

Using Moodle and Turnitin for in-course writing skills training



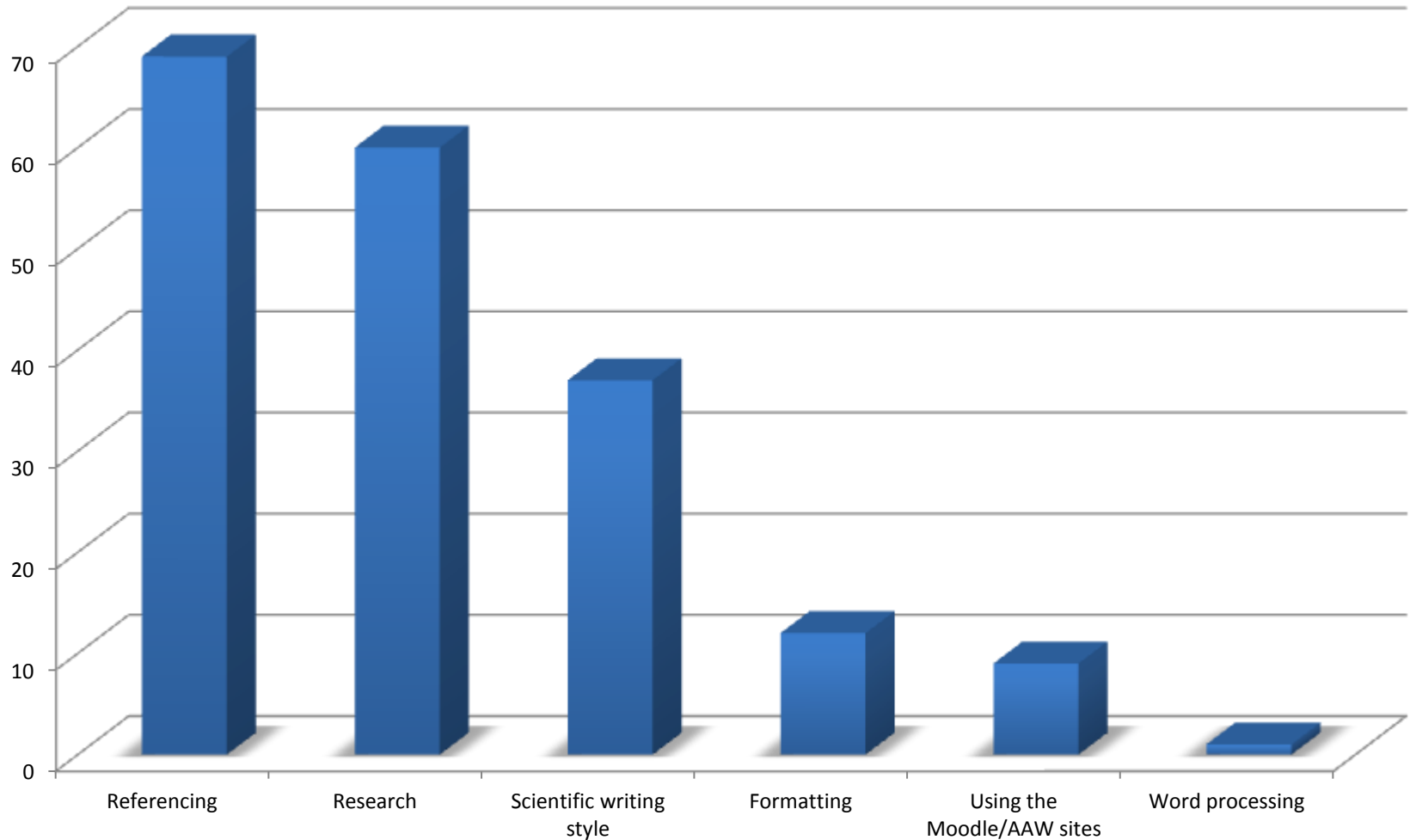
Dr Fiona Meade

University Teacher
Geographical and Earth
Sciences

Background

- Report writing was removed from the externally assessed portion of the Higher English syllabus in 2001
- Current students have difficulties with all aspects of the scientific writing method at University – finding information, synthesis, structuring
- This results in superficial essays, based on web searches and non-peer reviewed information

Problems





Expectations/ Assumptions



Staff

- Assume students will know how to approach an academic essay
- Assume academic skills are/should be taught centrally
- Expect students to know how to use the library

Students

- Expect a learning environment like school
- Expect all information (both skills and learning material) they'll need will be provided to them
- Many of the students are high achievers, want “the answer” – lacking confidence in information they find themselves

Centrally taught courses?

84% of students felt central support should be provided.

If it was provided:

42% suggested they would attend voluntarily

34% would only go if the courses were compulsory

20% felt their skills were good enough already

4% were not bothered improving these skills

Centrally taught courses?

The College courses were advertised to students in their first lab, by email and on the Moodle page!!

By the end of the course only 24% of students seemed to be aware that these seminars actually even existed, with nobody actually having attended them.

Voluntary courses are not the answer....

Study skills web tutorials

The College of science and engineering runs a series of study skills workshops covering a range of topics - [see here for information](#)

Topics include:

- Fitting study around your commitments
- Making effective notes in lectures
- After the lecture: Consolidating your notes
- Being effective with your reading
- Writing academic essays
- Writing scientific and technical reports
- Speaking out with confidence: Oral presentations
- Improve your memory
- Coping with exam stress
- Better late than never: Revision tips

