

BSc Paramedic Studies (Year 1): Introduction to Academic Writing

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Regional Writing Centre

www.ul.ie/rwc

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

**REGIONAL
WRITING
CENTRE**

Get on the 'write' track





Workshop outline

- Writing concerns/issues
- The writing process
- Synthesising the literature / intertextuality
- Paragraph structure (unity and coherence)
- Writing clearly and concisely
- Effective writing strategies



Sample assignment

Case Review Template

Describe your pre hospital treatment of this patient (you should answer within your current scope of practice).

List the C.P.G.'s which pertain to the treatment of this patient.

Discuss references which demonstrate the use of the primary C.P.G.'(s) used.

Discuss evidence which suggest alternative methodologies to those you have used.

Using a compare and contrast ideology either validate your current practice or suggest evidence based changes that may improve your current practice.



Reflection

Freewriting

- What I worry about and struggle with as I write the case history...
- Keep writing non-stop for 5 minutes.
- Write in sentences.
- Do not edit or censor your writing.
- It is private writing – no one will read it.

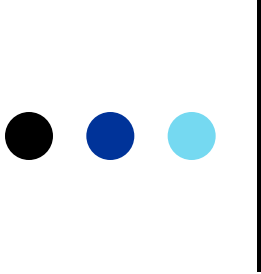


Key features of academic writing



What comes to mind when you think about academic writing?





Feedback on previous assignments

Positive

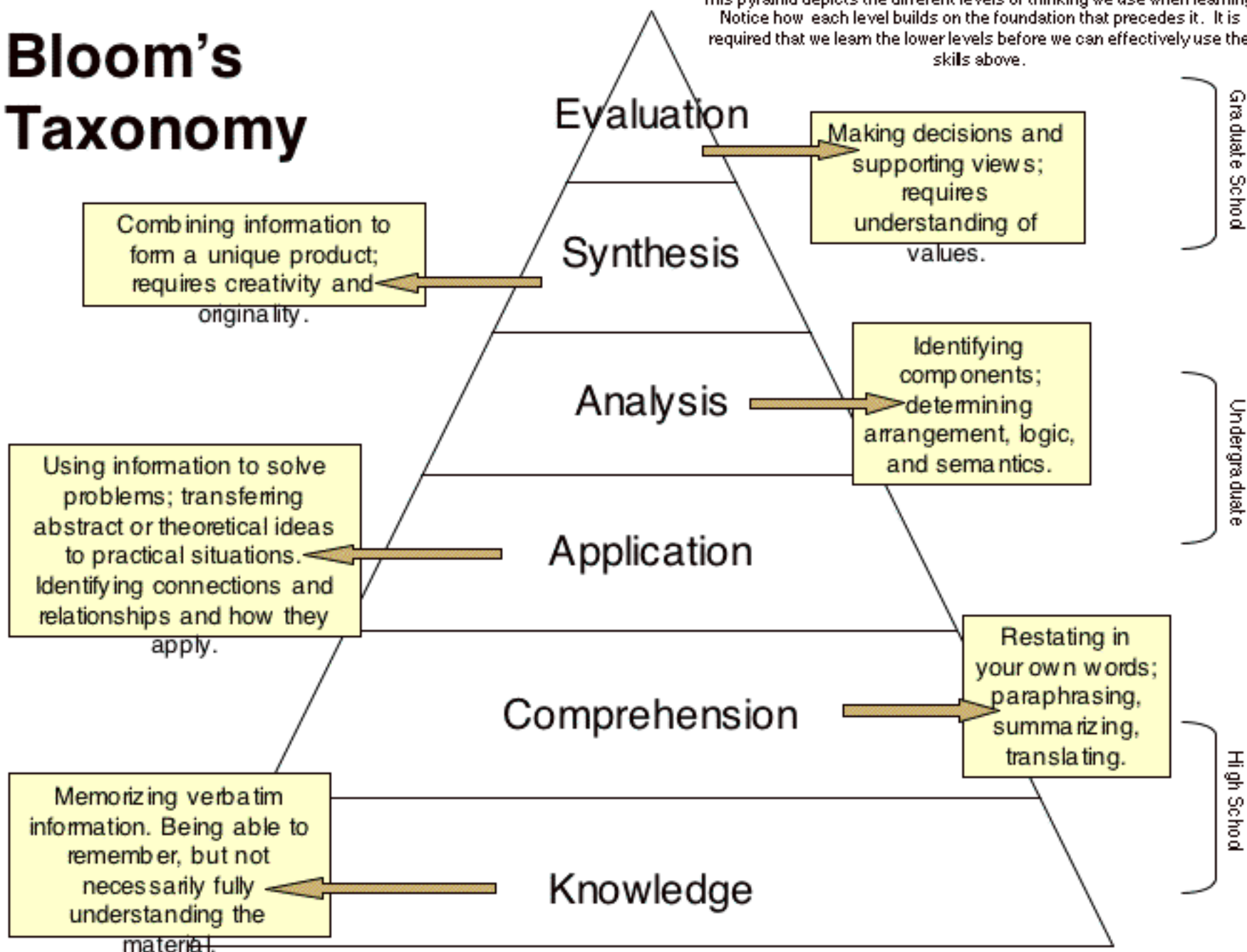
- Clear understanding of the concepts and principles involved
- Evidence of outside reading and research
- Interpretation, evaluation and synthesis of existing evidence/research
- Reflective
- Well structured/organised
- Logical

