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1 Am I ready to study in English?

Introduction

Are you thinking about starting a college or university course? If so, this booklet provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your English language skills. There could be many reasons why you might want to do this. You may have been educated in a language other than English; or perhaps you studied in English but in another country where the conventions are different from those used in the British educational system. Alternatively, you may have studied in Britain but not at degree level.

Most people are familiar with the idea that styles of writing within an academic context are influenced by subject area – writing a scientific report involves different technical language and a different sort of presentation to writing for an Arts subject, and even students who are educated in the United Kingdom and whose first language is English often find the switch between disciplines difficult at first. In addition, language, culture and educational background also influence your writing in English, even in an academic context. For example, not all cultural traditions teach that you should announce your topic directly in an introduction, or use your conclusion to merely restate what has gone before. Other differences include the extent to which figures of speech such as metaphor are used.

This means that even if you have studied at degree level before, studying in a second or additional language may present extra challenges for you and you may find that studying takes longer than expected.

Here are comments that some students starting Open University study have made; maybe you will identify with one of them:

- ▶ I was born in Nigeria where we studied in English at school, but spoke Yoruba at home. I came to Britain and got a job. At home we speak both Yoruba and English, but I speak and write English for my job. Although I can write and speak English fluently I sometimes get confused with English grammar. I want to study at university level but am afraid that my written English will let me down.
- ▶ I am a graduate from Estonia but am finding it hard to get a job in this country equivalent to my job over there; I am a radiographer. I am learning English, but want to study for a British degree at the same time to improve my job prospects and maybe to change career.
- ▶ I was educated in Hong Kong in an English medium school and college. I am now settled in Britain as I am married to a British man. I am working as a Teaching Assistant, but would like to train as a teacher. I do not feel very confident about studying in English at this level.
- ▶ I was born in Pakistan and trained in motor repair. I came to UK in 1997 to marry my cousin. I've done factory work ever since until two years ago when I had an accident at work. I'd like to study computing at home but I'm not sure I could follow the course materials.

Whatever your background in English, we hope that when you have worked through this booklet you will be in a better position to make a choice about the suitability of higher education study for you at the moment.

The texts we ask you to read and work on are taken from Open University course materials typical of the sort of material that you will meet whilst studying at undergraduate level in the United Kingdom. A distinctive feature in studying with The Open University is that all our courses are taught via 'supported open learning', using a mixture of media such as specially written texts, videos, DVDs, CD-ROMs and online resources. You will be studying on your own from home although you will have support and guidance from a tutor. All Open University courses are written in English and you are expected to be able to read and understand the course material as well as write assignments that are likely to include reports and essays. You may also have an exam, project or assessment at the end of the course. While other educational institutions may have more face-to-face contact there is still a strong focus on working with written materials, so you may find this booklet useful wherever you intend to study.

All the examples in the booklet are taken from courses equivalent to first year undergraduate study. Each section consists of one or more self-assessment tasks to work through on your own, followed by feedback and suggestions on how you can work to improve your skills. Do take time to work through the whole booklet, as each section engages with different types of linguistic competence relevant for studying in English at higher education level. At the end of the booklet there is a grid which allows you to take an overview of how you feel you got on with each task in turn. It is a good idea to fill in the relevant part of the grid as you go along, after you have completed each task. The final section in the booklet looks at 'next steps' and includes reference to useful sources of information and support to develop your learning skills.

This booklet won't give you all the answers in deciding what you are going to do; your English skills are one factor along with your previous educational experience and how long it is since you last studied. However, we hope that working through this booklet and reflecting on the exercises will help you to make better use of information, advice and guidance that is available.

2 What sort of English do I need to be able to study at higher education level?

You may well be confident in using English in everyday situations, but the kind of English you need for study is rather different. It is what is known as 'Academic English', or 'English for Academic Purposes' (EAP), and is the English you need to undertake the following activities:

- ▶ Read and understand university course books and materials
- ▶ Identify (and make notes on) the main points from written and spoken materials - books, cassettes, video, DVD, CD-ROM etc
- ▶ Express concepts and ideas in your own words
- ▶ Organise your writing so that the meaning of your argument or description is clear
- ▶ Use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling
- ▶ Write in an appropriate style
- ▶ Be able to check your written work for accuracy and meaning
- ▶ Choose the appropriate structure for the task and use academic conventions e.g. referencing
- ▶ Understand the requirements of questions set for assignments and examinations

Although you will develop these skills further as you study, you do need them to some extent before you start. The next section of this booklet will take you through a series of exercises on some of the above skills to help you reflect on and assess your present linguistic skills. The process of working through the various tasks will help you to decide whether you feel ready to start studying at higher education level.

3 Self-assessment exercises

3.1 Read and understand academic course books and materials

These exercises are designed to help you assess how easy you find it to understand course materials: to get the overall meaning and the key ideas. You can choose:

Task 1 (Arts course), Task 2 (Maths course), or Task 3 (Science course). Or, if you wish, you can do all three.

