NCFE **Level 1** Award in
Learning to Learn

Development

Effectiveness

Preparation

Learning

Contributing

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NCFE **Level 1** Award in
Learning to Learn

Unit 1:

Managing study and approaches to learning

Workbook Summary

About this qualification

Welcome to the Level 1 Award in Learning to Learn. This qualification consists of a single unit that will provide you with basic knowledge and understanding of the study skills required to gain a vocational qualification. You'll explore portfolio building, researching, completing assignments and how to take responsibility for your own learning.

Using this workbook

As you work through this workbook you'll find activities to complete and other opportunities to expand your knowledge of enterprise. The activities support your learning and therefore it's expected that you'll complete them and have them marked regularly. Please make sure that you save your workbook so you can identify it as along with following any instructions from by your Tutor and save regularly as you complete the activities. You'll then be able to complete an assessment for each unit as you progress or once you've completed all of the workbook.

You'll be working to achieve the following learning outcomes:

Unit 1: Managing study and approaches to learning

1. Understand the demands of a course of study
2. Understand how to organise study time effectively
3. Understand how to prioritise and set realistic targets for study
4. Be able to find and use information relevant to the course of study
5. Understand how to listen in and contribute actively to a learning environment
6. Keep information in a usable format

Unit 1:
Managing Study
and Approaches to Learning

Believe it, achieve it...

Unit 1 is split into the following topics of learning:

Topic area 1: Courses of study
- Aims and demands of a course of study
- Your attendance
- Assessments and assessment criteria

Topic area 2: Organising study time effectively
- Appropriate times to study
- Planning your study time
- Good, safe and productive learning environments
- Personal challenges that can affect your studies

Topic area 3: Prioritising and setting targets
- Setting SMART targets
- Planning your goals
- What to do if you fall behind with your work

Topic area 4: Searching for relevant information
- Reference systems for sourcing information
- Reading techniques

Topic area 5: Learning styles
- Barriers to effective listening
- Asking questions and contributing ideas
- Barriers to contributing to group discussions and activities

Topic area 6: Keeping information
- Methods for retaining information
- Effective note taking

Unit 1 Topic area 1
Courses of study

Making the decision to undertake a course of study is about making a commitment to developing, widening and improving your knowledge of a particular subject area.

Types of study programmes vary widely and can include:

• **distance learning** – where you study on your own, at home, with weekly or monthly contact with a Tutor by phone or email

• **electronic learning** – where you study on your own, completing online assignments and activities that are then marked by a virtual classroom Tutor

• **classroom-based learning** – the most common type of learning (school, college, and university), where you study with a group of other people in a classroom

Aims and demands of a course of study

There are a wide range of course subjects available, no matter what type of learning you may choose. Examples of the range of subjects include:

• Sciences
• Maths/Numeracy
• English
• Media and Communications
• Health and Social Care
• Performing Arts
• Creative Arts
• Education (including teacher education)
• Foundation Learning
• Sports and Leisure
• Finances
• Languages
• Nursing and Midwifery
• Construction and Engineering

The **main aim of a course of study** is to develop your educational knowledge. This will allow you to:

• gain qualifications and experience

• gain employment in areas relating to your qualifications

• create a career path for yourself

• widen your knowledge in a subject area (becoming a specialist)

Many people who decide to start a course are often unsure about what the nature of a course of study is. They might worry that they'll not be able to cope with their workload and will struggle to keep up. They may be concerned about how to 'fit in' with people they have never met before or that they're not clever enough and may not achieve their goals.

When you decide to enrol on a course you should ask yourself the following 3 questions:

1. What's the purpose of studying this course?
2. What will I achieve by studying it?
3. Where will this choice of course lead me?

If you can answer those questions fairly easily, then you'll be on the right path towards making the correct decision about the course you wish to take.

A course of study may last a day, a week, a month or a few years.

Your attendance

You'll be expected to attend all sessions or classes unless you're ill or have external personal issues. In these situations, you should notify your Tutor as soon as possible. You should do this yourself so that you're seen as responsible. Don't rely on friends or other people on the course to do this for you.

Sessions or classes may be daily, between 9am and 4pm, or they may be spread over different days of the week. Some may even be held in the evening.

Other than your classes, there may be other events that you'll be expected to attend, such as:
- trips and visits
- examinations
- open events/evenings
- guest speakers

Assessments and assessment criteria

Assessments are used by your Tutors, Lecturers or Teachers to measure your progression through the course and understanding of the subject. There will be many different types of assessments that you may come across, and planning for these is an important part of your learning.

The assessment criteria are the points that you'll be assessed on. The **learning outcomes** or **objectives** are normally shown on an assessment. These are what your progress and understanding will be measured against.

We can summarise this information by looking at this example:

**Anita has started a course in Performing Arts.
She's been given the following assessment brief:**

You're required to prepare a solo piece for performance (a monologue) that should last no more than 2 minutes. You'll perform this to an audience.

You'll be assessed on Learning outcome 1 of this unit, which is to 'perform a rehearsed piece of scripted drama individually to an audience'.

Anita understands that the assessment she's to do is a live performance and that the learning outcome is what she will be assessed on – performing a live piece of scripted drama to an audience on her own.

The types of assessment vary quite a lot depending on the type of course you're doing. Some courses have practical assessments, some are written and some may even be aural (listening) or speaking assessments. Examples of different types of assessments are:

- **Timed exams:** exams that must be completed in a set timescale
- **Essays:** these are written papers where you're given a title, scenario or question that you respond to in writing. They might be argument essays, discussion essays, comparison essays or multi-task essays
- **Reports:** you may be asked to create a report that is an information report or a report on an investigation into a topic
- **Oral assignment:** a spoken presentation (usually used in language subjects)
- **Short answer questions or quiz:** these are questions that are broken down into small parts that you answer. Multiple-choice questions are also included in this type of assessment

You should always check your instructions carefully, to make sure that you understand your assessment. Ask for help in advance if you need it.