Writing issues

- Lack of evidence to support the points being made
- Lack of evaluation and synthesis of the existing literature
- Not demonstrating a deep understanding of the concepts and principles under discussion
- Lack of attention to detail
- Inaccurate reporting/interpretation of published research

Bloom's Taxonomy

This pyramid depicts the different levels of thinking we use when learning. Notice how each level builds on the foundation that precedes it. It is required that we learn the lower levels before we can effectively use the skills above.





Writing critically

- How can you bring a critical orientation to your work?
- What questions should you ask when reading and writing in order to develop critical and analytical thinking skills?



Joining the conversation: example

To be successful, EMS handoffs must quickly and accurately convey information [1](#), [2](#), [3](#) and [4](#). Previous studies evaluating EMS handoffs in the trauma setting have found that 65%–72% of “key data points” were transmitted in high-acuity patients, with 9% of data not being documented by either the trauma team or EMS providers [1](#), [2](#) and [4](#). Unfortunately, retention of verbally delivered information given by EMS providers to ED staff is poor, with only 56% of the information retained accurately [\(5\)](#). Although this represents a large amount of information transfer, the perception of an adequate EMS handoff varies greatly by provider. In one study, 92% of paramedics believed that the transferred information was appropriate, and only 14% of nurses and 29% of trauma surgeons agreed [\(1\)](#).

Given the importance of these events and the reported variability in the perception of the accuracy and appropriateness of transferred information, we sought to evaluate provider perception of information transfer by EMS and ED personnel and compare this to an external observer's objective assessment.

(Panchal et al. 2015: 19)



Useful resources

- **Writing critically**

- Academic Phrasebank, University of Manchester:

<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/being-critical/>

- Using English for Academic Purposes:

<http://www.uefap.com/index.htm/>



My writing process



How does writing
happen for me?





The writing process

Pre-writing

Drafting

Editing and
proofreading

Revision





Prewriting

- Planning
 - Evaluating the rhetorical situation, or context, into which you write
 - Choosing and focusing your topic
 - Establishing an organising principle
- Gathering information
 - Entering the discourse on your topic
 - Taking notes as a strategy to avoid charges of plagiarism
 - Evaluating sources



The writing process





Drafting

- Try to visualise your report/paper. Work toward that vision.
- Begin to structure it—establish your section headings; give them titles. These do not have to be permanent.
- Examine the logical order of ideas reflected in those titles.
- Do not get hung up on details; elements of the draft are subject to change in the revision stage.
- Start to write the sections that you are ready to write.