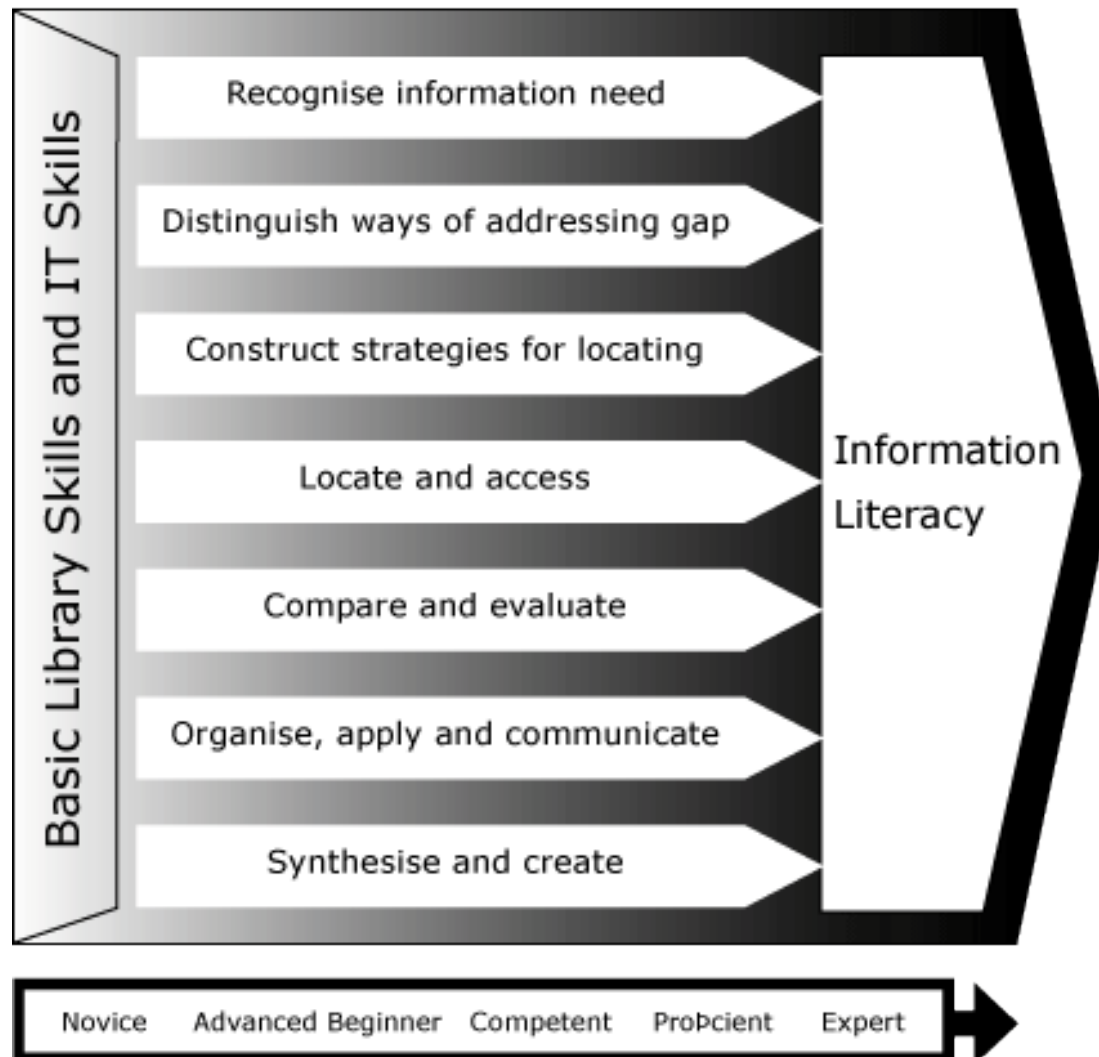
Katie Grant is the new [Royal Literary Fund Writing Fellow](#) at the University of Glasgow, and offers free and confidential one-to-one writing skills help for anybody from first years to post-graduates. If you feel might benefit, contact Fiona for Katie's details. She sees students on Mondays and Tuesdays by appointment.

What do I do?

- Use a combination of:
 1. Taught lab
 2. Moodle tutorial webpages
 3. Advancing academic writing website
 4. Progressively more challenging assignments with detailed feedback

SCONUL Seven Pillars Model for Information Literacy

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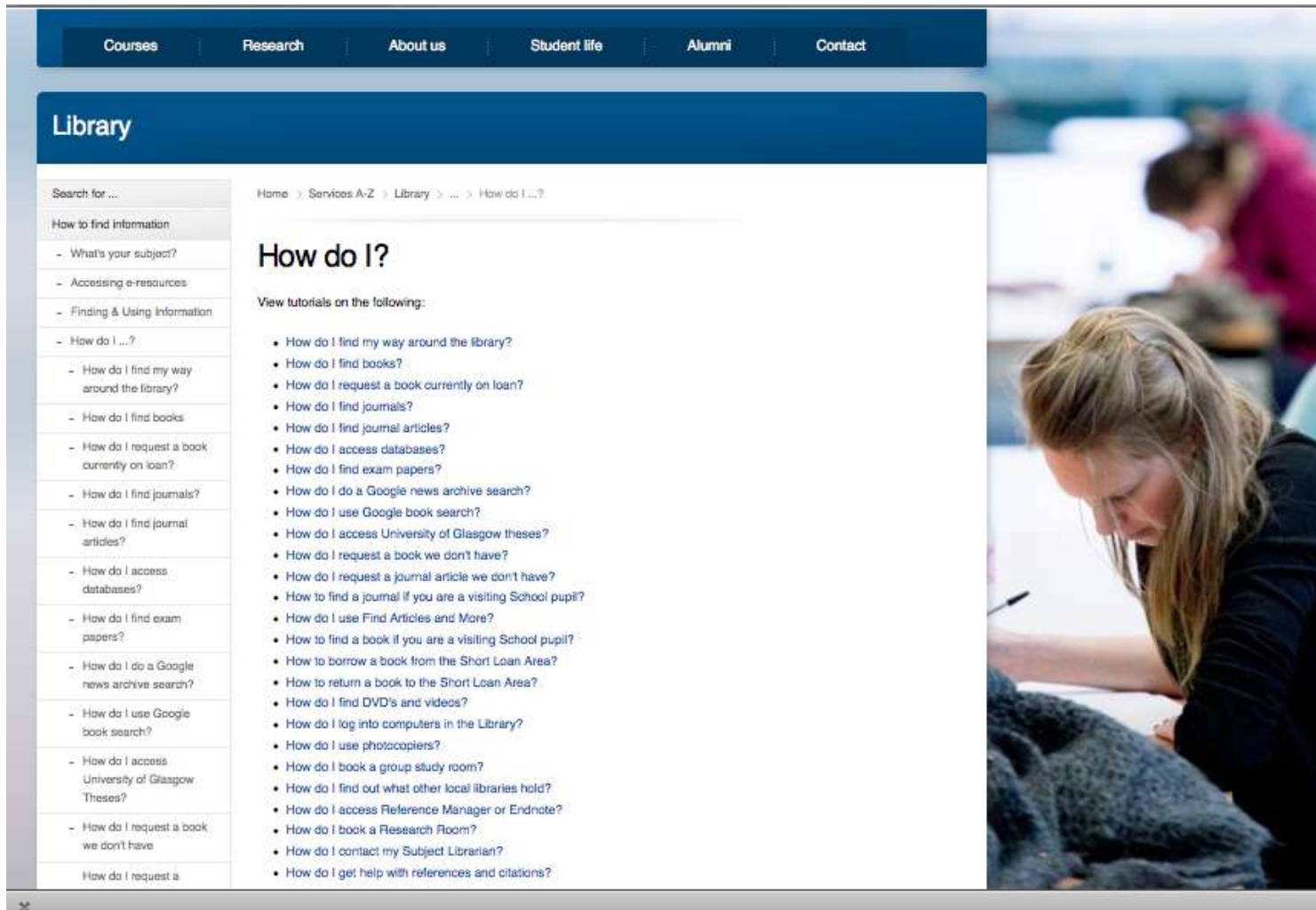
1. Taught lab

- First lab of session covers writing skills, research and assessment
- Introduce library website and resources
- Introduce Moodle tutorials
- What is expected in an academic essay?
- How to use scientific journals



Accessing Journals/Databases

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/library/howtofindinformation/howdoi/>



The screenshot displays the University of Glasgow Library website. At the top, a dark blue navigation bar contains links for Courses, Research, About us, Student life, Alumni, and Contact. Below this, a white header area features the word 'Library' in a dark blue box. A search bar is positioned on the left side of the page. The main content area is titled 'How do I?' and includes a breadcrumb trail: Home > Services A-Z > Library > ... > How do I...?. Underneath the title, it says 'View tutorials on the following:' followed by a list of 28 tutorial topics. On the right side of the page, there is a vertical image showing a student with long blonde hair, wearing a black top, leaning over a desk and looking at a laptop screen. The background of the image is slightly blurred, showing other people in a library setting.