Activity 1

List other types of assessment that you can think of that aren't included above.

Self study

Alongside your classes, assessments and ongoing workload, you'll also be expected to study on your own. This is known as homework or self study time. As a general rule, you should study on your own for 1 hour for every 3 hours you're in classes or are being taught. This could include when you're preparing for or completing an assessment.
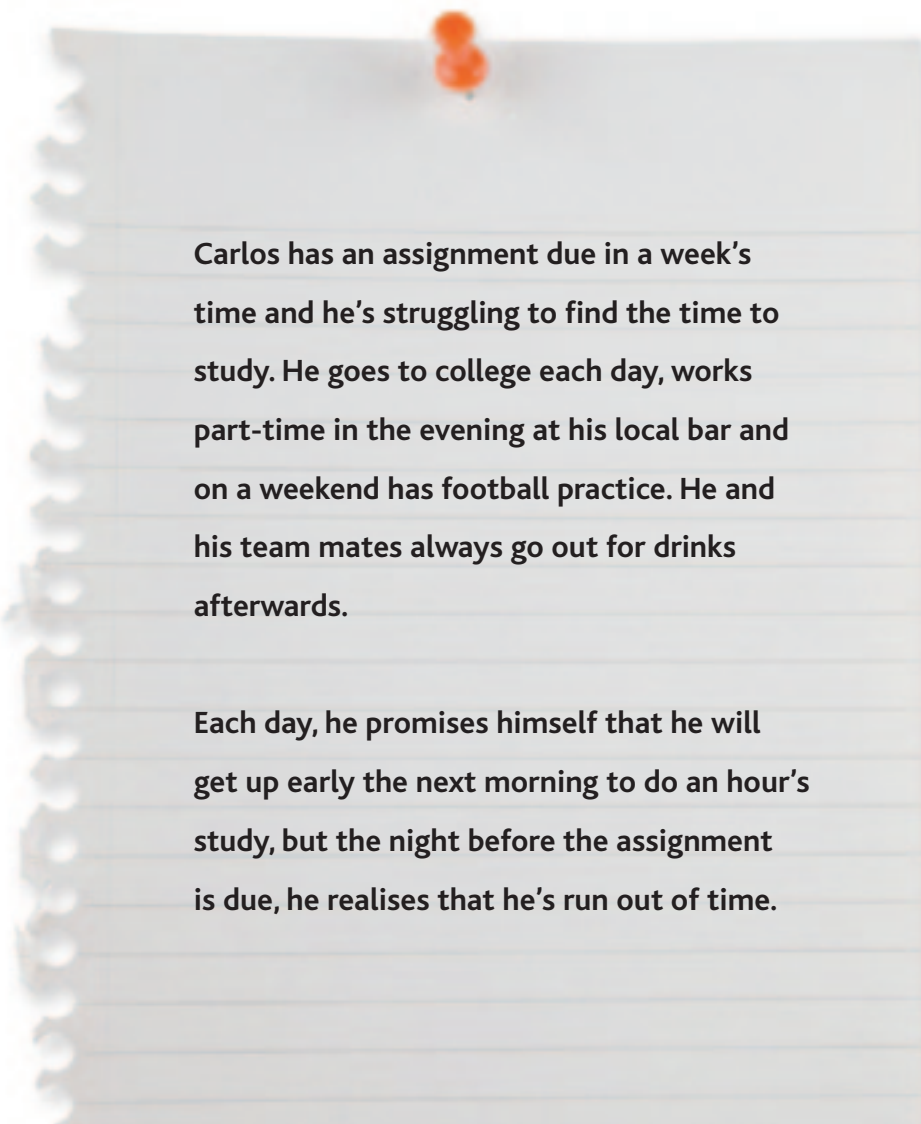
The biggest problem that most students seem to have is organising their study time. Many students try to 'cram in' a lot of information the week, the day or even the night before they are due to take a test or exam or hand in an assignment. Planning ahead lets you work when your concentration level is at its best.

Appropriate times to study

You'll need to decide on the best times of the day or week that suit you for study and revision. Good times would be when you can avoid distractions and you're not under pressure from other tasks, as both can be off-putting.

We can summarise this information by looking at this example:

> **Carlos has an assignment due in a week's time and he's struggling to find the time to study. He goes to college each day, works part-time in the evening at his local bar and on a weekend has football practice. He and his team mates always go out for drinks afterwards.**
>
> **Each day, he promises himself that he will get up early the next morning to do an hour's study, but the night before the assignment is due, he realises that he's run out of time.**

Activity 2

Suggest ways in which Carlos could have made appropriate times to study during his week.

Planning your study time

When you've found a good time to study, you need to think about how you're going to plan your study time.

1. Create a schedule that includes all your commitments relating to study and work for the duration of your course. This could be a weekly, monthly or yearly planner or timetable.

2. Plan out all your assessment deadlines and mark where you'll need to start planning in advance to start them and finish on time.

3. Add on all your social events and dates that aren't study-related.

4. Plan to do the most difficult work when your concentration is at its best.

5. Take regular breaks when studying.

6. Reflect on whether your plan is working; are there study times that you miss? Would a different time be more convenient? Adjust your study patterns to what works best for you.

7. Be flexible with yourself; if you have to change your plans, don't worry about it but plan in another time to do your study for that session.

Good, safe and productive learning environments

Finding a good, safe and productive learning environment to study in goes hand-in-hand with finding an appropriate time. You need to study in an organised space that will support your learning.

