

Success in your
studies



LIBRARY : Skills Centre

Session outline

In this session, you will:

- Learn about the Skills team and what we offer.
- Know where to find help with assignment writing and other key academic skills.
- Recognise the key features of studying successfully in the UK (up to Level 7).

Who can use the Skills Centre?

All students!

We provide information, advice and guidance on academic writing and study skills for students.

All levels

All courses

No matter your background or previous experience of study.



[Webinars](#)

Online group sessions on more academic skills and writing topics



[1-1 appointments](#)

Available online, over the phone or on campus



[Virtual drop-ins](#)

Every Wednesday 4-5.30pm for quick questions



[Studiosity](#)

Feedback on your writing drafts



[Skill Guides](#)

Online resources to develop your skills

Online resources:

Wide range of Skill Guides and downloadable resources for independent study:

Academic writing	Research skills	Organisational skills
Critical writing	Literature reviews	Time management
Planning and structuring assignments	Dissertation and research projects	Exam and revision strategy
Reflective writing	Designing research posters	Group Work and Collaboration

Evaluate your existing skills using our online self-assessment tool.

- Rate your confidence and knowledge of:
 - Essential Skills.
 - Academic Writing.
 - Reading & Research.
- Receive a personalised action plan and links to resources and guidance to develop your skills.

[Take the Skills Check](#)

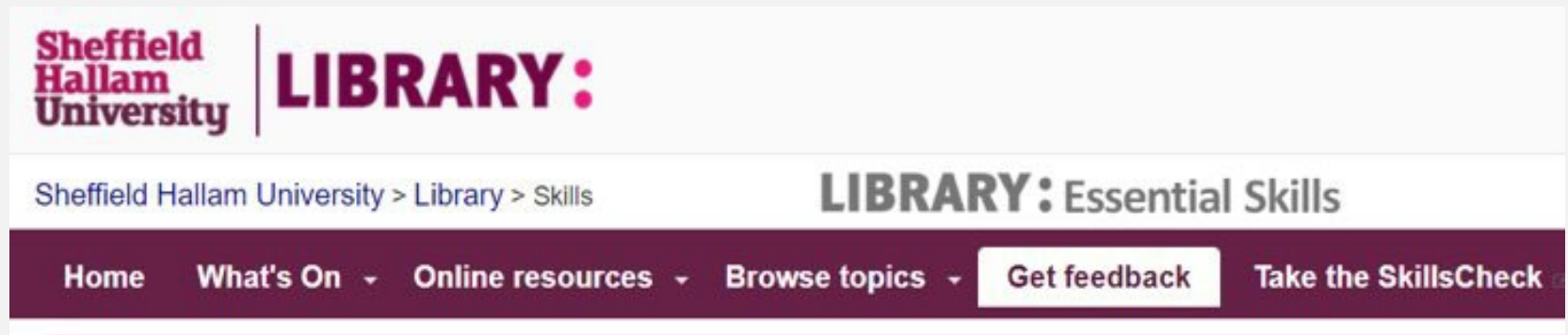
- Short e-learning course – 30 minutes to complete.
- For all new students (Foundation Year, Undergraduate and Postgraduate).
- Explores what learning at University is like.
- Guides you through evaluating your study skills and building a development plan.

[How to enrol on the course](#)

Studiosity – online writing feedback service

Develop your academic writing style, structure and grammar by receiving feedback on your work before you submit it for assessment!

- Upload up to 5,000 words of your work.
- Receive written feedback within 72 hours.
- Find out more on the "[Get feedback](#)" tab.



The screenshot shows the Sheffield Hallam University Library website. The header includes the university logo and the word 'LIBRARY:'. Below the header, the breadcrumb trail reads 'Sheffield Hallam University > Library > Skills'. The main heading is 'LIBRARY: Essential Skills'. The navigation bar at the bottom contains the following items: 'Home', 'What's On', 'Online resources', 'Browse topics', 'Get feedback' (highlighted with a white background), and 'Take the SkillsCheck'.

Get in touch

You can view our timetable, online resources and book onto a session via our website: [Skills Centre](#).