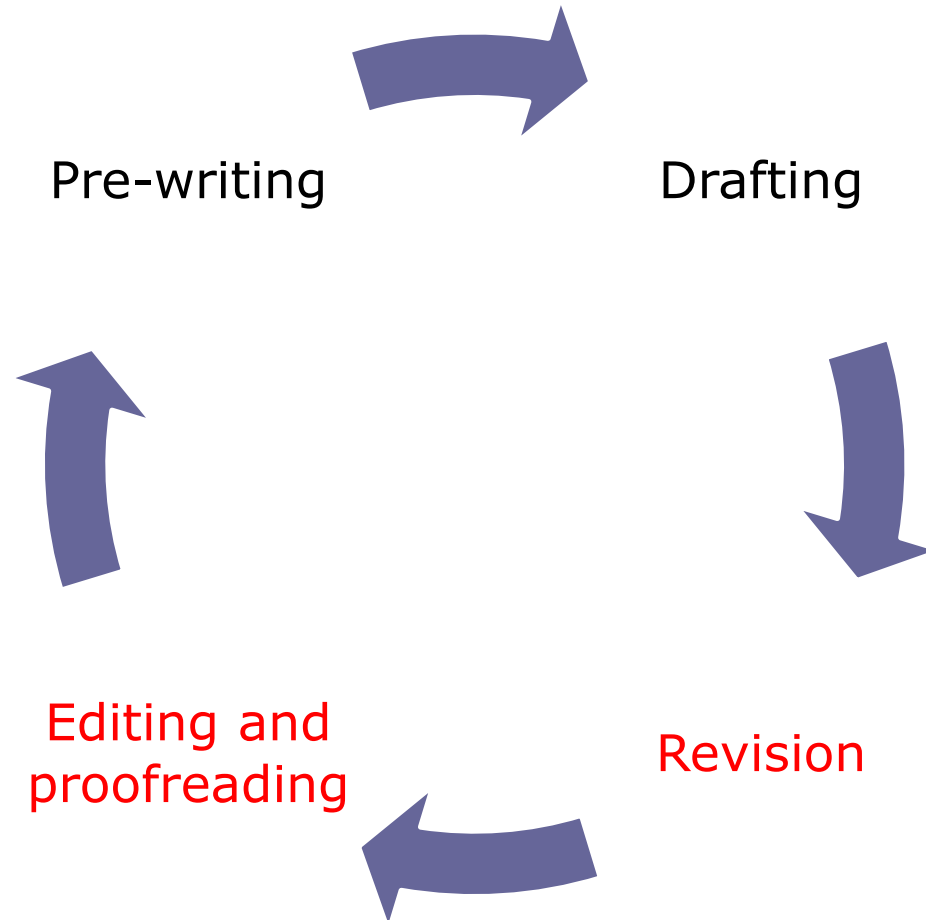


Drafting

- Continue to reassess your rhetorical situation.
- Does what you have written so far contribute to the achievement of your purpose?
- Experiment with organisation and methods of development.
- Don't get bogged-down in details; focus on the big issues: organisation and logical development.



The writing process





Importance of revision

“There is no such thing as good writing – just good rewriting”.

(Moore *et al.* 2010: 101)



Example

According to Marks et al. (2005) physical activity reduces your risk of chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease. Research shows that many Irish people do not get enough exercise. The SLAN report explains that 55% of Irish people are physically active. The SLAN survey states that older people have less physical activity than younger people (2007). Ellis et al. (2007) in their study say that people with disabilities have less physical activity. Physical activity is also known to help mental wellbeing. The aforementioned survey also discusses that women are more likely to be inactive.

(Extract taken from Maguire, Delahunt, and Everitt-Reynolds 2011)



Revised example

Physical activity is known to reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular disease (Marks et al., 2005). Regular physical activity is also associated with improved psychological wellbeing (Biddle & Ekkekakis, 2005). Evidence suggests that many people do not meet the recommendations for physical activity (Marks et al., 2005). The 2007 SLAN survey found that just over half of Irish adults were physically active (Morgan et al. 2009). Levels of physical activity are associated with demographic factors. For example levels of physical activity are lower among women, older people (Morgan et al., 2009) and those with disabilities (Ellis et al., 2007).