Library

Search for ...

Home > Services A-Z > Library > ... > How do I...?

How do I?

View tutorials on the following:

- How do I find my way around the library?
- How do I find books?
- How do I request a book currently on loan?
- How do I find journals?
- How do I find journal articles?
- How do I access databases?
- How do I find exam papers?
- How do I do a Google news archive search?
- How do I use Google book search?
- How do I access University of Glasgow theses?
- How do I request a book we don't have?
- How do I request a journal article we don't have?
- How to find a journal if you are a visiting School pupil?
- How do I use Find Articles and More?
- How to find a book if you are a visiting School pupil?
- How to borrow a book from the Short Loan Area?
- How to return a book to the Short Loan Area?
- How do I find DVD's and videos?
- How do I log into computers in the Library?
- How do I use photocopiers?
- How do I book a group study room?
- How do I find out what other local libraries hold?
- How do I access Reference Manager or Endnote?
- How do I book a Research Room?
- How do I contact my Subject Librarian?
- How do I get help with references and citations?

REFERENCES CITED

Batiza, R., and White, J.D.L., 2000, Submarine lavas and hyaloclastite, *in* Sigurdsson, H., et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of volcanoes*: London, Academic Press, p. 361–382.

Cas, R.F., and Wright, J.V., 1987, *Volcanic successions: Modern and ancient*: London, Allen & Unwin, 528 p.

Fisher, R.V., 1961, Proposed classification of volcanoclastic sediments and rocks: *Geological Society of America Bulletin*, v. 72, p. 1409–1414.

Journal article:

Author(s), Year, Paper title, Journal Name, Volume, Page range of paper.

Figures

- Figures are fundamental to writing in Earth Science: Field photos, photomicrographs, maps
- Ensure they are:
 - ? Relevant
 - ✓ Referenced
 - ✓ Have a caption and are referred to in the text
 - ✓ Are big enough and of high enough resolution
 - ✓ Annotated

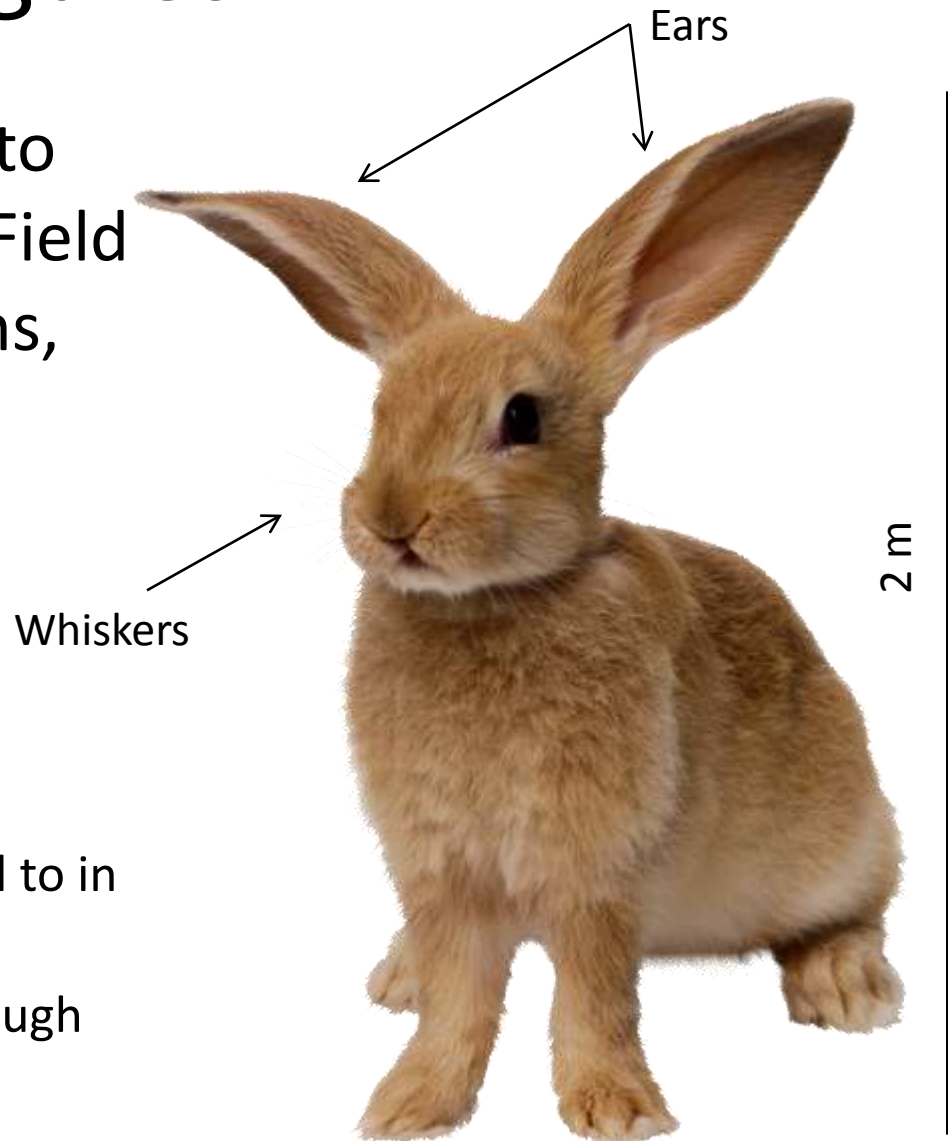


Figure 1: Robbie the rabbit (Clipart, 2011).

Continuous assessment 1

- CA exercise 1 asks you to write a short (1page) report on "The Geology of Holyrood Park, Edinburgh"
- Not only will this exercise prepare you for your field trip but will allow you to practice these writing skills before the bigger essay assignment.

40

Continuous assessment 1

- This assignment is worth 5% of your final grade and will be very useful in your revision for the theory exam, in which the field trip will be examined.
- Show Moodle page
- Work through example searches

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Continuous assessment 2

- This is the main written assignment for the 1X course. There will also be a similar essay for 1Y.
- You will need to write a 4 page essay, entirely using journal resources.

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Continuous assessment 2

- The essay titles are pre-allocated, based on your student number.
- They relate to geological disasters.
- Each is a very specific event, meaning they will be slightly easier to research using the techniques we have discussed today.

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Continuous assessment 2

- Each of these topics has a wikipedia page that you might use for an overview but should not be referenced in your essay.
- Use it as a start point to fuel your own research on the topic.
- I know the content of the wiki page so I'll know if you've used it as the basis of your essay!!

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Continuous assessment 2

- Your essay should focus on the geology – the processes that caused the event and the geological/environmental consequences.
- You should include something on the human impact of the event, but do not make it the focus of your essay

45

Continuous assessment 2

- The essay has several requirements (elements to be included, style etc)
- Be sure you meet these requirements
- Compulsory elements that are not included will result in marks being lost
- See the Moodle segment for full guidelines.