3.1 Task 1

The following extract is from The Open University course *A103: An Introduction to the Humanities*. (The course material here refers to the 1960s)

Please read the text and comments in the suggested answers 1 to 6, listed below. Tick either a) or b) to select the answers you feel are most accurate in relation to the text.

Affluence came to America during the Second World War, and (though there were still many pockets of severe poverty) continued thereafter; economic recovery began in Europe from 1948 onwards.

Slowly the economic basis was established for the production, consumption, and international exchange, of new consumer goods. Between the mid-fifties and the mid-sixties there was a great increase in the number of multinational companies. New purchasers appeared in the market place: particularly young married couples, the working class in general, racial and ethnic minorities, those in the regions and provinces, asserting themselves for the first time against metropolitan dominance, and women and girls.

Economic change combined with demography, specifically the 'baby boom' at the end of the Second World War, producing by the beginning of the Sixties an unprecedentedly large, and unprecedentedly well-off, teenage presence in the market place (and young people could operate as producers as well as consumers).

Major technological developments of importance are those in television (including Telstar), 45-rpm records and transistor radios, in electronic synthesizers, and in advanced consumer products, refrigerators, washing machines, and so on, and in the development of the contraceptive pill. Ideologically conservative forces were strong, reinforced by the frigid influences of the Cold War, and hysteria in the United States about 'un-American' activities.

Affluence and consumerism were taken as validating the perfections of existing society. However, new critiques of society were appearing in the Fifties, and formed the basis for the much more rapid and extended circulation of critical ideas in the Sixties: neo-Marxism (Marcuse), the beginnings of structuralism, the 'New Left', the establishment of sociology departments, particularly in the European universities, and the first limited circulation of the notions of the American Beats. Old racial boundaries were crossed in a much more comprehensive way than ever before as young whites adopted and adapted black rhythm 'n blues.

Having read the previous extract on page 8, decide which of the following statements are most appropriate?

Please tick either a) or b) in each case and then compare your answers with those suggested on the following page.

The first example has been done for you.

1. a) America became a **poor** country after the war.
 b) America became a **rich** country after the war. ...✓
 b is **correct** because, '**affluence**' (line1) means **rich**.

2. a) There was a **growth** in trading between countries.
 b) There was a **decline** in trading between countries.

3. a) The population **increased** in the 50s and 60s.
 b) The population **decreased** in the 50s and 60s.

4. a) The greatest advances were in **entertainment**.
 b) The greatest advances were in **technological developments**.

5. a) America was becoming more ideologically **traditional**.
 b) America was becoming more ideologically **liberal**.

6. a) Everyone **approved** of the new form of society.
 b) People were beginning to be **critical** of society.

Suggested Answers

Question	Option	Comment
2	a	there was ' international exchange ' (line 5)
3	a	there was a ' baby boom ' (line 12) after the war
4	b	see line 16
5	a	' traditional ' means conservative (line 20-21)
6	b	' critiques ' (line 24) means expressing opposing ideas

Self-assessment

- A I got all the answers right and found it easy to do.
- B I got most of the answers right, but it took me longer than 15 minutes.
- C I found this difficult and got most of the answers wrong.

Please now turn to the grid on page 35 and note in the appropriate column for this task whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.

3.1 Task 2

The paragraphs numbered 1 – 7 below, are adapted from *MU120 Unit 0, Preparing for Open Mathematics*.

Please read through all **seven paragraphs** and choose a **heading** from the box which seems to sum up the **theme** of each paragraph in turn.

(The first one has been done for you.)

Convenience	Speed
Why a calculator?	Editing Accuracy
Memory	Flexibility

1 Why a calculator?

The course makes use of a calculator in order to help you to learn and understand the mathematics in the course – a calculator is *not*, as some people still seem to believe, a substitute for learning mathematics. In fact, using a calculator can enable you to see the underlying mathematics more readily in several ways.

Some advantages of the course calculator are given below, but as you work with the calculator you may find other useful aspects to add to your list.

2 insert the appropriate heading here _____

The calculator takes the tedium out of long calculations with numbers that would be fearsome to do in your head or time-consuming to do with pencil and paper. For example, the calculator takes about the same time to multiply 123.57 by .598 as to do 2×2 .

3 insert the appropriate heading here _____

You can correct mistakes in the input for a calculation easily and investigate what happens if you change one number in the calculation: for example, the interest rate or the price of an article.

4 insert the appropriate heading here _____

The calculator does not make mistakes in the way that human brains tend to do. Human fingers do, however, make mistakes sometimes; and the calculator may not be doing what you think you told it to do. So correcting errors and estimating the approximate size of answers are important skills in double-checking your calculator calculations. (Just as they are for checking calculations done in your head or on paper!)

5 insert the appropriate heading here _____

The calculator retains numbers, formulas and programs which you have stored in it, even when it is turned off. You can recall them when you need them and so save time by not having to enter the same information again.