A learning environment **should:**
• support your learning – have IT access where possible, a desk, space for research and other materials
• help you to concentrate by being quiet and relaxing
• have enough room to enable you to complete the work you're doing

A learning environment **should not be:**
• overly noisy
• busy with distractions
• dangerous – near machinery or other dangerous equipment

Other types of learning environment may include:
• a library
• a classroom
• a gym or sports hall (for physical courses)
• a laboratory
• an IT centre or suite
• your dining room or other area in the home, but not your bedroom

Personal challenges that can affect your studies

As mentioned earlier in Topic area 1, there may be times when illness or personal issues mean you can't attend classes or sessions.

These things may also affect your study time, but can't be helped. Examples of these could include:

- family or personal bereavement

- personal accident or illness

- family accident or illness

- issues at home that require your attention such as flooding, fire or burglary

- moving house or residence

- divorce or separation if you're in a long-term relationship

If you're unable to work because of external pressures you should let your Tutor(s) know as they may be able to extend deadlines or provide other support.

Sometimes, study time can be affected by personal challenges that you can do something about.
These include:

- being distracted by others in a non-emergency (invites to social events etc.)

- taking on too many other commitments

- not being able to prioritise your tasks or plan your time effectively

- not being motivated to focus and complete
  study tasks within the timescales set

These sorts of challenge should be addressed quickly so that you don't run out of time.

When you start a study project, the first step is to define the scope of the project or the overall objective. There are 2 questions that you should get answers for:

1. What is it you're supposed to achieve through this project?

2. What is the project objective?

Setting SMART targets

Establishing the objective of the study project is important as this allows you to plan your project, complete it on time and receive a good mark for it.

Once the objective has been decided upon, a plan needs to be created that includes information on:

• which step will happen first

• what order the rest of the steps will happen in

• resources to be used for each step

• who'll be involved in each step

• suggested or guideline timelines

As a study project develops, the plan might have to be changed or adapted. Therefore your SMART targets may also have to change from the original ones set.

SMART targets are set in order to be manageable and meet the deadlines.

SMART targets stand for:
Specific – what's the task, goal or objective that needs to be completed?
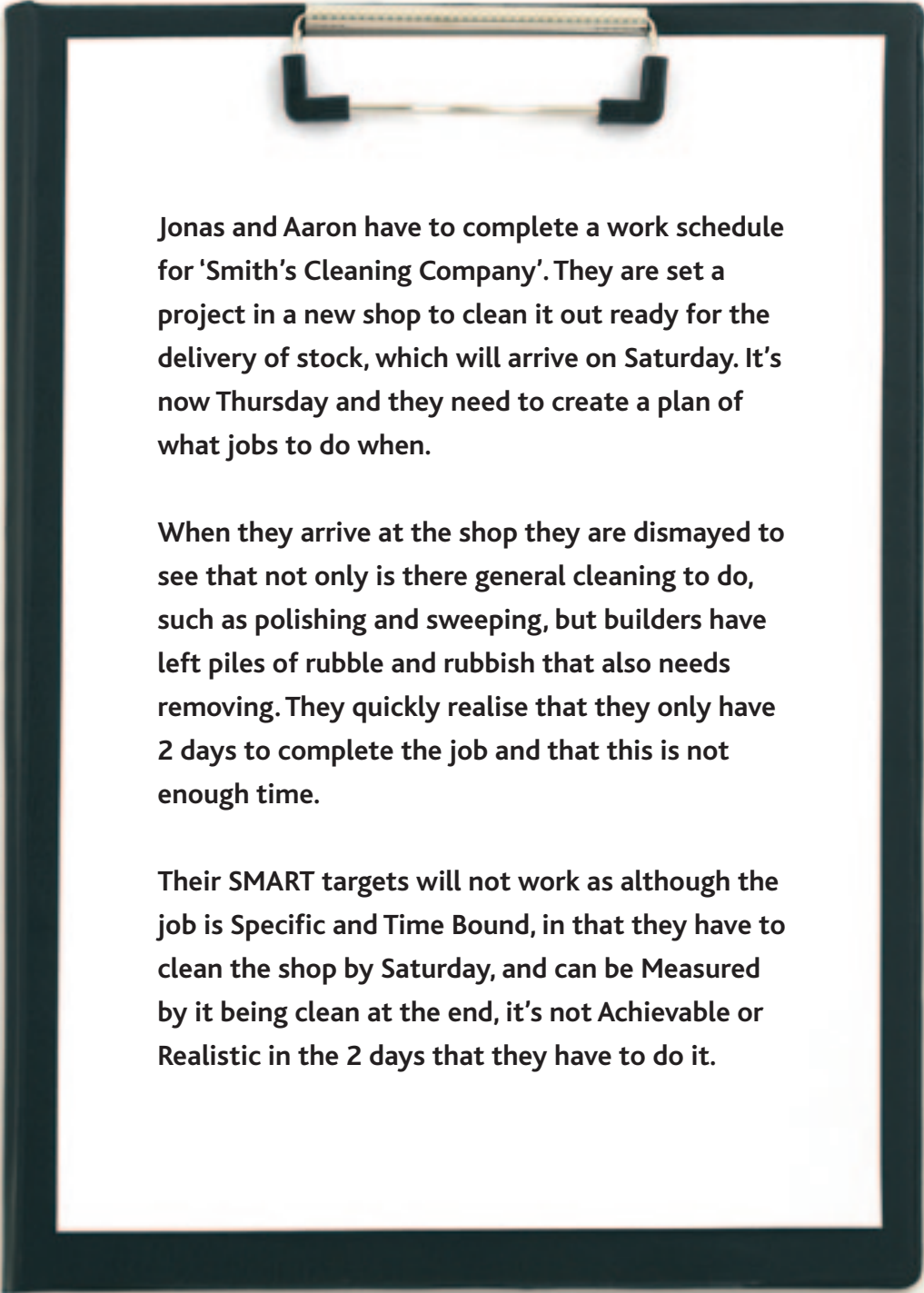**M**easurable – how will you know if the task has been achieved?
Achievable – can the task be achieved?
Realistic – can the task be achieved within the time limit by those doing it?
Time bound – when will the task be achieved by?