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Be organised

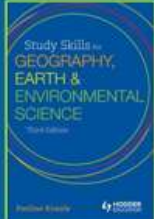
1. Use headings
2. Use page numbers
3. Make clear paragraphs. New subject = new paragraph.
4. Make sure figures and tables are consistent and referred in the text. Be careful if you add another figure – make sure you update the text.
5. GIVE YOURSELF LOTS OF TIME and READ INSTRUCTIONS



47

Resources

- Moodle tutorials – use as you write
- Study skills for Geography, Earth and Environmental Science students by Pauline Kneale
 - Covers note taking, study skills, writing, oral presentations, revision, presenting field data, dissertations etc.



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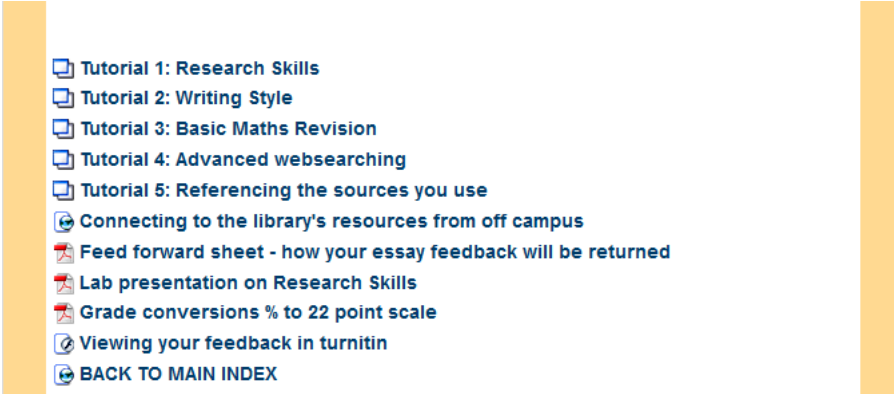
1. Taught lab

- Short assignment (1 page) given immediately, for submission after 3 weeks of classes
- Subject matter prepares for field trip – runs 1 week after submission
- Give some articles and required to find 3 more and include a figure



2&3. Resources

- Moodle based study skills tutorials
 - Research skills
 - Advanced websearching
 - Referencing the sources you use
 - Connecting to the library's resources off campus
- Advancing academic writing skills website
 - Writing style
 - Technical aspects of writing

- 
- [Tutorial 1: Research Skills](#)
 - [Tutorial 2: Writing Style](#)
 - [Tutorial 3: Basic Maths Revision](#)
 - [Tutorial 4: Advanced websearching](#)
 - [Tutorial 5: Referencing the sources you use](#)
 - [Connecting to the library's resources from off campus](#)
 - [Feed forward sheet - how your essay feedback will be returned](#)
 - [Lab presentation on Research Skills](#)
 - [Grade conversions % to 22 point scale](#)
 - [Viewing your feedback in turnitin](#)
 - [BACK TO MAIN INDEX](#)

Basic Research Skills

This tutorial covers the following topics: **Red links** take you to other useful websites.

- **What sort of information do I need?**
- **Where do I find the resources I need?**
 - **A. Your lecture notes**
 - **B. Your course text books**
 - **C. The library**
- **Websites and web searches**
 - **Google scholar**
 - **Wikipedia**
- **Using primary resources - Journals**
 - **Journals in the library**
 - **Online Journals**
 - **Web of Knowledge**

Where do I find the resources I need?

C. The library

There is a wide selection of Earth Science textbooks in the University Library. Earth Science books can be found in two places in the library, on **Level 6** and **Level 2**. The books on Level 2 are available for short term loan.

The video on the right shows you how to find books in the library.

This video is one of a series of useful **how-to guides** to help you use the library facilities. These guides include information on how to find books, take them out on loan and how to use the E-resources.

The library main page can be found here: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/library/>



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Websites and web searches

These exercises are in the **Formatting - capitals** category.

A. The following words should always be capitalised:

- the first word of every sentence
- the personal pronoun 'I'
- proper nouns (individuals' names, place names, planets, mountain ranges, oceans, languages, days of the week, months of the year, brand names) - remember that Earth should be capitalised when referring to the planet, but lower case 'earth' when referring to the soil.
- Roman numerals, e.g. XIV, IV, MCLXVI
- Geological periods (Precambrian, Archaean, etc.)

N.B. we do not use a capital letter after a colon, unless the word would need a capital letter in any context, e.g. a proper name - Precambrian, Earth.

B. Specific, allocated names should be capitalised when things or creatures are being referred to by that specific, unique name, otherwise use lower case. This can be complicated so let's look at examples:

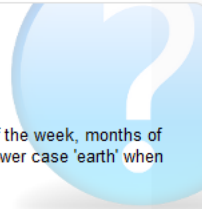
- the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, but the ridge
- the Great Rift Valley, but the rift valley or rift valleys
- the Somali subplate, but the subplate or subplates
- the Atlantic Ocean, but the ocean or oceans
- Professor Brainstorm, but the professor
- South America, but the southern American states

C. With scientific taxonomic classifications, everything above a species is capitalised: **Tip: a quick google will often tell you whether you're dealing with a genus or a species.**

- Homo sapiens (Homo, which is the genus, is capitalised; sapiens, which is the species, is not capitalised)
- the phylum Arthropoda (phylum, which is the species, is not capitalised; Arthropoda, which is the genus, is capitalised)

D. A general name is not capitalised.

- humans, NOT Humans
- dogs, NOT Dogs
- fish, NOT Fish



Formatting - capitals - #37

Category: Formatting - capitals 

Instructions:

Read the text and click on the word or words that are either wrongly capitalised or missing capitals. In the box that pops up, type the word as it should appear, and if it is followed by a punctuation mark, e.g. a full stop or a question mark, make sure to put the punctuation mark in as well.

You have found 3/8 words

There are **Three** main types of Plate **Boundaries**: Divergent boundaries, where the crust is generated as plates pull away from each other; Convergent Boundaries, where crust is destroyed as one plate dives under another; and Transform boundaries, where crust is neither produced nor destroyed as the plates slide horizontally past each other. The convergence and divergence boundaries balance out, as **earth's** surface is not increasing in size.

[Click to finish this task](#)

4a. Assessment structure

1X

Short essay – 5%

Main essay – 15%

Content worth 33%

Figures/tables /style/bibliography
worth 66%

1Y

Main essay – 20%

Content worth 50%

Figures/tables /style/bibliography
worth 50%



4b. Feedback

- 1st reports are marked in time for writing main course essay
- Used Turnitin for submission, marking and feedback
- Feedback directly linked back to Moodle resources
- Video tutorial on how to pick up their feedback and what to do with it

Insert Title

Holyrood park owes its distinctive topography to volcanism that took place from around 350 MYA, during the carboniferous.

Capitalisation

At this time Scotland sat near the equator and had a warm tropical climate. The area forming the Midland Valley was subject to much passive rifting as a consequent of continental collisions to the south, associated with the Variscan Orogeny. This rifting lead to the volcanism that formed the igneous rocks of Holyrood Park. (Website 1). During this time, a cycle of alternating encroachment of the land by seawater and deposition of seawater (summarised in table 1) (Website 2). Consequently, Edinburgh was part of a t... shoreline when the volcano Holyrood park erupted.