(Extract taken from Maguire, Delahunt, and Everitt-Reynolds 2011)



Revision (global issues)

Organisation and structure

- Does the text achieve your writing goals as established in your evaluation of the rhetorical situation (writing context) and by your research question?
- How does the introduction fit in with the body of the paper? Did you address what you said you would address? Did you fulfil your promises?
- Is information logically arranged, and is the organisation of your text clear?
- Is each section in the right place to fulfil your purpose? Does each section contribute to your reader's understanding of your topic?
- Have you drawn connections between the sections?



Revision (global)

- Does each paragraph treat in a controlled manner an identifiable idea, and does that idea follow logically the ideas expressed in previous paragraphs and do they allow readers to predict the ideas expressed in the paragraphs that follow?
- Does each paragraph have a topic sentence and is the paragraph cogent, coherent and unified? Take a close look at [paragraphs](#).
- Is there deviation, wander and digression?
- Does your conclusion take into account the discoveries made during your research and writing processes?
- Strategy: Reverse outline



Revision (local)

Editing and proofreading

- Look at logical and grammatical relations as expressed within paragraph boundaries.
- Do your sentences express complete ideas, and do you vary your structures? Are they grammatical?
- Is the relationship between pronouns and noun substitutes and the things they represent clear?
- Verbs express relationships of time and indicate person, number and mood. Are those relationships consistent and appropriate?



Copyediting / Proofreading

- This is the careful editing of each line and each graphic to ensure that the material is expressed in clear, correct English, checking errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, format and sentence structure.
- Proofreading is not editing in the broader sense – it is an effort to achieve correctness in the elements mentioned above.
- Read passages aloud.
- Get others involved.



What mistakes do you typically make?

- Punctuation
- Using capital letters in the wrong places
- Sentences without verbs
- Inappropriate use of verbs – e.g. ‘elicit’ when they mean ‘produce’
- No paragraphs in long sections of text
- Poor spelling
- Poor understanding of conjunctions and connections
- Citations



Tips for editing

- Purdue OWL: Proofreading
 - <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/1/>
- Personalising proofreading
 - What mistakes do you typically make?
 - How can you fix these errors?
- Peer review



Writing clearly

- Logical method of development
- Effective transition signals
- Good signposting
- Consistent point of view
- Conciseness (careful word choice)
- Clarity of expression
- Paragraph structure
 - Unity
 - Coherence

My writing process

Cognitive
Strategies

Metacognitive
Strategies

Assessing my
research/writing
process

Affective
Strategies

Social
Strategies



Reflection: understanding your relationship with academic writing

- Writing would be so much more enjoyable and less daunting for me if ...
- How would I characterise my writing process? What works? What is preventing me from moving forward?
- What are the things that I do to make writing happen?

Effort and
Commitment

Supportive
Relationships

Reward and
Celebration





Resources

- Academic Phrasebank, University of Manchester: <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Ebest, S.B., Alred, G., Brusaw, C.T. and Oliu, W.E. (2005) *Writing from A to Z: The Easy-to-use Reference Handbook*, 5th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Regional Writing Centre, UL: <http://www.ul.ie/rwc/>
- The OWL at Purdue: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>
- Using English for Academic Purposes: <http://www.uefap.com/index.htm>

Because every
writer needs
motivation



Because even
the best writers
need help



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MAIN BUILDING
C1-065

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Writing Centre Resources



- One-to-One Peer Tutoring
- Writers' Groups
- Writers' Space
- Workshops and Seminars
- Online Resources