We can summarise this information by looking at this example:

Jonas and Aaron have to complete a work schedule for 'Smith's Cleaning Company'. They are set a project in a new shop to clean it out ready for the delivery of stock, which will arrive on Saturday. It's now Thursday and they need to create a plan of what jobs to do when.

When they arrive at the shop they are dismayed to see that not only is there general cleaning to do, such as polishing and sweeping, but builders have left piles of rubble and rubbish that also needs removing. They quickly realise that they only have 2 days to complete the job and that this is not enough time.

Their SMART targets will not work as although the job is Specific and Time Bound, in that they have to clean the shop by Saturday, and can be Measured by it being clean at the end, it's not Achievable or Realistic in the 2 days that they have to do it.

SMART targets and objectives work together, when you're about to take part in a project, as they ensure that you know:

- what you're taking part in
- what the time limits are
- what needs to be achieved
- when the goals, objectives and tasks need to be achieved by

Planning your goals

Target setting can also help you to achieve your goals and prioritise your work. It's this planning that can help you to study effectively. As discussed in Topic area 2, you'll need to look at how you're going to study and when. Target setting, especially SMART targets, help you to work out what is the best way of doing this, in what order and when. This ensures that you hit your deadlines and makes studying enjoyable, rather than a worrying chore if you've run out of time at the end.

Activity 3

Set yourself a SMART target for this week. It can be anything as long as it's SMART.
Write a sentence for each section.

S

M

A

R

T

You can create a SMART target planner to help you with your work and/or assessment planning. You can use the table below or create your own.

Example study planner

Target	What I need to do	Target date	Completed?	Revised target date	Completed?
Research topic for French class on Foods	Collect information on food types and spellings for mini assessment **Specific Measurable**	20 March **Achievable Realistic Time bound**	Yes		

What to do if you fall behind with your work

Nearly everyone who's a student falls behind at some point during their course of study. So don't panic about it, but do speak to your Tutor as soon as possible. You should ask for:

• advice and any notes that your Tutor may have, if you've missed any classes

• a tutorial or one-to-one with your Tutor

• an extension for outstanding assessments

When you're planning your work it's important to know where you can look for information. There are quite a few ways you can find out about a subject area.

Reference systems for sourcing information

With the internet at our fingertips it's easy to search for specified information. However, the internet is not the only source of available material. You could also use:

- text books
- e-learning platforms
- reports
- documents
- images
- notes from conversations or witness statements
- friends, family, teachers, careers advisors
- Dewey Decimal System (Dewey Decimal Classification)

Text books: you can source text books from your library. There will be an electronic catalogue system called the Dewey Decimal Classification and a member of staff will be able to help you to use it if you need them to. You can also search for text books held elsewhere and arrange to have them sent over to your local library. You could visit specialist libraries for information related to your learning. Text books can also be purchased in shops or online.

E-learning platforms: your course may require you to source information via an electronic learning platform or virtual learning environment (VLE). E-learning is an accessible way for others to post information for you to study, before undertaking assessments and tasks.

Reports: many information sources can be accessed by reading written reports or statistical reports (figures and calculations).
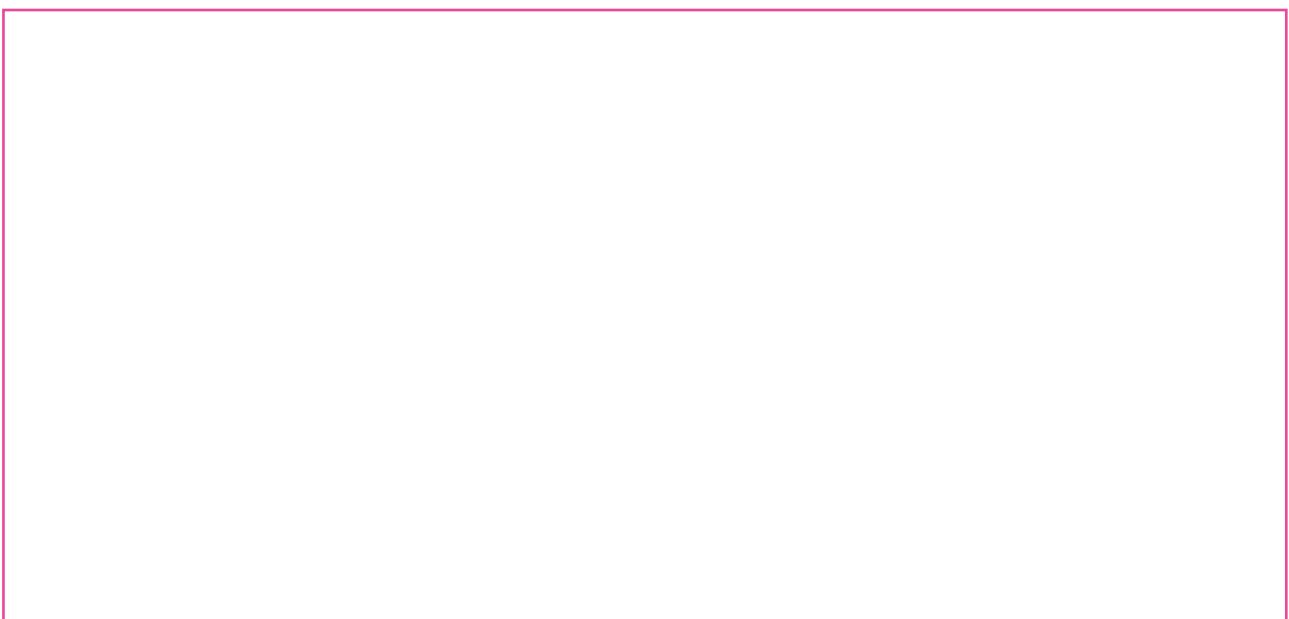
Activity 4

Find out where and how to access such reports to help you in your course of study.
For example: Sport, Travel, Tourism or Cookery.

