
BLOG ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND

The course Moodle site will host a blog to which students will contribute. In the first week of term, the Learning Technology and Innovation unit will host a session on blogging, providing guidance about what is expected of a blog entry and how blogs differ from formal academic work, such as essays. If you are not familiar with blogs, I recommend reading a few of the articles on:

- Psychology Today (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/>; “Most Popular” articles list on right hand side)
- Evonomics (<http://evonomics.com/>)

Your blog posts can be on any topics covered during the course. The best blog posts will integrate multiple topics. You will need to research further into your chosen topics, think about relatable examples from everyday life, and interesting case studies that your readers may not have heard about. Search widely for research, examples, and case studies that you can link to illustrate the science.

When you have an idea for a post, I encourage you to submit it on the Moodle site for comments from myself and your peers. You can submit as many posts as you like and your summative post can be based on one of these, but your final assessment (one per term), will be submitted as a private Moodle assessment.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Writing for a blog is not the same as writing academic essays. Here are a few things to consider:

CONTENT

- Each post should have a short title and at least two hyperlinks to other resources, e.g. newspaper or academic articles, visual aids (maps or graphs), and relevant websites. As noted above, try and respond to other people’s posts. But avoid any online denunciations – be respectful of other people’s ideas and viewpoints.
- Think carefully about the structure of the post. A blog post is not a murder-mystery in which you only find out who the killer is at the end of the book. Nor is it an academic essay that speaks through a voice of objectivity. Rather, a blog post is an ‘inverted pyramid’ in which you start by telling the reader what the argument is and then substantiate this argument (e.g. through links to online resources).
- Feel free to be more opinionated and speculative than you would be in an academic essay. But, as noted above, do think about ways to back up your argument. No rants! And no SHOUTING!

STYLE

Use short punchy sentences. And short punchy paragraphs. Like this. Use images (e.g. free stock images or memes) and media (e.g. Youtube video or gif) where appropriate. Memes are ok, just remember your audience and consider appropriateness!

PLAGIARISM

Since you will all be reading and commenting on each other's posts, ideas will be shared, but the usual plagiarism expectations apply. Please don't copy each other's specific words or examples any more than you would copy anything you would find on the web, your textbook, or the academic literature. Note also that I have access to all blog posts and will know who posted what first! The goal here is to learn from each other, but you will be assessed on your independent thinking and independent work.

Please also ensure that any images you use are free for public use. You can find high quality, royalty free images at one of these sites:

- <http://librestock.com/>
- <https://www.pexels.com/>
- <https://pixabay.com/>
- <http://www.freeimages.com/>
- <https://www.flickr.com/> (filter by license)
- <https://stocksnap.io/>

There are many others (and if you find any particularly good ones – post them to the blog discussion forum!).

GRADING

The aim of this assessment is to write two blog posts that convey research in psychology to a general audience. Your blog posts will only be shared with members of the class, but I encourage you to consider posting it publicly once assessments are complete. I will not force you to comment on each other's posts (i.e. there is no formal assessment for comments), but commenting on others' work is a good way to encourage them to comment on yours, and writing several posts is a good way to assess your own understanding of a topic. "If you can't explain it to a six-year-old (or at least a smart undergraduate in another field), then you don't really understand it!"

TIMEFRAME

You will submit one blog post for assessment each term. I encourage you to use this assessment as an opportunity to "take notes" via blog posts on the topics you learn about. This is an opportunity to translate psychological research into everyday life using relatable examples and case studies. At the end of term, you can either take one of your posts, improve it or write a brand new post and submit it for assessment by

Week 10 of MT and LT respectively. (Note, submission will be through a separate link).

LENGTH

Each blog post must not exceed 1000 words (the general guideline is +/- 10%). Short, punchy, and gripping is what you're aiming for, with careful consideration given to each paragraph, each sentence, and each word.