Position of citation

Cited incorrectly (in-text)

Table 1

Subsidence allows the sea to encroach the land.	Deposition of sediments allow for the formation of alluvial plains	Dense Lycopod (swampland trees) forests form
Continuing subsidence		

Well done

The first volcano to erupt was a Rock volcano, first erupting (Emrys Phillips and Sue L 2004) releasing ash and the with basaltic lavas spreading. Later the Arthur's seat volcano. The volcano likely rose to a height and 5000m across (2002), the lavas were also composed of basalt.

This is not the correct citation style. Sources should be cited as follows:

- If there is 1 Author: (Surname, Year)
- If there are 2 Authors: (Surname1 & Surname2, Year)
- If there are 3 or more Authors (Surname1 et al., Year)

website: (Website 1)

See: <http://phisci.moodle.qia.ac.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=22761>

and

http://khios_dcs.qia.ac.uk/writing/mod/writingskills/view.php?id=245

After the extinction of the volcanoes sedimentary layers of interbedding shale and sandstone continued to build and dolerite magmas pushed through between these beds for

Refer to figure in the text

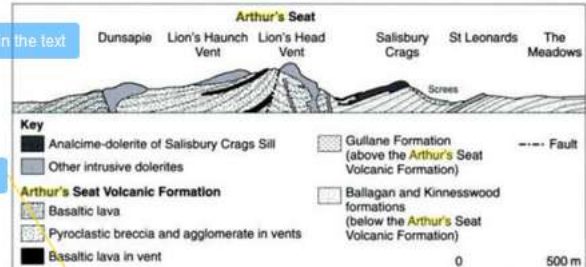


Figure caption

(Edinburgh and a landscape fast geology. (David McAdam, 2003). Sills form sheet like structures as instead of pushing straight upwards towards the surface magma follows a weaker path cutting between beds, sills form when these magmas cool before

Search QuickMark templates

Writing skills linked

Comment Select text and click the Comment button to highlight text associated with a comment.

- Alphabetise reference list
- Capitalisation
- Cited incorrectly (in-text)
- Commonly Confused
- Direct quotation
- Don't personalise the citation
- Figure caption
- Good introduction
- Good work
- Incomplete information in bibliography
- Insert Title
- McAdam
- Muddled order
- not relevant
- Phillips & Loughlin
- Plagiarism
- Poor paraphrasing
- Position of citation
- Refer to figure in the text
- Repetition
- Run-on
- Too long!
- Vague
- Website citation
- Well done

Originality GradelMark PeerMark

turnitin 9% SIMILAR 16 OUT OF 22

able to go on and dominate in the way we see around us today (Figure 2). As vein density of the non-angiosperms has not changed much since the Paleozoic with a lower limit of 1.8 mm mm⁻² in modern time and an upper limit of 2.8 mm mm⁻² in the Carboniferous (Boyce et al., 2010). In contrast angiosperms have seen a mean average around 8 mm mm⁻² with some modern species reaching as high as 24 mm mm⁻² (Boyce et al., 2009). This increase in vein density not only helps the plants to transpire water, it helps with the exchange of gases during photosynthesis. Once again this is an area of some debate as to the process that drove this change during the Cretaceous. Although a recent study has show that like vein density, early angiosperms had lower photosynthetic rates (Brodribb and Field, 2010). Therefore it not hard for us to imply that these changes around 140-100 million years had a huge effect on the development of the angiosperms beyond the K-T boundary. This is why modern flowering plants gas exchange potentials far exceed that of all other living or extinct plants (Feild et al., 2011). Once they flowering plants cemented there place as the most abundant species it was long before their effects where being felt.

Effects of the Rise of Angiosperms on Climate

The climate of the Cretaceous was one of high seasonal aridity (Boyce and Lee, 2010). Therefore these newly developed skills of the flowering plants to exchange gases at a higher rate shaped the climate and composition of atmospheric gases. They do this by altering the amount of water vapor and carbon in atmospheric cycle (Field et al., 1998). The rise in angiosperms are proposed to have strongly altered climate, with the massive diversification of angiosperms creating a positive feedback loop with climate modifications started by the angiosperms themselves (Boyce et al., 2010). Climate model simulations run with and without the presence of angiosperms produce an overall increase in precipitation, this can be seen in Table 1 where we can see the difference in duration of a monsoon season (Boyce and Lee, 2010).

	With Angiosperms			Without Angiosperms		
	Onset	Demise	Duration(days)	Onset	Demise	Duration(days)
Min	14 Nov	3 Apr	185	23 Jan	3 Apr	100
Mean	26 Oct	16 Apr	202	10 Jan	12 Apr	122
Max	15 Oct	28 Apr	220	29 Dec	18 Apr	140

Table 1. Mean onset, demise and duration of the rainy season, as well as minimum and maximum values of any individual year in runs with and without angiosperm transpiration capacities (Boyce and Lee, 2010). Poor paraphrasing

This increase in precipitation along with the fact that the Cretaceous was one of the warmest in earth's history helped increase the rate of expansion and diversification. Angiosperm megathermal rainforests came to reign in the Paleogene with a lot of fossil records to support this rise but Cretaceous rainforests fossils are harder to find. This is in part down to a lack of macrofossil records but also because interpretation can be ambiguous (Boyce et al., 2010). Due to this lack of fossil records, although angiosperms first influence on climate came in the Cretaceous, modern climate is best used to try to isolated and further study the true impact of angiosperm to the global climate change. Another reason given for the rapid expansion was that the Cretaceous period was one of great geological activity which is thought to have helped spread the angiosperms from