Documents: it may be that you're able to access documents such as studies, past papers for exams, etc. that may prove to be valuable sources of reference material.

Activity 5

Name a document that could help you in your own study area.

Images: searching for relevant information can also be found in picture- and image-based sources, such as photographs, paintings, drawings, cartoons and even sketches.
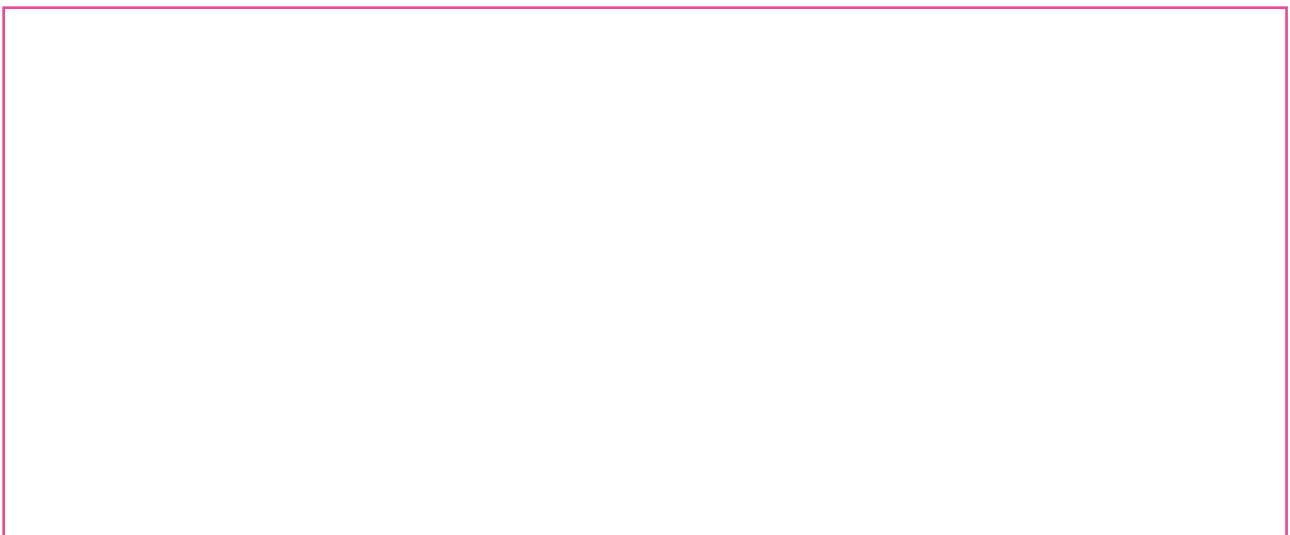
Activity 6

Access images which may help you and note down relevant websites or other sites.

Notes from conversations or witness statements: if you've undertaken any research by interviewing people or taking witness statements then this is a good way of sourcing relevant information and material. You could also read other people's testimonies and reports, especially if you're required to look at case histories of a particular event or series of events.

Activity 7

Explain how you would best record your research.

Friends, family, teachers, careers advisors: people are a useful source for gaining reference material as they may be able to offer first- or second-hand knowledge in the form of interviews or oral documentation (spoken word). People can often direct you to other sources that they may know about, so it's always worth asking other people what they know.

Activity 8

List the people who may be able to assist you and give a reason why you've chosen them.

Internet: we return to this valuable reference source because it's a widely used way of gaining information, the internet is extremely valuable for being able to access information quickly. Be aware that some information may not be wholly accurate and that it's easy to be caught plagiarising work (copying work and claiming it's your own). This is because most colleges, schools and universities have plagiarism detection software that can analyse your work to check if you've 'stolen' someone else's.

Activity 9

Find out and give the definition of 'copyright' and 'plagiarism'.

Copyright:

Plagiarism:

Dewey Decimal System: this system organises books on library shelves in a specific and repeatable order, which makes it easy to find any book and return it to its proper place. Text books, magazines, journals, CDs and other reference material are given a numbered classification. For example: a history book called 'Ancient Egypt' may be found under 900.1.12 and a medical journal called 'Nursing Weekly' may be found under 500.1.16.