Or simply Google “**Sheffield Hallam Skills Centre**”!

You can also contact and follow us via:

Email: skillscentre@shu.ac.uk

Twitter: @HallamSkills

Podcast: anchor.fm/skillschat

Other ways to develop your skills

Libraries at City and Collegiate Campus

The Libraries offer a wide range of services including:

- Library search.
- Reading lists online.
- Subject guides.
- Bookable desks/computers.
- Guidance on referencing.

[Library homepage](#)

Sheffield
Hallam
University

LIBRARY:

Assistive Technology

Workshops on how to use specialist software and tools for academic study.



- Mindmapping (Mindview).
- Tools for reading and research (Office 365).
- Recording lectures and notetaking (Audio Notetaker, Glean).

[Assistive Technology](#)

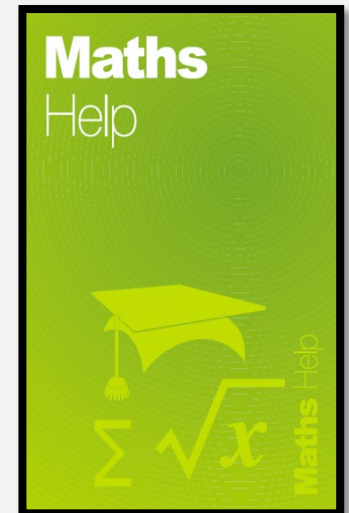
Maths and Statistics Support

Individual Support with:

- Mathematical content of courses.
- Using statistical software (e.g. SPSS).

Online resources including:

- Maths and stats help-sheets.
- Guides to using statistical software.



[Maths and Stats Support](#)

Additional support



[Library](#)

Help with finding sources, referencing, and reading lists.



[Maths and Stats Help](#)

Support for statistical (including software) and maths queries.



[Assistive Technology](#)

Specialist software for reading and notetaking.



[University English Scheme](#)

Resources and workshops to improve your use of English.



[Disabled Student Support](#)

For help with disability-related enquiries.



[Student Wellbeing](#)

For confidential help with psychological wellbeing.



[Hallam Help](#)

For all general questions or if you're not sure who to ask.

Being a successful student

What are your markers expecting?

The student has:

- an in-depth understanding of their subject and a **critical awareness of different perspectives**.
- a comprehensive **understanding** of techniques and research methods in their subject area.
- **originality** in the application of knowledge, together with a **practical understanding** of how theory and research fits real-world contexts.
- the qualities and **transferable skills** necessary for employment.
- **independent learning** ability.

What are your markers expecting - explained

In other words, a successful student can:

1. **manage their own time** and studies effectively.
2. **read widely** to develop their subject knowledge and acknowledge alternative perspectives and viewpoints.
3. **become a critical thinker**, developing their own stance by using their personal experience and ideas to spot potential areas for new research.
4. **develop their academic writing and research skills** in preparation for the dissertation.

Step 1 – Manage your time effectively

Long term planning

Create a [Master List of Assignments](#)

- Use different colours for each module.
- Include only key information: e.g. 2000 word essay, 50% of module mark, deadline 3rd Nov 2022.
- Keep the list somewhere you can see it easily.