Rubric 1Y essays

Content 22 20 18 16 13

Figures/Table 22 20 18 16 13

Style 22 20 18 16 13

Rubric score 16 / 22

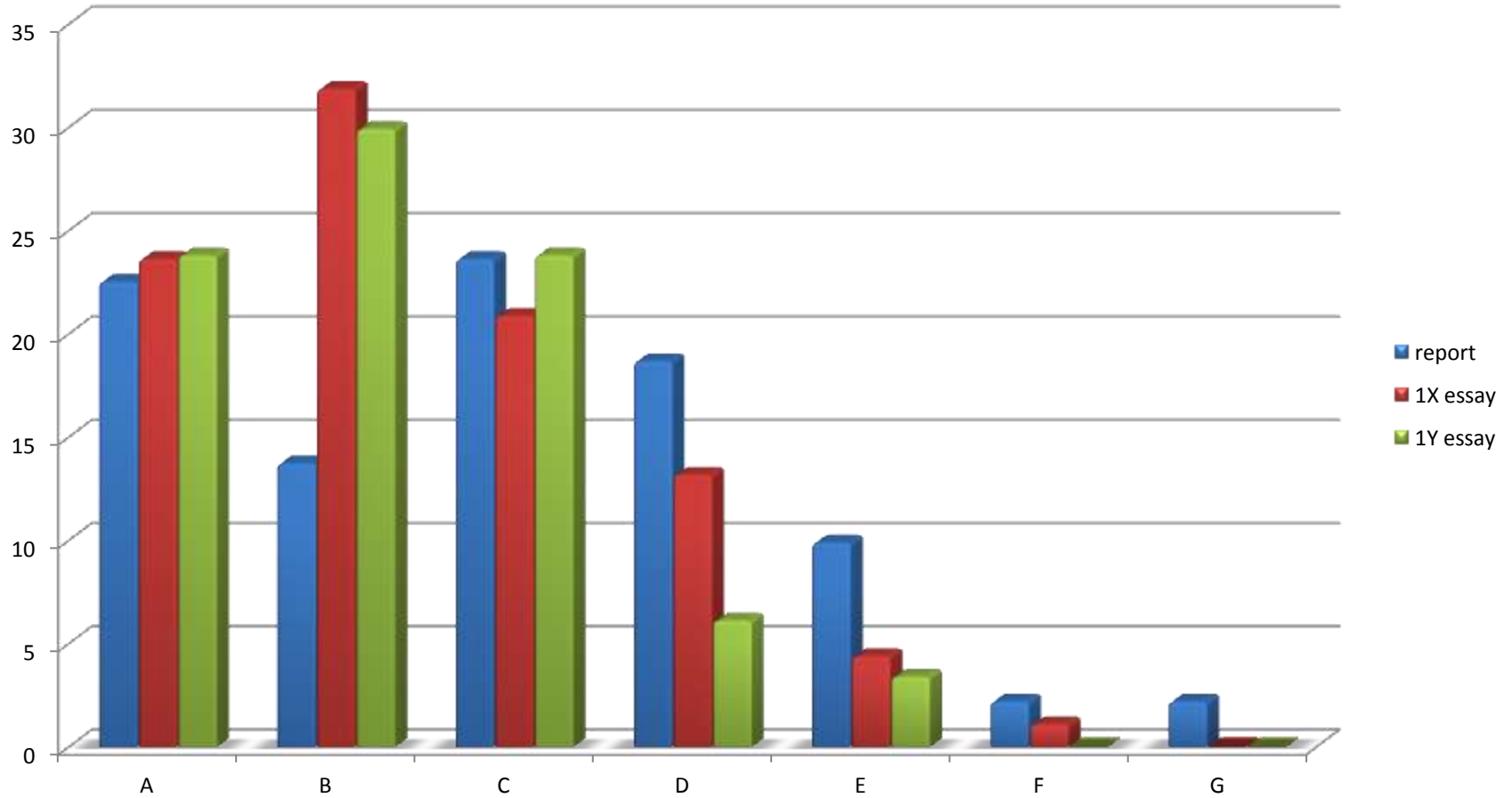
RUBRIC PERCENTAGE 73%

Content 50%

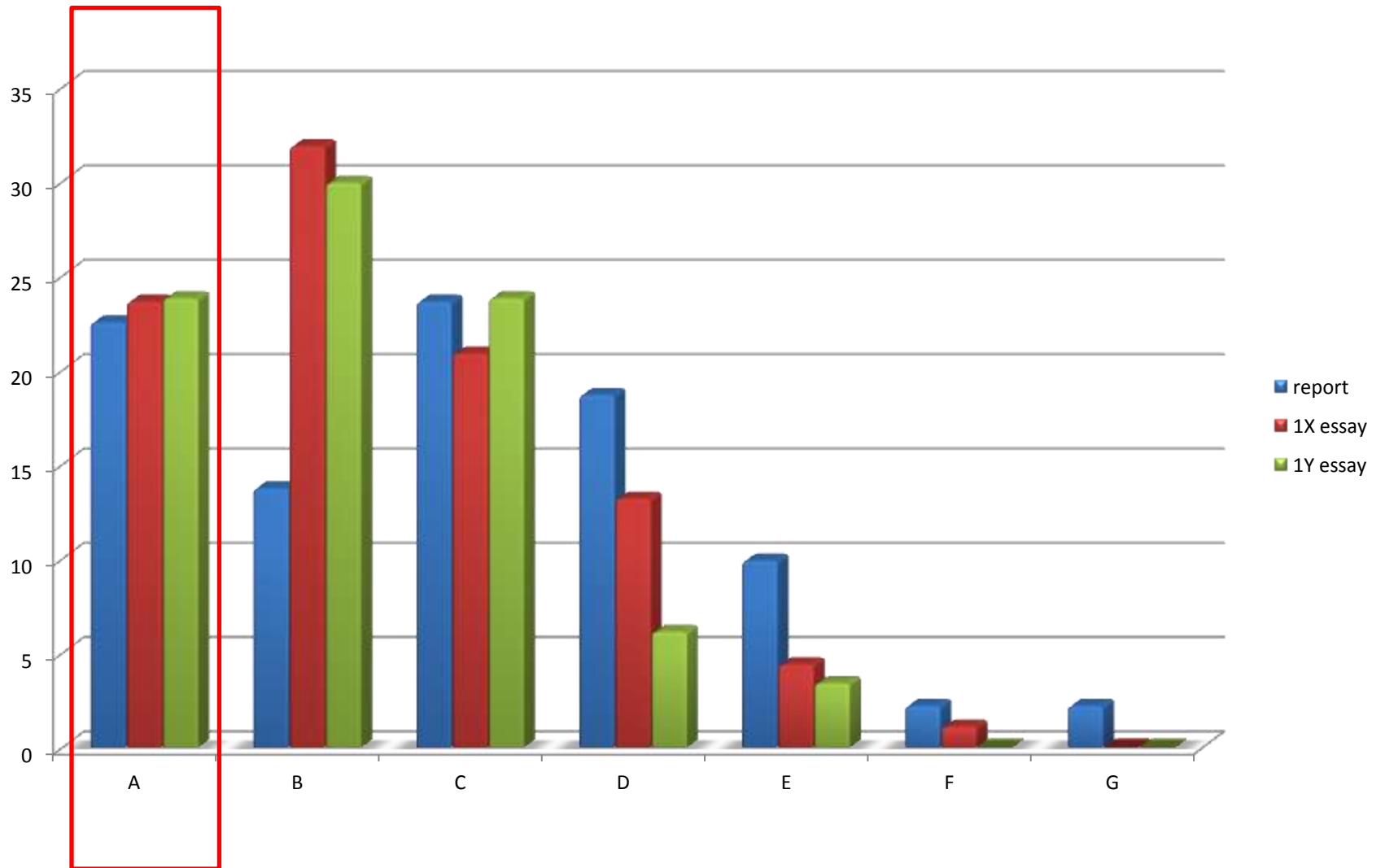
8 - B
Conclusive attainment of virtually all intended learning outcomes, clearly grounded on a close familiarity with a wide range of supporting evidence constructively utilised to reveal appreciable depth of understanding.