6 insert the appropriate heading here

The calculator is very useful for ordinary arithmetic and yet it can also perform many functions commonly associated with a computer and deal with quite advanced mathematics. It is useful for both beginners and experts alike, because it has a variety of modes of operation.

7 insert the appropriate heading here

The calculator is small and slips conveniently into a bag or pocket. You will be able to carry it around with you and use it unobtrusively as and when you want – perhaps in a shop, on a train or in a restaurant.

Suggested Answers

The following list matches the key word to the particular paragraph.

Paragraph Heading

1. Why a calculator?
2. Speed
3. Editing
4. Accuracy
5. Memory
6. Flexibility
7. Convenience

Self-assessment

- A** My answers match the above list and I found the task easy to do. I did it in less than 5 minutes.
- B** Most of my answers match, but it took me longer than 5 minutes.
- C** I found this difficult. It took me a long time. Or, most of the answers do not match the above list.

Please now turn to the grid on page 35 and note in the appropriate column whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.

Advice on reading and understanding academic texts

- ▶ When reading new materials first read through a complete section without stopping, to get a **general** idea of the overall meaning.
- ▶ Try to guess unfamiliar words from the context. Then, read the section again and check key words in an English-English dictionary.
- ▶ Write the definitions in English, not in your first language.
- ▶ Write a sentence or two in English, in your own words, summarising the main ideas in the text.

3.1 TASK 3

The following extract is from the Open University course *S154: Science starts here*. Please read the text then answer the questions which follow it.

Keeping our water clean

Pollution from domestic sewage can lead to more than one sort of problem. Most obviously, sewage is a source of water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid fever. A second problem with sewage is that the bacteria that break it down, during a process called respiration, use dissolved oxygen from the water to do so. This same dissolved oxygen also supports the other aquatic life. The more sewage there is in the water, the more bacteria are required to break it down and the more dissolved oxygen they use, leaving less oxygen for fish and other aquatic animals. Once the oxygen in the water is used up, animals that need oxygen die. It isn't long before the water begins to smell distinctly unpleasant due to the gases released when the sewage begins to be broken down by bacteria that can live without oxygen. If you've ever stirred up the mud at the bottom of a stagnant pond, you will know exactly what we mean.

Agricultural activities pose problems through both crop spraying and the use of fertilisers. Crop spraying is carried out to prevent damage to crops from weeds and various forms of pests. However, such spraying can disperse herbicides and pesticides over a wide area so that they end up in water that drains into rivers and lakes. In high enough doses these pollutants may be toxic and, like lead and mercury, they can accumulate in the tissues of animals and so end up in our bodies too. Fertilisers contain nutrients, substances essential for the healthy growth of all plants and animals. However, when fertiliser seeps into lakes and rivers by drainage off the land it can lead to excessive plant growth. As a lake surface becomes covered with water weed, oxygen can no longer be dissolved in the water to replenish what is being used by fish and other aquatic animals. Once again, starved of oxygen, the animal life soon begins to die, and the water becomes stagnant and foul-smelling.

Having read the passage above, which of the following statements are true?

Please tick either option a) or b) in each case, then compare your answer with those listed on pages 14 and 15.

The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. a) Cholera and Typhoid fever can be carried in water polluted by sewage. ..√..
- b) Oxygen released from sewage smells unpleasant.
- a) is **correct**, see lines 2 and 3.
- b) is incorrect, because the smell is caused by gases given off by bacteria which survive when there is no oxygen present – please see the second last sentence in the first paragraph.

2. a) Some bacteria use oxygen to break down sewage.
 b) Sewage accumulates in river mud, where it helps plant growth.

3. a) Aquatic animals need nutrients from fertiliser for healthy growth.
 b) Drainage of fertilizer into lakes may pollute the water.

4. a) Fertiliser from farmland will break down sewage in rivers.
 b) Herbicide and pesticide concentration can build up in humans.

5. a) Oxygen can be dissolved in lake water.
 b) Fish and other aquatic animals cause water in a lake to stagnate.

6. The first paragraph is best summarised by the sentence:
 a) Crop spraying, agricultural fertiliser, industrial waste and domestic sewage can all contaminate water.
 b) Sewage can pollute water both by introducing water-borne diseases and by reducing the amount of oxygen available for aquatic animals.

Commentary

2. The **correct** answer is a). Please see lines 3 to 5.
 b) is incorrect because the article does not suggest that sewage accumulates (builds up) in mud, nor that it helps plant growth. Please see lines 4 and 5).
3. The **correct** answer is b). Please see lines 23 to 24.
 a) is incorrect because nutrients from fertiliser actually cause aquatic animals to be starved of oxygen (lines 27 to 28).
4. The **correct** answer is b). Please see lines 21 to 23.
 a) is incorrect because the article does not describe any connection between fertiliser and sewage.
5. The **correct** answer is a). Please see lines 24 to 26.
 b) is incorrect because it is bacteria in sewage which use up the oxygen in the water (lines 6 to 9).