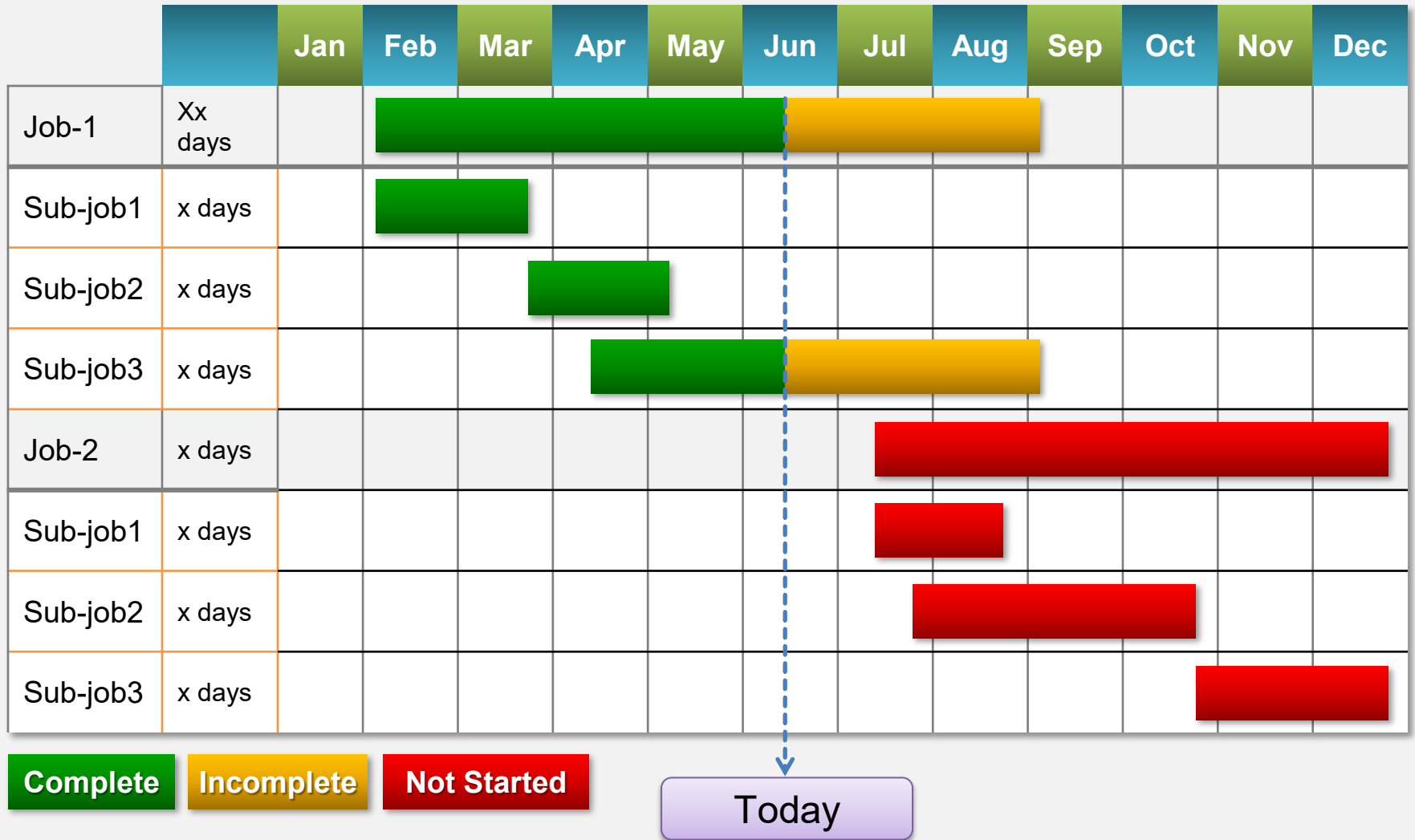
Use a Gantt Chart

- Helps you to identify different tasks and allocate time to each to meet an overall deadline.
- See overlapping tasks and dependencies.
- Example of [dissertation plan using Gantt chart](#).

Use an Online assignment calculator,

- Like this one from [Leeds Beckett University](#).
- Or this one from [Studiosity](#).

Gantt Template



Short term planning



Create a Weekly planner

- Use different colours for each activity.
- Schedule in rest and fun activities as well as work.

To do lists:

- Keep track of what you need to do for each task.
- List three things you need to do next.

Break the task down:

- Chunk up your time into small blocks and rewards.
- Set 'stepping stone' deadlines.

Review, review, review!

- Review your progress regularly and adjust the plan if you need to (you will!).