Apply rubric percentage to grade

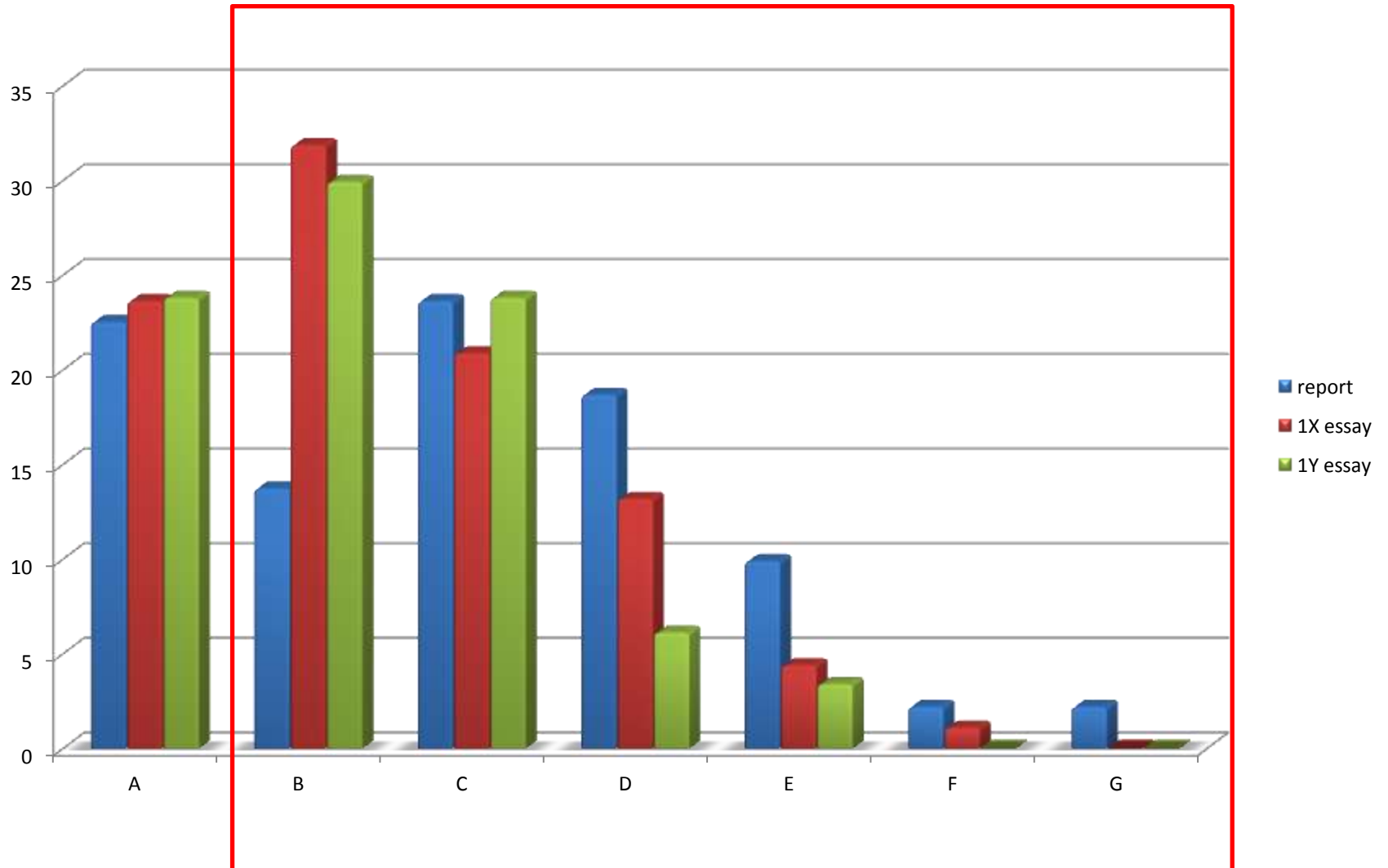
Results 2010/11



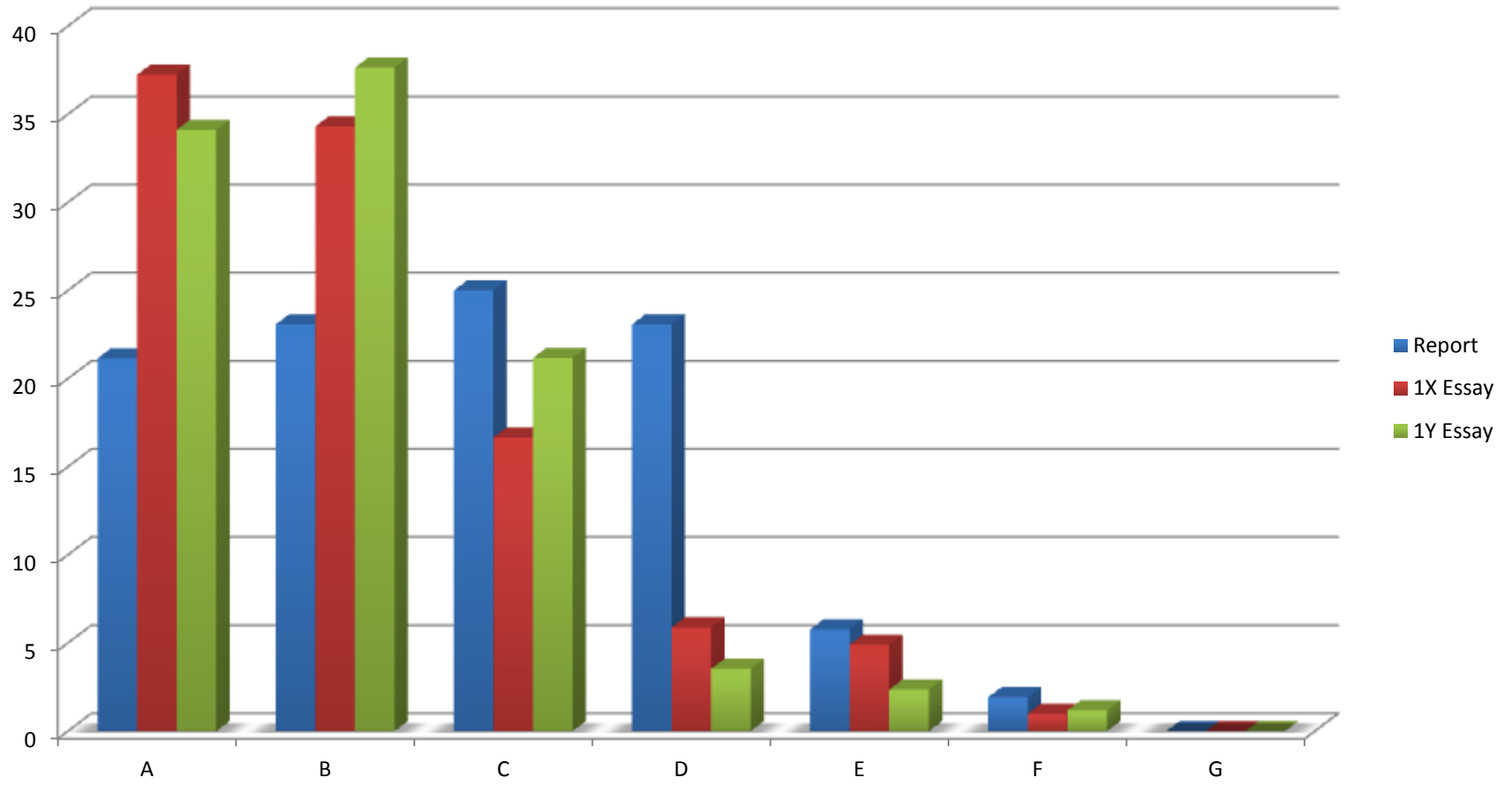
Good students
seem to
always do well



Noticeable improvement by middle/poor students



Results 2011/12

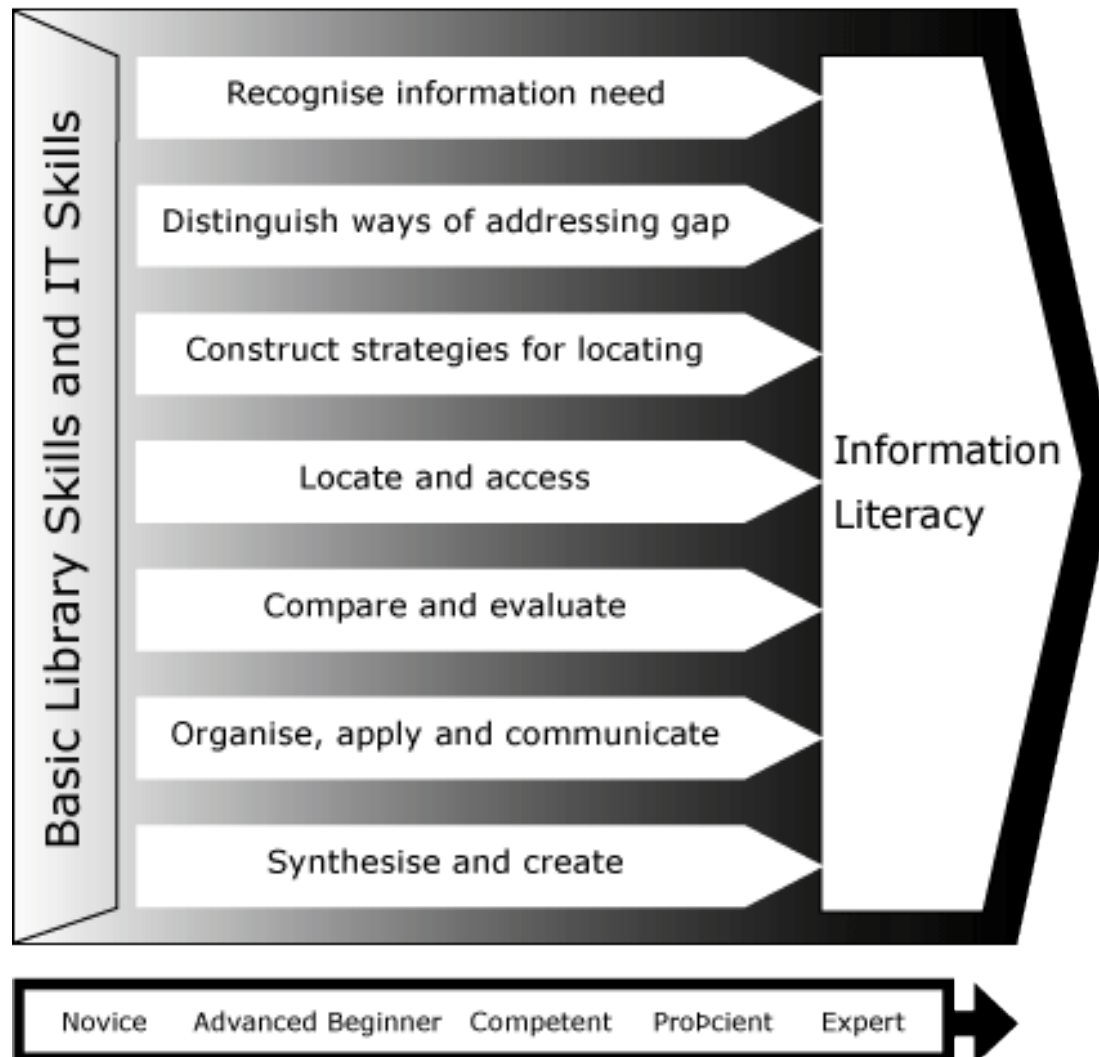


Have you achieved the following ILOs?

<i>Can you?</i>	Yes	No	Maybe
Research information on a broad topic using a variety of sources	99%	1%	0%
Appraise this information to give a detailed review of the essay topic	90%	8%	2%
Demonstrate the ability to construct a clearly laid out science essay	87%	9%	4%
Use the preferred Earth Science style to reference the information used	87%	10%	3%
Express your research on the topic using clear and concise language	86%	10%	4%

SCONUL Seven Pillars Model for Information Literacy

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What did the students think?

1. Module Structure

- *“I'd like to say that I thought it was well organised, the essays. It is **helpful that they are sequential** - 5%, 15%, 20%”*
- *“Like the way you start off with one small **practice essay** so if it all goes wrong it doesn't make a huge impact **and can improve**”*
- *“**Wouldn't attend voluntary courses**, but found the online stuff helpful”*

What did the students think?

2. Feedback and Turnitin

- *“Essays are really **well organised** in terms of the use of Turnitin and the **feedback is really good and appreciated**”*
- *“Feedback for essays I think is excellent. The **resources and extra information available on the moodle site etc. is brilliant.**”*

What did the students think?

3. Progression

- *“1Y essay was much easier after doing 1X, you felt like **you knew what you were doing then**”*
- *“I felt that by using journals mainly to write essays this **helped me in other courses**, as that is now the first place I look for scientific information”*

What did the staff think?

1. Using Turnitin