Library staff: if you need any help then library staff will always be able and willing to help you.
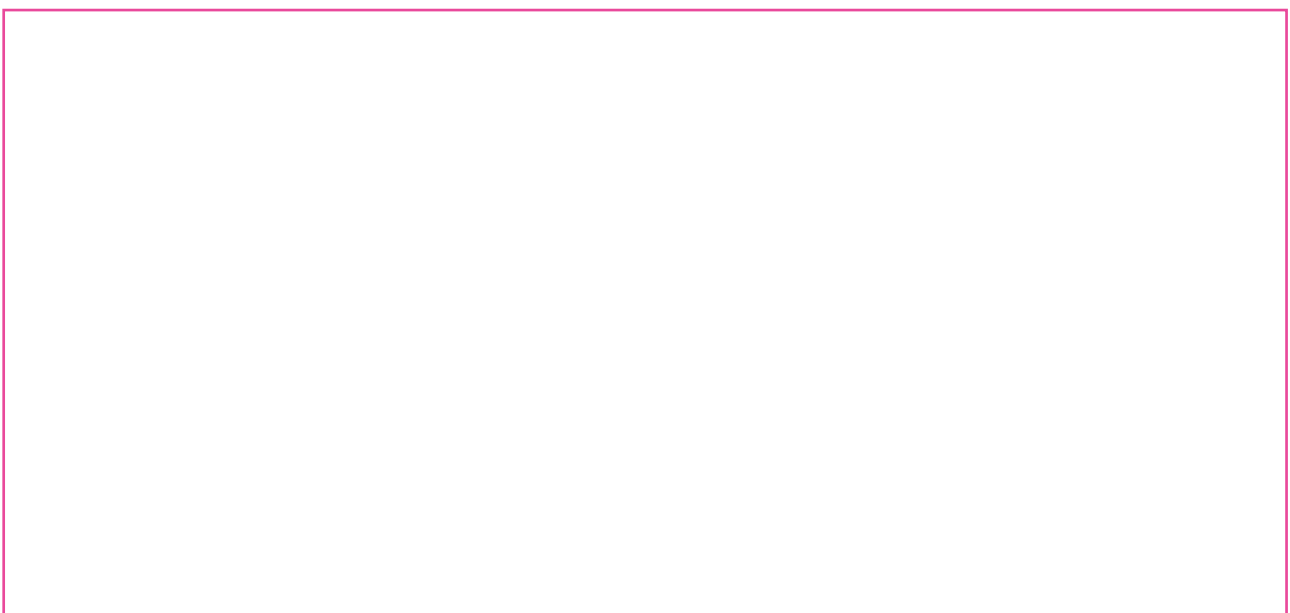
Activity 10

Find out in which section of the library you would find books to help you in your course and find out the section number.

Activity 11

Select one reference source from the list above and use it to search for a short piece of useful information about a topic of your choice. Describe the information source and how you accessed it.

Reading techniques

Reading is the most common way of studying and finding out about a subject area or topic.
There are different ways of reading for different purposes:

- **Skim reading:** a popular reading technique to use when you wish to 'pick out' particular pieces of information. Cast your eyes over a short passage of text and choose words and sentences relevant to what you're searching for that stand out.

- **In-depth reading:** this is where you read information very carefully and fully to make sure that you have understood and learned about a subject matter. This requires you to have strong reading skills, analysis skills and focus as it takes time to gain this level of knowledge.

- **Reading for note taking:** if you need to get a general overview or understanding of something then note taking is a good skill to develop. This is where you read a short passage and make notes summarising the key points to help you understand and learn.

- **Re-reading for exams:** many people use this technique to check they've understood and absorbed information contained in a piece of text. They then re-read the piece of writing and make notes, before returning to the passage and checking they have recalled and understood the information it contains.

- **Critical reading:** where you test your knowledge against the authors to see if you agree or disagree with their points, ideas and suggestions.

Activity 12

Choose a piece of text and use one of the above techniques to search for information that's relevant to your topic. Describe how you managed or did not manage to use the technique.

Title of text chosen:

State the technique used:
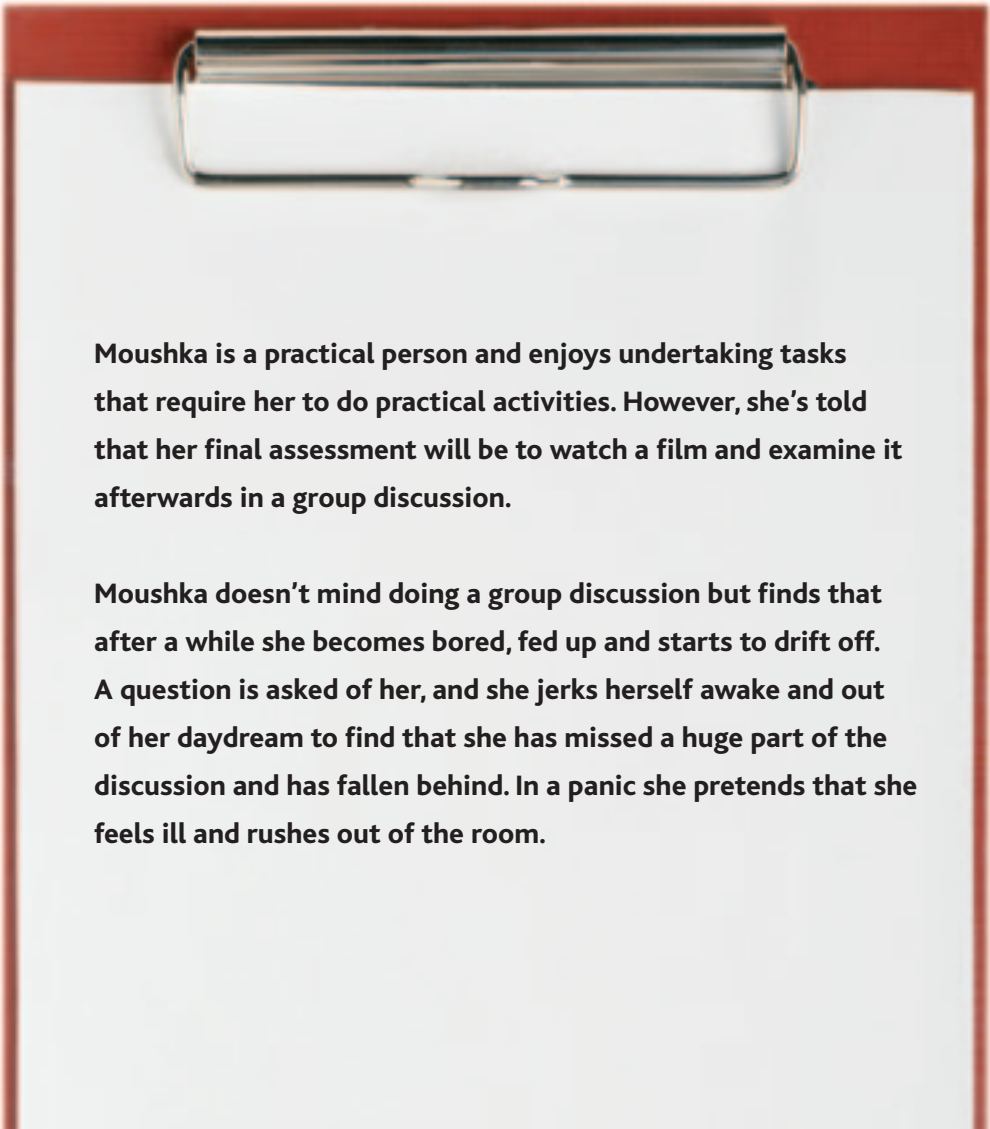
People have different learning styles and you'll most certainly have your own. It's thought that there are a number of different ways in which we learn but that we each have our own approach or style.
You may be a:

- **reflector** – who likes to learn by considering different approaches

- **theorist** – a ponderer of different thoughts and suggestions and how they are applied to different contexts

- **visual learner** – who likes to see things or read them and learns by doing so

- **practical learner** – who likes to learn by doing something hands-on or active

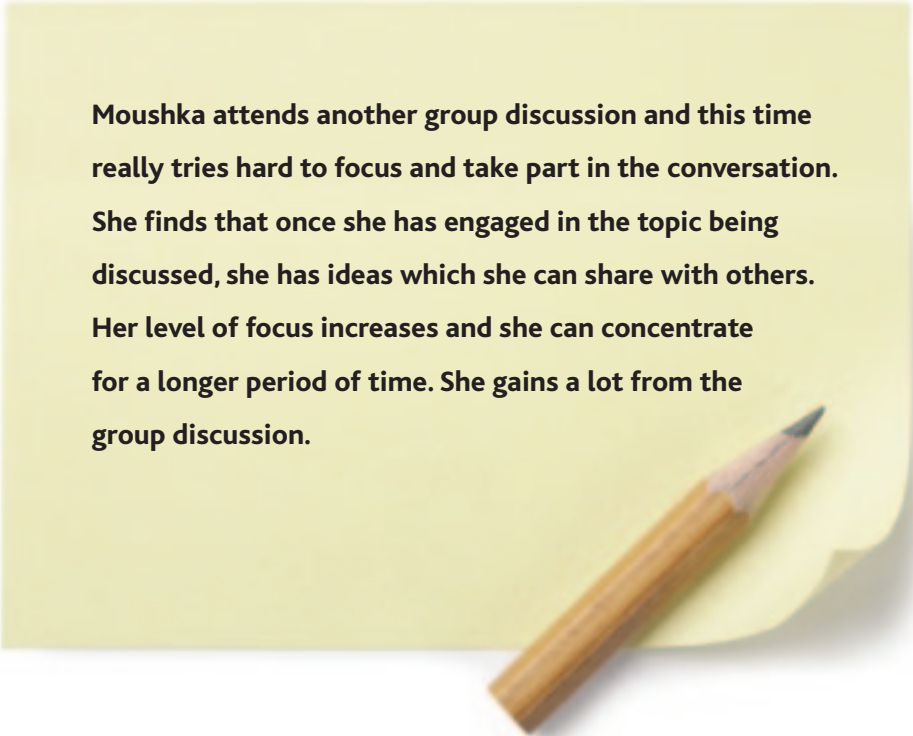*We can summarise this information by looking at this example:*

Moushka is a practical person and enjoys undertaking tasks that require her to do practical activities. However, she's told that her final assessment will be to watch a film and examine it afterwards in a group discussion.

Moushka doesn't mind doing a group discussion but finds that after a while she becomes bored, fed up and starts to drift off. A question is asked of her, and she jerks herself awake and out of her daydream to find that she has missed a huge part of the discussion and has fallen behind. In a panic she pretends that she feels ill and rushes out of the room.

Although taking part in a group discussion is a practical way of reinforcing learning, it does not necessarily suit Moushka's learning style. However, she could develop this as a skill and use a mixed approach of practical learning and reflective learning so that she has another learning style to use in different situations.

We can summarise this information by looking at this example:

Moushka attends another group discussion and this time really tries hard to focus and take part in the conversation. She finds that once she has engaged in the topic being discussed, she has ideas which she can share with others. Her level of focus increases and she can concentrate for a longer period of time. She gains a lot from the group discussion.

Barriers to effective listening

Developing excellent listening skills is essential in the classroom and out of it. Listening skills include being able to follow instructions, understand information and apply it to your own learning or work.

Barriers may prevent a person from being an effective listener for a variety of reasons, not just laziness or boredom as some people have suggested. These include:

- being distracted - using a phone or a mobile bleeping as you're trying to listen, people asking you questions while you're listening etc.

- being unable to understand what a person's saying - they may not be clear, they use hard-to-understand words and vocabulary or they have a different accent from yours

- having a limited attention span and being unable to focus for long periods of time

- having a medical condition such as tinnitus (ringing sound in the ears) that prevents you from hearing properly or being deaf or having hearing impairment

Listening skills to develop

There are a number of skills that you can develop to help you become an effective listener and allow you to understand what another person is trying to communicate.

