

Head start to university - introduction

Hello and welcome to Royal Holloway's Head start to university series. The materials here are designed to give you a head start in your studies, so that come September, when your studies start proper, you won't feel as 'at sea' as you would if you simply turned up cold outside the gates on day one. The materials focus on university-level study in general, so it makes sense to look at these materials in conjunction with the pre-arrival materials provided by your department.

This resource contains a series of four self-study learning modules. Each module is short. It begins with a short, introductory video presentation, in which we'll raise questions around a particular theme and suggest some ideas for you to consider. After watching the presentations, I encourage you to do the accompanying activities, which are designed to consolidate and expand on the ideas put forward in the presentation. Doing the activities will make the ideas presented more concrete and meaningful for your particular context.

University is more than just learning a subject. As well as all the new knowledge and understanding you'll gain, you'll most likely have to develop new ways of thinking, working and reasoning. The reason for these can sometimes feel a bit unclear, so we want to touch on why your courses are designed like this, which should hopefully make the adjustment to university study easier.

In each video we'll explain an aspect of the university study and then give you some suggestions of what you can do in practice to help you prepare. In doing this, we'll help you to think about these sorts of questions:

- How can I start to become an expert in my subject?
- How is 'university thinking' different from other ways of thinking?
- How can I quickly get a handle on my subject in the weeks leading up to starting?
- How is research done in my subject? What methods are used?
- How can I develop my own academic interests and become proactive in my studies?

Each video presentation is 15-20 minutes. You can of course watch the video in one sitting or break it into chunks as you see fit. You may also wish to pause the video at key intervals to note down important ideas or thoughts.

The activities in each module should keep you busy for one to two hours (although it is up to you how long you spend on them!). You will notice a variety of materials, including webquest tasks, short reading and writing tasks, as well as links to other resources and ideas. I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer and that you find this resource useful.