



Level 4 Diploma in:
Advanced Childcare Practice & Management

Study Skills: Tips on writing assignments

Listed below are a few tips to writing your assignments. You may already be familiar with most of these points, but it will be good to remind yourself of these points before you write up your assignment for credit. You can follow the steps below, and before you hand in your assignment, complete the checklist.

The tips are organised into 3 sections, which you need to consider when writing a level 4 assignment:

1. structure
2. evidence base
3. critical thinking

The steps you need to take when preparing your assignment are:

1. Read the question - you may find it helpful to rewrite the question in your own words.
2. Check that you have read all parts of the question - is there different sub questions?
3. Check the assessment criteria - see the marking grid.
4. Write a draft structure for your assignment, with key headings and a bullet point list of all key points that you want to include in each section - in a logical order, so it reads well - as if you were presenting the information (telling the story) to your colleagues.
5. Send a draft structure of the assignment to your TLC - this should be done before the submission deadline, otherwise you will not get feedback in time. It should not be longer than 2 pages. It should only include headings and key points in each section - not full sentences.
6. For each section, think carefully about each 'claim' and what evidence you need to back up these claims
7. Search the internet and other research resources for evidence to support your claims.
8. Keep a list of all references you use in the write format
9. Next to each claim, write a sentence that summarises the evidence and the reference (name of author and year)
10. Write down 2 or more points about the limitations of each piece of evidence, and a reflection of how that evidence might relate to your country.
11. Repeat points 6-10 for each section.

Tips on how to Structure an Assignment

- **Outline:** Before you start to write your assignment it may be a good idea to write an outline for your assignment which includes the main points you will be discussing. This will i) save you time ii) help you organise your ideas iii) enable you conduct efficient literature searches iv) help you divide up your word count between different sections.
- **Introduction:** It is really important to start your assignment with a clear introduction that should include a brief background mentioning what the assignment will discuss the aim/purpose of writing this assignment and a few lines to indicate how the assignment is structured/ organised. These would usually be included in 1-2 paragraphs.
- **Continuity of ideas:** This is especially important as you write the middle part of your assignment. Ensure continuity of ideas both between paragraphs and within a paragraph so that the reader is able to follow your train of thought/ argument easily. As a general rule, discuss each main point of your assignment in a different paragraph.
- **Use of 'I' and 'you':** Academic writing is impersonal so avoid using 'I' or 'you' in your assignment. Try and build your arguments by including evidence and opinions from different sources and different perspectives so that you present a clear, unbiased picture. If you want to include your opinion, then do so indirectly. For e.g.: Include your opinion by saying 'In my opinion, implementing such an intervention is difficult because....' instead of 'I think implementing an intervention is difficult because...'
- **Bullets and numbering:** Paragraphs are preferred to bullets and numbering in academic writing and this will allow you to discuss each point further.
Use of examples: It is vital that your assignments reflect that you have a clear understanding of a particular topic which has been gained from multiple sources and that you are able to identify weaknesses and strengths objectively. Finally, you must show that you are able to apply this knowledge practically. Including examples in your assignment is a useful way to demonstrate all of the above. Where possible, explain the inferences that can be drawn from included statistics/ figures/ tables and the relevance of these.
- **Conclusion:** This is your final chance to impress the reader so make it powerful. Most conclusions include three main parts i) stating the aim/ context of the assignment again ii) followed by a very brief summary of the main points iii) final comments often considering the future (for e.g.: what can be done to improve the implementation of an intervention in the future)

BEFORE you submit your assignment, please check that there is:

- A name, date and title
- title, introduction and conclusion
- an answer to every question (and sub questions)
- a source of evidence for every claim. Re-read your text and underline all claims and make sure there is evidence for each claim.
- all figures and tables have a reference.
- references for each piece of evidence - articles, websites and opinions. It should be clear in the text what are your own thoughts and what are those of another person.
- a reflection about the quality of each evidence source, and how this evidence might apply
- a list of references at the end of the assignment
- **no plagiarism** - direct copying and pasting of other people's text that you did not write.