6. The **correct** answer is **b**).

Although the statement in **a**) is correct, paragraph one only discusses sewage; industrial waste is not mentioned in the extract.

Self-assessment

- A I got all the answers right and found it easy to do.
- B I got most of the answers right, but it took me longer than 15 minutes.
- C I found this difficult and got most of the answers wrong.

Please now turn to the grid on page 35 and note in the appropriate column for this task whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.



3.2 Identify (and make notes on) the main points from written and spoken materials and express ideas in your own words

The following tasks are designed to help you think about **reading** and **picking out the main ideas** from course materials.

3.2 Task 1 - identifying main points from the text

Read this extract from a chapter called 'Whose health is it anyway?' by Brenda Smith and David Goldblatt (2004) from *DD100: An introduction to the social sciences: understanding social change*.

Please **read** the information outlined in the box below.
Make notes on the important points.

Health seems to play an increasing role in our everyday lives. It is difficult to pick up a newspaper or magazine, listen to the television or radio, or visit a bookshop without being confronted with information on health or exhortations to avoid certain foods, take certain vitamins or minerals, take regular exercise and a host of other things. It seems that everyone is concerned with health – not just doctors and health care professionals, but the government, the media and indeed all of us who each year make resolutions to eat more healthily, drink or smoke less and take regular exercise. A lot of this information and advice seems to suggest that we can influence the extent to which we enjoy good health through the food we eat, the exercise we take (or don't take), the 'good' or 'bad' habits we have. In other words, we each seem to be responsible for whether or not we enjoy full, active, healthy lives.

However, despite this rhetoric of responsibility for oneself and one's health, a close look at the same sources tells us that atmospheric pollution is a major problem of the era and that it is largely responsible for breathing difficulties such as asthma in our cities. In the twenty-first century we are also witnessing widespread concerns about the health effects of genetically-engineered food and heated debates about just how 'natural' the fruit and vegetables in our shops and supermarkets are. Increasingly, too, we hear about the medical discoveries of genes which play a part in the development of diseases such as cancer, whilst drug companies constantly seem to produce new treatments for many forms of disease. Many sources also suggest that feelings of being uneasy with ourselves and the stresses and strains of everyday life cause many illnesses.

These arguments seem to suggest that there are many causes of illness which are not within the individual's control. As individuals we are concerned to maximize our own health. However, these issues are also important for society as a whole. Apart from moral reasons for maximizing the health of the nation, provision of health services places a considerable financial burden on taxpayers. In Britain, around 7 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (an indicator of the nation's income) is spent on health care services, whilst working time lost through illness places pressure on business and other organizations.

3.2 Task 2 - making effective notes

Notes should only include the main points.

Please read the following **three sets of notes** on the text from Task 1.

Notes 1

Health plays increasing role in our everyday lives: difficult to pick up a newspaper or magazine, listen to the television or radio, or visit a bookshop without being confronted with information on health or exhortations to avoid certain foods, take certain vitamins or minerals, take regular exercise. Everyone is concerned with health: we each seem to be responsible for whether or not we enjoy full, active, healthy lives.

Despite rhetoric of responsibility for oneself and one's health, a close look at the same sources tells us that atmospheric pollution is a major problem of the era and that it is largely responsible for breathing difficulties such as asthma in our cities. In the twenty-first century we are also witnessing widespread concerns about the health effects of genetically-engineered food. The stresses and strains of everyday life cause many illnesses.

As individuals we are concerned to maximize our own health. However, these issues are also important for society as a whole. In Britain, around 7 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (an indicator of the nation's income) is spent on health care services.

Notes 2

Health: plays key role, wealth of information from media including advice on food, vitamins and exercise. Doctors, health care professionals and media interested: we can influence aspects of our health by improving lifestyle and changing habits. There are dangers to health such as atmospheric pollution, genetically-engineered foods, stress in everyday living. Health is an important issue: 7% of Gross Domestic Income spent on health care issues. If people off sick working time lost: loss to businesses and economy.

Notes 3

Health: seen as more and more important by health professionals, government, media, individuals.

Advice widely available on changing individuals' life styles e.g. re food eaten, vitamins taken, exercise → implies that **individuals are responsible for own health**.

But: also information (from same sources) on **factors not within our control:** e.g. pollution, food (natural?), genetic causes of disease, stress.

Responsibility for health difficult to assess – complex factors– but importance clear for individuals and society: moral and economic reasons for keeping people as healthy as possible.

Which of these three examples do you think is **most effective** in **summarising the main points** of the above text: Notes 1, Notes 2 or Notes 3?

Answer _____

Self-assessment

- A I chose Notes 3.
- B I chose Notes 2.
- C I chose Notes 1.

Please now enter either A, B or C on the grid on page 35.