- *“Turnitin is a **simple and straightforward** tool for all levels of computer user... it allows for more **efficient method of grading** as well as providing a greater level of **consistency** of comments and feedback for all students”*
- *“Actually I liked Turnitin to mark, it was very **efficient** to do the marking directly on the computer. Writing comments in this way is **much better than putting comments in a marking sheet or writing them on paper.**”*
- *“I found using Turnitin actually inhibited my ability to mark the essays appropriately, and I would have preferred to mark using a pen on paper.”*

What did the staff think?

1. Using Turnitin

- *“Turnitin is good, especially as it makes my comments more **legible** than my awful handwriting. Ability to repeatedly use the same comment is useful and also helps **you identify repeated mistakes** on the basis that if you need to write a new tag, it is a common problem. Also **keeps the rubric uppermost in your mind for the marking.**”*
- *“Didn't particularly like it. Very **good for plagiarism**, but clunky for feedback. Took me longer than otherwise. Easier to mark with a printout. Comments not easy to apply to more than one essay.”*

What did the staff think?

2. Quality of submissions

- *“I think that the **scientific skills improved**... some of the students seem to be able to write quite well”*
- *“The content is **far more appropriate, properly laid out and focused**. We also end up **marking similar looking efforts**, which helps.”*
- *“I think forcing students to use journals is a good idea.”*

Conclusions

- Prepare students
 - Let them know what is expected
- Provide resources and examples
 - Useful while writing and for reflection
- Give lots of early feedback
 - Turnitin allows detailed feedback to be provided quickly
 - Linked directly back to resources
 - Beneficial for the next assignment
 - Doesn't allow bad habits to develop
 - But all staff may not like using it....

Thanks to

- Katie Grant (AAW site)
- Susan Waldron (GES)
- Learning and Teaching centre staff
- Earth Science L1 students and essay marking staff
- David Brown (GES)