Step 2 – Read widely

Top tips for reading widely

- Read widely – use your [subject guides](#) to explore key journals and publications in your subject area.
- Make sure what you are reading is relevant – [check the date, author and context.](#)
- Use a range of sources – try to connect theory to practice and real-world contexts.
- Question what you read – this will show you are a [critical thinker.](#)

Use tables to organise your reading

Perspectives	Evidence	Critical position
Traditional toppings generally considered 'acceptable' (pepperoni, margarita, mushroom)	Cheferton (2015); Marinarington (2016);	This may be cultural - both of these studies were conducted in the USA. Other cultures may have different perceptions of acceptable flavours.
The 'Original flavour' theory: original flavours will always be perceived as superior	Crustworth (2009); Crisper (2010)	Perceptions are time-bound. This theory would suggest that pineapple will eventually be regarded as a 'traditional' pizza topping. Pineapple has been used as a pizza topping since the 1960s- how long will it take?
The concept of what could be considered a 'topping' is changing e.g. sushi pizza, 'dessert' pizza.	Yumkinson (2018); Margaritworth (2016)	With the development of contemporary toppings, and the definition of what constitutes a 'pizza' becoming more fluid, maybe 'acceptability' will no longer be a key influence in decision making.

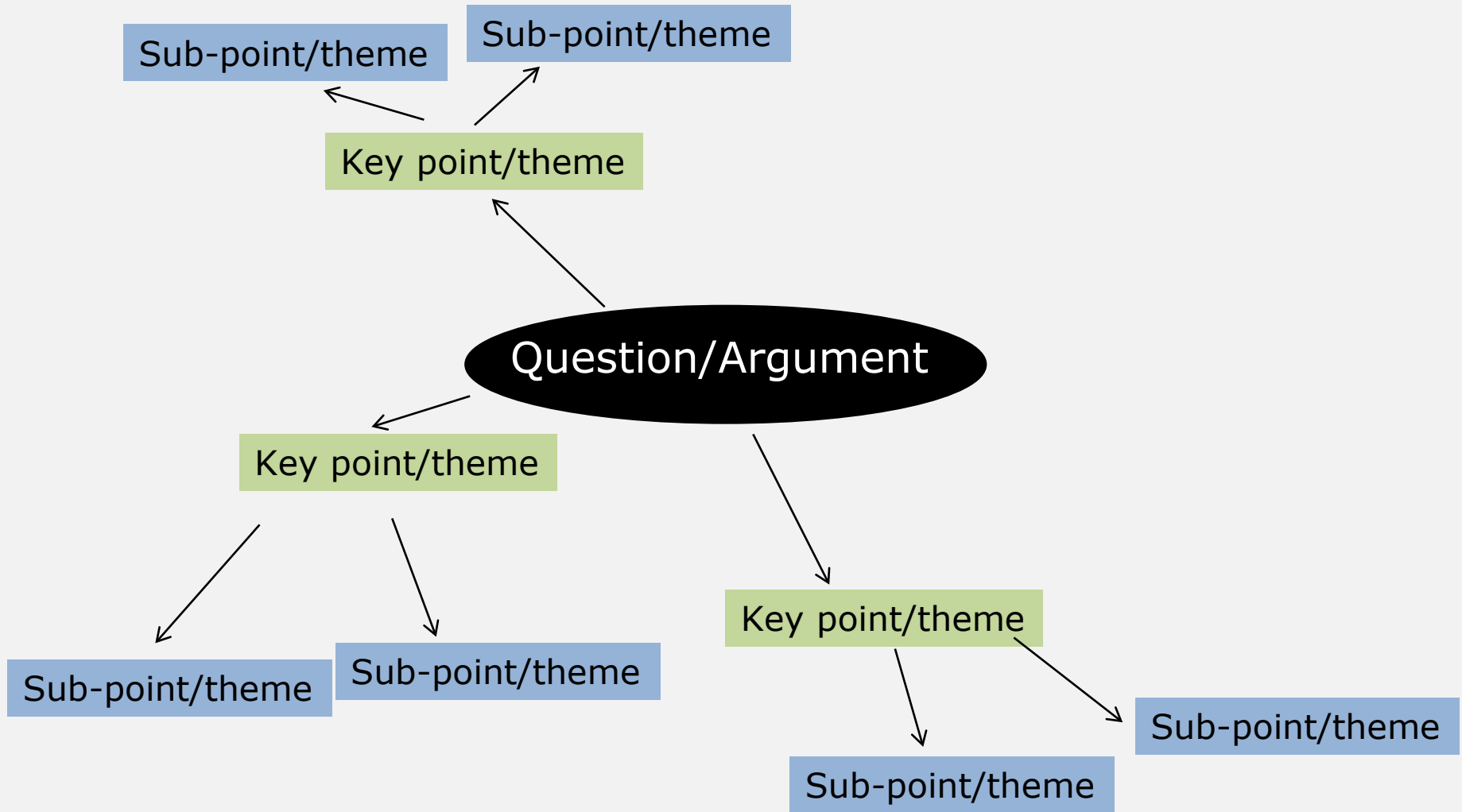
Steps 3 and 4 – Build critical writing skills