Commentary

Notes 1 picks out the main ideas but often the exact words from the text have been copied. The writer has not shown that he or she can express the ideas in his or her own words. The notes are also too long. There is a lot of unnecessary detail.

Notes 2 include some of the main points but the writer has missed out some important points e.g. the argument over who is responsible for health and how much control we have over our health.

Notes 3 are the most effective. They include the main points and the writer has shown that he or she understands the ideas by putting them in his or her own words and his or her style of note taking. Notes can be taken in different formats, for example lists – as shown here – or grids - especially useful for comparisons.

Which style of notes works best would depend on your task, the requirements of your faculty and, of course, your own style and preferences. These are just suggestions on how to organise notes effectively – there are also other styles which would work well depending on the information and the task you have been asked to carry out. Once you begin your studies, you will have access to further advice for effective note taking – see also Section 5 in this booklet. In the meantime, see some suggestions for further practice below:

Advice on identifying the main points from written materials

- ▶ Practise by reading articles in 'serious' newspapers or magazines or listening to/watching serious programmes on the radio or TV, and making notes in English in your own words about the main points.
- ▶ Write a summary of the article or programme.
- ▶ Show it to a friend to see if he or she can get an idea of what the article was about from your summary.

Sample Answers

Answer 1

An increasing interest in health appears to be shared by all of us: individuals, health professionals and government agencies. Smith and Goldblatt (2004) observe that information on health is readily available in the media and in books. Suggestions for improving individuals' health include dietary advice, food supplements and exercise. This advice implies that individuals can take responsibility for their own health by improving their lifestyles.

On the other hand, information from the same sources also mentions that factors which are not within our control can affect our health, such as atmospheric pollution. Medical discoveries indicate that genetic structures – which again are not within our individual control – are responsible for causing disease.

Smith and Goldblatt (2004) suggest that this debate over who or what is responsible for health and illness matters for individuals and also for society because there are moral, economic and policy implications e.g. the amount of spending on health and time lost to the economy through ill health. It seems that a complex set of factors involving individual as well as social and biological factors affect our health.

Answer 2

Health seems to be very important to all of us. We come across a lot of advice on health in the media, and all of us, including doctors, health care workers and the government take health issues very seriously. There is important information on what vitamins to take, what to eat, how much to exercise so that we can lead a healthy lifestyle. We should also avoid pollution, genetically engineered foods and not get too stressed. It is important for individuals to look after themselves. This is quite expensive and in Britain 7 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product is spent on health care.

Answer 3

Health seems to play an increasing role in our everyday lives. It is difficult to pick up a newspaper or magazine, listen to the television or radio, or visit a bookshop without seeing a lot of information on health or exhortations to avoid certain foods, take certain vitamins or minerals and take regular exercise. Everyone is concerned with health. We can influence the extent to which we enjoy good health through the food we eat, the exercise we take (or don't take), the 'good' or 'bad' habits we have.

However, despite this rhetoric of responsibility for oneself, a close look at the same sources tells us that atmospheric pollution is a major problem. Many sources also suggest that feelings of being uneasy with ourselves and the stresses and strains of everyday life cause many illnesses.

In Britain, around 7 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (an indicator of the nation's income) is spent on health care services, whilst working time lost through illness places pressure on business and other organizations.

Self-assessment

- A My answer was most like Answer 1.
- B My answer was most like Answer 2.
- C My answer was most like Answer 3.

Please now turn to the grid on page 35 and note in the appropriate column for this task, whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.

Commentary

Answer 1 is the most effective answer. It covers the main points and tries to show what the debate is about and how it links to the question. The writer has presented the material in his or her own words, rather than copying directly from the course materials. The writer has also acknowledged the source of their ideas and information by referring to the writers of the materials – Smith and Goldblatt (2004).

Answer 2 is a little better than Answer 3 in that the writer has tried to express ideas in his or her own words. However, the writer presents these points in a fairly unstructured way and misses out some points about the debate regarding responsibility for health. He or she has not acknowledged the source of the ideas or information.

Answer 3 covers the main points. However, in many places the writer has copied the exact words from the course materials and has not acknowledged the source of the ideas or information.

Advice on expressing concepts and ideas in your own words

- ▶ Being able to put ideas and information in your own words comes with practise.
- ▶ You should make your notes in English, using English expressions and phrases.
- ▶ Try to 'think in English', rather than translate from your first language.

Even if you put the idea in your own words in an essay you must still acknowledge where the idea came from. When you start your course you will be told how to reference your sources correctly.

3.4 Organise your writing so that the meaning of your argument or description is clear

3.4 Task 1

One of the features of good academic writing in English is that it appears to flow from one idea to another. Structure and organisation is important. For example, paragraphs would generally start with a sentence that 'signposts' the main topic, with all other sentences leading on from this, while linking words and phrases help to maintain this sense of flow. The following task tests your knowledge of these linking words.

Read the following extract from *K100: Understanding Health and Social Care* and choose the appropriate **linking word or phrase** from the two alternative words or phrases outlined **in bold**. (Please **underline** the word or phrase you think is appropriate.)