You could:

- learn to focus by concentrating on what they are saying rather than letting your mind wander

- let people finish what they are saying before interrupting them

- listen for the underlying message – ask yourself what the speaker is actually trying to communicate to you

- demonstrate that you're listening by using appropriate body language

- check what has been said by asking appropriate questions

- if you have asked a question, allow the other person to consider their answer – leave an appropriate silence

All of these support you in becoming an effective and active listener which will work well for you in group situations as well as in the classroom. Active listening is a technique that enables you as a learner to understand, interpret and evaluate what you're hearing.

Activity 13

Give an example of when you could have listened more effectively.

Asking questions and contributing ideas

It might seem daunting but much of your study in the classroom will involve you taking part in group discussions and team tasks, where you'll be expected to work well with others.

Asking questions can be scary to some people as they think they'll look silly or stupid or that their Tutor might think the answer is obvious. However, this is not the case. Asking questions is important, as it helps you to:

- clarify what's being said or instructed

- understand what is being said or what you have to do

- check that you're learning

- ensure that you don't make mistakes

Of course, there are times when you, or others, may ask questions that aren't appropriate, especially if you haven't been listening. This can cause people to feel frustrated or get impatient with you so make sure that you think carefully before asking.

When contributing ideas to a team or group situation, the same fears may apply as when asking questions, but again these fears may be unfounded. It's much better to get involved with your group, class or Tutor and give ideas and input into a session as this often encourages others to do so as well. Your ideas may even prove to be winning ones and enable you and others to embrace the ideas and make them into a success.

In the sharing of ideas, it's important to respond to the ideas and contributions of others in a positive way and to offer praise too. You could even use appropriate questions to clarify, refine and support the ideas they've contributed.

Barriers to contributing to group discussions and activities

Not everyone enjoys being a part of a group and taking part in a group discussion. Employers, however, look for employees who can (in the main) work with other people in the workplace confidently and as a member of a team. When you're studying, you may find that this comes into the 'assessment critera' and learning outcomes that you'll be assessed on.

For example, you may be set a task to contribute to a group discussion or activity on a particular subject. The assessment may be measured by your Tutor/Assessor in the form of a witness statement and they'll expect you to engage in the discussion to demonstrate that you're able to do so.

Contributing to a group discussion or group activity allows you to show a good relationship with others, and demonstrate your level of confidence as well as your communication skills.

However, barriers to contributing to a group discussion or activity may be due to:

- fear of what others may think if you voice your opinions

- fear of speaking in public

- not having the confidence or skills to speak in public

- not having good listening skills

- being worried about negative reactions and criticism

Activity 14

After reading the last sections, state what preparations you would make to prepare for a class discussion on a topic as chosen in the previous session.

Unit 1 Topic area 6

Keeping information

As your course of study progresses, you'll be starting to retain all sorts of information. Some will be useful and relevant and other information won't.

You may find that you struggle to keep information safe either in your head or at your workplace, so it's a good idea to deal with your workplace by making sure you're organised and can easily access the information you need.

If you have plenty of notes, you may wish to file them or make sure that they are safely stored so that you do not lose them.

If you are able, you may choose to store your data on a memory stick and/or computer hard drive. When you use a computer to type up your work, always remember to back up the work on a regular basis.

Methods for retaining information

If you take notes and information from classes or from self study but don't do anything with them then you've not been an active learner. Active learning means that you get involved in what you're studying by interacting with it. It also helps you to stay enthusiastic about your course and raises your confidence and ability to cope with new challenges.

Methods for retaining information and supporting your learning can include:

- highlighting anything that you feel is useful during and after studying so that you can remember to use it in an assessment

- considering any gaps in what you have learnt in between one session and the next – try to fill the gaps

- reading through any information again if you don't understand it

- creating your own timeline for important dates or events in the subject you're studying

- creating your own 'glossary' for technical or specialist terms that you don't understand, to help you remember important key words or events

- taking notes that are meaningful to you and keeping them safe. Write them out again if you need to, so that you fully understand what you have been learning

Effective note taking

Note taking is a useful way of learning and revising when preparing for an exam or assessment. However, you don't need to write down everything that you hear or see when being taught. Notes should be short reminders about what you've been learning about.

Look out for clues from your Tutors or Assessors when taking notes, as often they will write the most important points on a board or put them in a handout for you. They may even stress certain words or sounds when speaking. You can take down your own notes to either expand on your Tutor's points or create reminders for yourself.

Good and effective strategies for taking notes include:

- making them brief and concise

- sum up the main points

- list dates and events then go back to these later in your self study time to expand upon them or do further research

- use a style of written language that you understand. Don't try to be too clever by inventing your own shorthand, which you may have to make sense of later on

- use a Dictaphone (or other recording device, if allowed) in a classroom session to help you create fuller notes later on

- if you're making notes from a text book, website or other source of information write down where you got the notes from so that you can find them again if you need to

- keep your note taking together in one place rather than on separate and disorganised pieces of paper

Activity 15

Give an example of how you feel your skills for retaining information and effective note taking have developed.

It's important to review your notes regularly to remind yourself of what they're about and what you've learnt. For example, don't leave them for a full year and then go back to them expecting to remember what certain words and letters stand for. It's likely that you won't remember!

Well done!

You've now completed the activities for this unit. This means that you've finished your workbook for this qualification. You should now be ready to complete the assessment for the Level 1 Award in Learning to Learn.

What other related qualifications are available?

We've a carefully selected list of qualifications and
supporting workbooks that you may be interested in.
These qualifications may provide direct progression
in the same subject, may be related by sector or have
personal relevance to you.

• NCFE Level 1 Award in Demonstrating Enterprise Skills
QAN: 500/8444/6

• NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Developing Enterprise Skills
QAN: 500/8443/4

For further details on all our qualifications please use our
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