Planning your approach

- It's important to take time to read and plan out your ideas before you start writing.
- Mind maps can help you organise these ideas.
- Download our [essay planning template](#) to get started.

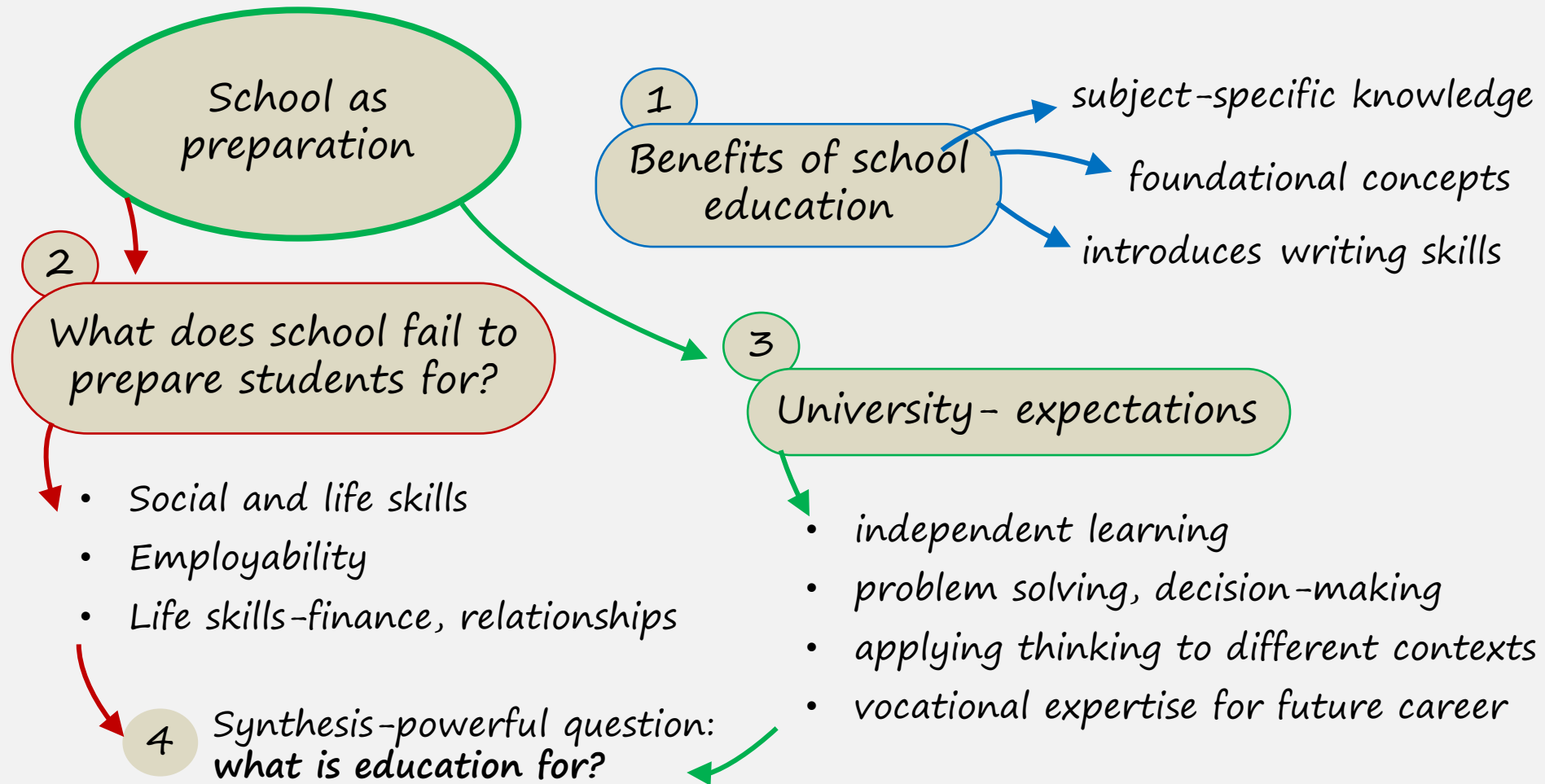
Recommended webinar: [Planning and structuring webinar](#)