Care relationships are seldom just a matter of 'doing what comes naturally'. **Rather/For one thing**, you may be caring for, or being cared for, by someone you would not otherwise get on with. **And/Also**, a care relationship has to adapt to circumstances: it may be brief, as in an acute hospital ward, or it may be very long lasting; it may be flexible according to need **or/ furthermore**, as you saw with the home care plans in Unit 3, it may involve a high degree of regularity. **In addition/Yet**, some of the things you have to do together are very different from what goes on within other relationships. **What is more/On the one hand**, you need to be able to conduct a care relationship in a calm and consistent way, without the fallings out and reconciliations that can occur in many other kinds of relationship.

But/In other words, a care relationship has to be specially 'constructed'. This is true even when the care relationship is built on an existing family relationship. You are not simply relating to someone according to your personal inclination. You have a particular kind of role to play. **Moreover/to sum up**, the other person has a role too. **On the other hand/In fact**, your two roles go together as a matching pair – carer and receiver of care. The one role implies the other. A care relationship involves both parties enacting their roles together in co-ordination.

Compare the following version with your selection. The appropriate linking words are **in bold**.

Care relationships are seldom just a matter of 'doing what comes naturally'. **For one thing**, you may be caring for, or being cared for by, someone you would not otherwise get on with. **Also**, a care relationship has to adapt to circumstances: it may be brief, as in an acute hospital ward, or it may be very long lasting; it may be flexible according to need **or**, as you saw with the home care plans in Unit 3, it may involve a high degree of regularity.

In addition, some of the things you have to do together are very different from what goes on within other relationships. **What is more**, you need to be able to conduct a care relationship in a calm and consistent way, without the fallings out and reconciliations that can occur in many other kinds of relationship.

In other words, a care relationship has to be specially 'constructed'. This is true even when the care relationship is built on an existing family relationship. You are not simply relating to someone according to your personal inclination. You have a particular kind of role to play. **Moreover**, the other person has a role too. **In fact**, your two roles go together as a matching pair – carer and receiver of care. The one role implies the other. A care relationship involves both parties enacting their roles together in co-ordination.

Self-assessment

- A I could understand and fill in the gaps in the text quickly and correctly.
- B I took quite a long time to do the task but eventually I managed to fill all or most of them in correctly.
- C I had difficulty understanding the text and found it difficult to fill in the gaps.

Please now turn to the grid on page 35 and note in the appropriate column for this task, whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.

Commentary

The words chosen by the writer help the piece 'hang together': to connect up different sentences and paragraphs so that they flow on from each other.

For one thing, In addition, Also, What is more, Moreover add points which are similar, or form points to make an argument.

Or contrasts points in an argument

In other words, In fact sums up an argument

Other useful linking words and phrases are: **Rather, But, Furthermore, Yet, Whereas, However, On the other hand, In conclusion**

Note that **And** at the beginning of a sentence is not generally used in an academic assignment.

Advice on organising your writing

- ▶ Look at paragraphs carefully when you read texts and notice how the writer has organised them. They should start with a sentence that 'signposts' the main topic, with all other sentences leading on from this.

- ▶ Experienced writers use linking words and phrases to organise their argument.
- ▶ Note them in texts you read and practise using them in your writing to help it 'hang together'.
- ▶ Find the linking words used in the above exercise - and others you can think of in a thesaurus (a book listing synonyms - words of similar meaning) and make your own list of useful linking words.

3.5 Use appropriate grammar, punctuation and spelling

3.5 Task 1

Please **read** each of the following sentences, decide how each needs to be changed, and then **rewrite** it correctly.

1. Each candidate who applies to the college has individual interview.

2. There are a number of ways of ways of keeping informed about current affairs. Reading the newspaper. Listening the radio.

3. It known that exhaust emissions are the major cause of pollution in large cities.

4. Caxton introduced the printing press into England, the first texts were printed in English at the end of the C15th.

5. What the major reasons for inflation have been?

6. Hospital waiting lists will be shorter if more doctors and nurses were recruited.

Suggested Answers

- 1 Each candidate who applies to the college has **an** individual interview.
'Interview' is countable. It requires an article – 'an'.
- 2 There are a number of ways of keeping informed about current affairs:
reading the newspaper; listening **to** the radio.

Reading the newspaper. This is not a complete sentence as it has no main verb, so a full stop wouldn't be appropriate. Similarly, 'Listening the radio'; this is not a complete sentence as it has no main verb. Also, the preposition 'to' is needed after listen.
- 3 It **is** known that exhaust emissions are the major cause of pollution in large cities.