SUBMISSION

By the end of each term, you will hopefully have written several blog posts. By Week 10, you will take one of these posts, improve on it based on what you have learned, (including what you have learned from peer comments) and submit it privately via Moodle.

MILESTONES

Week 1-3 MT: Learn to use the blogging platform and learn how to write a blog post. LTI will offer training during one class.

Week 4+: For the rest of the year, I encourage you to write short blog posts on topics you learn about in class that fascinate you. Your final blog post can integrate multiple ideas you have learned.

Week 10 MT: Submit your first blog post for assessment.

Week 10 LT: Submit your second blog post for assessment.

MARKING CRITERIA

You will be assessed on:

- Content:
 - analytical quality
 - links to weekly topics and questions
 - links to online resources
 - relevance of examples and case studies
 - demonstrated understanding of the topic
- Style:
 - clarity of expression
 - easy-to-follow structure
 - conversational tone
 - good use of images or other media

CATEGORY	Distinction (70-100)	Merit (60-69)	Pass (50-59)	No Credit (0-49)
Content (40%)	Post provides comprehensive insight, understanding, and reflection on topic. Post builds a	Post provides moderate insight, understanding, and reflection on topic. Post lacks focus in some	Post provides minimal insight, understanding, and reflection on topic. Post lacks overall focus or	Post provides little or no insight, understanding, and reflection on topic. Post is unfocused or asks

	<p>focused argument or asks a new question or has an unconventional view supported by research. Integrates multiple ideas and topics in a cohesive manner. Examples or case studies effectively illustrate the point being made. Post is creative, fluent, topical and would stimulate dialogue, commentary, and a new understanding for a general audience.</p>	<p>places or asks a question or offers a view that is mostly understood by the general public. Examples or case studies offer some insight into the point being made. Post is moderately creative, fluent, topical and would stimulate some dialogue, commentary, and some new understanding for a general audience.</p>	<p>asks a question or offers a view that is well understood by the general public. Examples or case studies offer minimal insight into the point being made. Post is uncreative, lacks cohesion, topical and would be boring to most in a general audience.</p>	<p>a question or offers a view that is not supported by research. Examples or case studies offer little or no insight into the point being made. Post is uncreative, lacks cohesion, topical and would be ignored by most in a general audience.</p>
Accuracy (20%)	<p>Argument or topic is consistent with research or makes well-argued criticisms of existing theory or evidence, drawing on course material where appropriate.</p>	<p>Argument or topic has a few inconsistencies with research that are not dealt with.</p>	<p>Argument or topic has many inconsistencies with research that are not dealt with.</p>	<p>Argument or topic ignores relevant evidence and theory.</p>
Organization (20%)	<p>Post is well structured such that each paragraph is well connected to the previous paragraph and overall message is clear. Introduction captures the audience and conclusion leaves the audience satisfied, but wanting more. Media is used in a way that adds to rather than detracts from message.</p>	<p>Overall structure is good, but difficult to follow in some sections. Introduction and conclusion are adequate, but could be more compelling. Some media is gratuitous.</p>	<p>Overall structure is acceptable, but difficult to follow in several places. Introduction and conclusion are boring. Media is gratuitous and detracts from message.</p>	<p>The post is poorly organized or media substantially detracts from message.</p>
Style (20%)	<p>Writing is short, punchy, and entertaining. Avoids jargon (or explained in a manner appropriate for a general audience). Uses a conversational</p>	<p>Writing is mostly short, punchy, and entertaining. Mostly avoids jargon and overly complex language. Three or fewer misspellings and/or mechanical errors.</p>	<p>Writing is boring and unclear in several places, or reliant on unexplained jargon or overly complex language. Four misspellings and/or grammatical</p>	<p>Writing is boring, unclear, filled with jargon or unnecessarily complex language. More than four errors in spelling or grammar.</p>

	tone and avoids overly complex language. No misspellings or grammatical errors.		errors.	
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