Mind map example 1



Mind map example 2

To what extent does school prepare undergraduate students for studying at university? Discuss.



Writing your assignment

- Make sure that everything you write is relevant to the assessment question.
- When making an argument ensure you are back up your point with evidence.
- Whatever you write, **critical thinking** will play a key part of your assignment.

Recommended resource: [Academic Writing study guide](#)

What do we mean by being critical?

- Backing up your opinions and argument with evidence.
- Showing if there is agreement or debate in the literature on a particular subject.
- Evaluating the relevance and strength of the evidence.
- Drawing a conclusion.

Recommended webinar: [Critical Writing](#)

What next?

Action 1: Complete the Skills Centre e-module

Our e-module – **Essential Skills for Academic Success** – takes 30 minutes to complete and enables new students to assess their current skills and plan their development for the year ahead.



Essential Skills for Academic Success

This module will introduce you to the key academic skills you need at university level, and how and where these fit into your course, as well as practical strategies for developing these skills with sessions and resources from the Skills Centre.

In section 2, you'll take our SkillsCheck – an online self-evaluation that enables you to reflect on your current strengths and identify which academic skills you want to develop over the next 12 months. You'll receive a personalised action plan via email that you can share with your Academic Advisor to set goals and stay on track.



Duration
30-45 mins



100% online
Return any time



Key induction activity

libguides.shu.ac.uk/essentialskillsmodule

Action 2: Book onto an upcoming skills webinar

The screenshot shows the Sheffield Hallam University Library Skills Centre website. At the top left is the university logo and 'LIBRARY:' text. On the top right are links for 'MyHallam' and 'Staff Intranet'. Below the header is a navigation bar with links: Home, What's On, Online resources, Browse topics, Get feedback, Take the SkillsCheck, and About Us. A search bar is also present. The main heading is 'Webinars and workshops'. Below this is a paragraph: 'You can view upcoming online group sessions below, browse topics individually, subscribe to our calendar, or talk to an adviser.' There are three columns of content:

- Essential Skills**:
 - Essential key skills
 - 27 Jul 2023, 2:00 pm
 - Getting started with APA Referencing - Library webinar
- Academic Skills**:
 - Academic writing
 - 15 Aug 2023, 5:00 pm
 - Advanced Critical Writing - Skills Centre Webinar
- Wellbeing and effectiveness**:
 - Personal effectiveness
 - No entries found.
 - Personal wellbeing

Explore our calendar and book an upcoming session:

libguides.shu.ac.uk/skillscentre/events

Skills Centre induction:

Do you want to know more about what the Skills Centre offers and how it can support you while at university?

Then book onto one of our new induction sessions:

- **October 3rd: 12-1pm, online**
 - **October 4th: 12-1pm, Collegiate campus, Southbourne, Room 133**
 - **October 5th: 12-1pm, City Campus, Owen, Room 1026**
- Refreshments provided.
 - Learn about what the Skills Centre offers.
 - Speak to staff and share ideas with other students.

Sign up: <https://tinyurl.com/shuskillsinduction>

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Skills Centre