The verb 'know' is in the passive tense. This involves the use of the verb 'to be' (is) + past participle (known).
- 4 It is not correct to link two sentences with a comma. You can use a full stop:
Caxton introduced the printing press into England. The first texts were printed in English at the end of the C15th.

or a semicolon:
Caxton introduced the printing press into England; the first texts were printed in English at the end of the C15th

(Notice that there is a capital letter after a full stop but not after a semicolon.)
- 5 The word order (or syntax) of this sentence is wrong. It should be:
What have been the major reasons for inflation?
- 6 Either:
Hospital waiting lists will be shorter if more doctors and nurses **are** recruited.

or
Hospital waiting lists **would** be shorter if more doctors and nurses were recruited.

The first sentence describes a situation that is more likely to happen than in the second sentence.

Self-assessment

- A I was able to identify the errors easily and could rewrite the sentences correctly with no difficulty.
- B I was able to identify most of the errors and rewrite some of the sentences.
- C I had difficulty identifying the errors and was not able to rewrite the sentences correctly.

Please now turn to the grid on page 35 and note in the appropriate column for this task, whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.

3.5 Task 2

Please read these extracts from course guidelines for students. The first is from *M150: Data, Computing and Information*. The second is from *A103: An Introduction to the Humanities*. **Rewrite** the verbs in square brackets in their **appropriate form**.

For example:

The writing of history [require] the utmost precision in the handling of language. We need concepts [help] [organise] our thoughts.

Answer:

The writing of history **requires** the utmost precision in the handling of language. We need concepts **to help organise** our thoughts.
(Marwick, 1998: 36-37)

Extract 1

Now would be a good time [reflect]..... for a few minutes on your progress over these two units. [Think]..... about what you [know]..... at the beginning of the units and [compare]..... it with what you [know]..... now. [Take]..... time [reflect]..... on the progress you [make]..... in [learn]..... mathematics. Which topics in this unit you [find] straightforward? Which you [find]..... difficult? [Write down]what you [feel]..... you [gain]..... from [study]..... this unit – for example, a skill that you [improve]..... or an understanding of some idea or technique.

Extract 2

For the next two weeks we [look]..... at the political ideas of the eighteenth-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, his influence on the French revolution and on the development of modern democracies. There [be]..... three parts to these units. These [break down]..... into sections, each of which [revolve].....round one particular point. During your study of these units [make sure]you [read] slowly, [give]..... yourself plenty of time [think]..... Philosophy [be]about argument and arguments cannot [rush].....

Now look at the answers below and compare them with your own.

Note: the correct verb forms are in green below.

Extract 1

Now would be a good time **to reflect** for a few minutes on your progress over these two units. **Think** about what you **knew** at the beginning of the units and **compare** it with what you **know** now. **Take time to reflect** on the progress you **have made** in **learning** mathematics. Which topics in this unit **have you found** straightforward? Which you **have found** difficult? **Write down** what you **feel** you **have gained** from **studying** this unit – for example, a skill that you **have improved** or an understanding of some idea or technique.

Extract 2

For the next two weeks we **are going to look** at the political ideas of the eighteenth-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, his influence on the French revolution and on the development of modern democracies. There **are** three parts to these units. These **are broken down** into sections, each of which **revolves** round one particular point. During your study of these units **make sure** you **read** slowly, **giving** yourself plenty of time **to think**. Philosophy **is** about argument and arguments cannot **be rushed**.

(Maltravers, 1998: 92)

Commentary - Extract 1

The following are also possible – though the meaning is slightly different.

- ▶ *the progress you are making*
- ▶ *did you find straightforward*
- ▶ *did you find difficult*
- ▶ *you gained from studying*
- ▶ *you improved*

Commentary – Extract 2

The following are also possible:

- ▶ *we are looking*
- ▶ *will look (this sounds much more formal)*
- ▶ *break down (this is more informal)*

Note: academic, and especially scientific or technical, texts frequently use the *passive form* of the verb.



Self-assessment

- A I found this task quite easy and did it quickly (about two minutes per extract), with few errors.
- B I made some errors but took no more than 5 minutes for each extract.
- C I found this difficult. I spent more than 5 minutes on each extract and still had a number of errors.

Please now turn to the grid on page 35 and note in the appropriate column for this task, whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.



Now compare your punctuation with the original text below:

Many thousands of genes have been discovered, including many that have roles in disease. These genes are scattered throughout the human genome. But what is the human genome? The physical appearance of the bulk of the human genome is 46 long, thin structures known as chromosomes. It is along the length of each chromosome that the genes are located. The term genome is a combination of the two words 'gene' and 'chromosome'.

Chromosomes are built up from a remarkable substance called DNA (which stands for deoxyribonucleic acid). DNA is breathtakingly simple in structure and yet capable of directing the way we grow, reproduce and survive; hence it is often referred to as the genetic blueprint - the plan - of human life.*

Self-assessment

- A I had no problems in correcting the punctuation.
- B I managed to correct most of the punctuation but had problems with 3 or 4.
- C I found this difficult. I had 5 or more wrong.

Please now turn to the grid on page 35 and note in the appropriate column for this task, whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.

