a theory.

**field study**—A field study is carried out in the community, the workplace, the school, or any other place outside a laboratory.

**longitudinal study**—A longitudinal study is one that is conducted over a period of time—over months or even years.

**subject**—A subject is a course of study in a specialised academic area; for example, Introduction to Computing or International Management.

**summary**—A summary is a statement that presents the main points of an article in brief form.

**executive summary**—An executive summary presents the main points of a report and its recommendations (if any). It is placed at the beginning of a report.

**supplement**—If one thing supplements another, it adds to it.

**supplementary readings**—*See* readings.

**supporting voice**—*See* voice.

**survey**—A survey is a way of collecting data which involves interviews and/or the use of questionnaires.

**syllabus**—The syllabus is the document that tells you all about the organisation, learning outcomes, assessment and schedule of a module. It may be given out on the first day of classes, or it may just be available on the VLE for the module. A syllabus may also be referred to as a module guide or a study guide.

**synonym**—A synonym is word that has the same or almost the same meaning as another word. For example, you might call a piece of furniture that two or three people can sit on a 'couch' or a 'sofa'.

**technology**—Technology is the practical application of scientific knowledge to develop new systems and devices.

**information technology**—Information technology refers to the mechanical and electronic devices that are involved in storing, retrieving, communicating and managing information.

**technical language**—Technical language is language that has a special meaning in a particular subject.

**text**—A text is a piece of writing or speech which has a meaning or a communicative purpose; for example, a stop sign, a journal article, a lecture, a telephone conversation.

**general-specific text**—A general-specific text organises information so that general information is followed by specific information that gives more information and examples about the same topic.

**problem-solution text**—Problem-solution texts are texts that discuss various aspects of a problem or discuss how to solve a problem. Most reports are problem-solution texts.

**textbook**—A textbook contains information about a particular area of study. It summarises the research and ideas of scholars in a particular field.

**theory**—A theory is an explanation of some aspect of the natural or social world that is based on evidence.

**thinking**—Thinking is the activity of using your brain to consider ideas, solve problems and so on.

**critical thinking**—*See* analysis for description.

**timeline**—A timeline is a detailed schedule of activities indicating each activity and the time at which it occurs.

**topic sentence**—A topic sentence is the sentence that indicates the topic of the paragraph. In academic writing it is often the first sentence in the paragraph.

**transparent**—An argument is transparent if you can see what evidence supports it, how the evidence was collected and so on.

**tutorial**—A tutorial involves the presentation of a paper on an academic topic followed by discussion under the leadership of a lecturer. It is similar to a seminar, but tends to involve undergraduate students rather than postgraduates.

**valid**—If your argument is valid, it means that it is based on fact and the conclusion logically follows.

**validity**—If a source has validity, it is regarded as reliable.

**variable**—A variable is something that can change.

**verbatim**—If you repeat something verbatim, you use exactly the same words as the original.

**verbs**—*See* reporting verbs.

**verifiable**—If something is verifiable, it can be checked.

**verify**—If you verify something, you use different methods to check that it is accurate or true.

**vice-chancellor**—*See* chancellor.

**Virtual Learning Environment**—A Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is a collection of websites that a university uses to present learning materials to its students. Each course has a separate site on the VLE that stores the learning materials (lecture slides, readings, audio recordings of lectures, discussion boards, etc.) for that course. *See also* Learning Management System.

**voice**—Voice refers to the source of information in a text. A writer can present information in his or her own voice, or indicate that the information comes from others by using the direct, indirect or external voices of others.

**direct voice**—You use a direct voice when you quote the exact words of a source.

**external voice**—You use an external voice when you summarise the ideas of a source and indicate the source in brackets at the end of the sentence; that is, outside the sentence structure.

**indirect voice**—You use an indirect voice when you summarise the ideas of a source.

**supporting voice**—A supporting voice is a voice that gives evidence that supports a particular position. Direct, indirect and external voices can all be used as supporting voices.

**word chain**—A word chain involves a number of related words that are repeated from one clause or sentence to another. Word chains assist in tying a text together.

**writing process**—The writing process refers to the steps that you undertake to write an assignment.