When you have completed all of the tasks in Section 3, take an overview of the grid in Section 4, p35, to find out whether you have filled in mostly As, Bs or Cs. Then turn to Section 5 to consider, "What next?".

Commentary

* A variety of punctuation has been used here to break up the text and makes it easier to read. You may have punctuated the passage in a more simple way which would be equally correct, for example, brackets, dashes and the semicolon can all be replaced by commas.

The full stops and question marks followed by a capital letter are essential.

A new paragraph is needed because the main subject changes from the genome to DNA.

4 Self Assessment Grid

For each of the self-assessment tasks/exercises, tick skills box
A, B or C.

Self-assessment task	Exercise number	A) ...easily. This was not a problem at all. I understood the tasks and got most of them right.	B) ...with some difficulty. I need to do some more work on this. I understood the tasks and know where I need to improve. I'll follow up the practice suggestions.	C) ... with great difficulty. I found the tasks very difficult and sometimes I did not understand the points in the Commentary.
3.1 I can read and understand academic course books and materials.	Task 1			
	Task 2			
	Task 3			
3.2 I can identify (and make notes on) the main points from written and spoken materials.	Task 1			
	Task 2			
3.3 I can express concepts and ideas in my own words.	Task 1			
3.4 I can organise my writing so that the meaning of my argument is clear.	Task 1			
3.5 I can use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.	Task 1			
	Task 2			
	Task 3			

Any other points you wish to note? e.g. if the task took much longer to do than expected.

5 What next?

Having completed the grid on page 35 you will now have a fairly clear idea about the areas of language use where you feel confident and be able to identify any areas which you may want to develop further. Even if you found some of the exercises in this booklet quite challenging there is a wide range of help and support available.

As a 'next step' you could perhaps use the completed grid as a basis for discussion of your future plans with an advisor – whether this person is an Open University student advisor, an admissions advisor at another institution, or an educational advisor within a local support agency.

If you are an Open University student or enquirer and are concerned about your ability to use English language in an academic context, contact your Open University national or regional centre for further information about the help and support which may be available for OU students who are EAL speakers. (See contact details in Appendix A). Your course tutor, together with staff at your local regional centre, are there to support you through your studies. Regional office staff are available Monday to Friday 08:30 to 17:00. Outside our normal office hours, you can phone us on our advice line on 0870 333 1444 (Monday to Friday 17:00 to 20:00, and Saturdays 09:00 to 17:00).

Alternatively, you may be looking at the booklet having seen it mentioned in the information pack "Diverse Routes into Higher Education in Scotland", or website www.diverseroutes.co.uk, in which case, your advisor may use the information in the pack to talk through the various options open to you in terms of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision in your local area, and the next step you feel might be appropriate to you.

For example, you may want to approach a local college to take a test which will show your level of English language. The following tests are a guideline of the acceptable minimum requirement for studying at higher education level:

Scottish Qualification Authority Standard Grade English (3 or above)
<http://www.sqa.org.uk>

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) has a sliding scale depending on which course you hope to access
<http://www.ielts.org/>

Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (pass)
<http://www.cambridgeesol.org/>

For further information about English language provision in colleges and in the community together with information about access to higher education in Scotland visit the Diverse Routes website, www.diverseroutes.co.uk which gives you information about Access and ESOL courses near where you live.

Having worked through the tasks in this self-assessment workbook, you may be keen to investigate further what study at higher education level involves. There are a number of resources available to familiarise you with Open University course materials. For example, visit

<http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/tasters/>

<http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn/home.php>

or contact your Open University regional centre to enquire about course-related diagnostic workbooks which may be available.

Alternatively, while you may feel confident in some areas of English language you might welcome the opportunity to take this initial step into studying at higher education level more slowly. In which case, one of the short courses on The Open University Openings Programme might be useful. For more information visit

<http://open.ac.uk/openings/>

If you wish to develop your learning skills, there is a series of Open University books, called 'Good Study Guides', with specific subject-related volumes for Social Sciences, Arts, Management and Maths, Science and Technology. Sample pages from these guides can be viewed online at www.open.ac.uk/goodstudyguide by clicking on the 'Look inside' tab. These books can be purchased at most good bookshops or online, directly via links from the above website, or via www.ouw.co.uk/classifications/study_support-student.shtml as well as from other sites.

A list of other Open University self study packs are also listed on a link from www.ouw.co.uk/classifications/study_support-student.shtml website, including one on 'The Effective Use of English', which may be of particular interest.

Whatever your background in English, we hope that having worked through the exercises in this booklet and the process of reflection involved in this, has put you in a better position to make a choice about your future study plans.

Getting in touch

Staff at your local regional centre are there to support you through your studies. They are available Monday to Friday 08:30 to 17:00 (UK time). Outside our normal office hours, you can phone us on our advice line on 0870 333 1444 (Monday to Friday 17:00 to 20:00, and Saturdays 09:00 to 17:00). (Calls to this line from the UK are charged at the national rate.)

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