**Free resources for all students
and staff**



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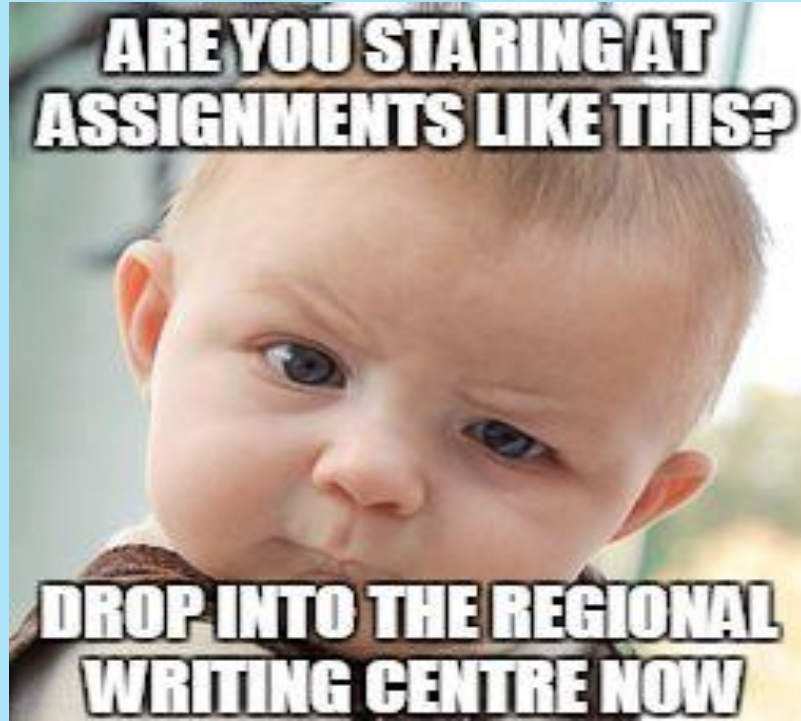


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Peer Tutoring in Writing



Let the Writing Centre get you on the “write” track.

Drop in to the Regional Writing Centre for a **FREE** one-to-one consultation with one of our experienced peer tutors.



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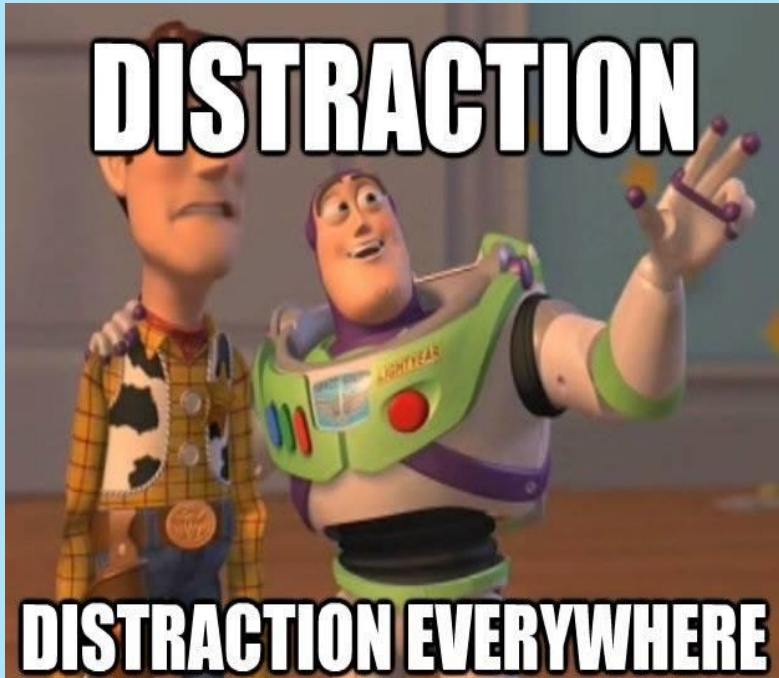


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Writers' Group



- Struggling to write?
- Too many Distractions?
- Too much Procrastination?

Join Writers' Group in
our distraction-free
Writers' Space.



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RWC Events

UL One Campus One Book

- encourages students and staff to read the same book and talk to one another about it during the academic year.

How I Write, Ireland

- invites students to interviews which enquire into how authors write, and
- provides recordings of past interviews.

Essay Writing Competition

- invites secondary school students to enter the RWC's National Secondary School Essay-writing Competition.



@RWCUL

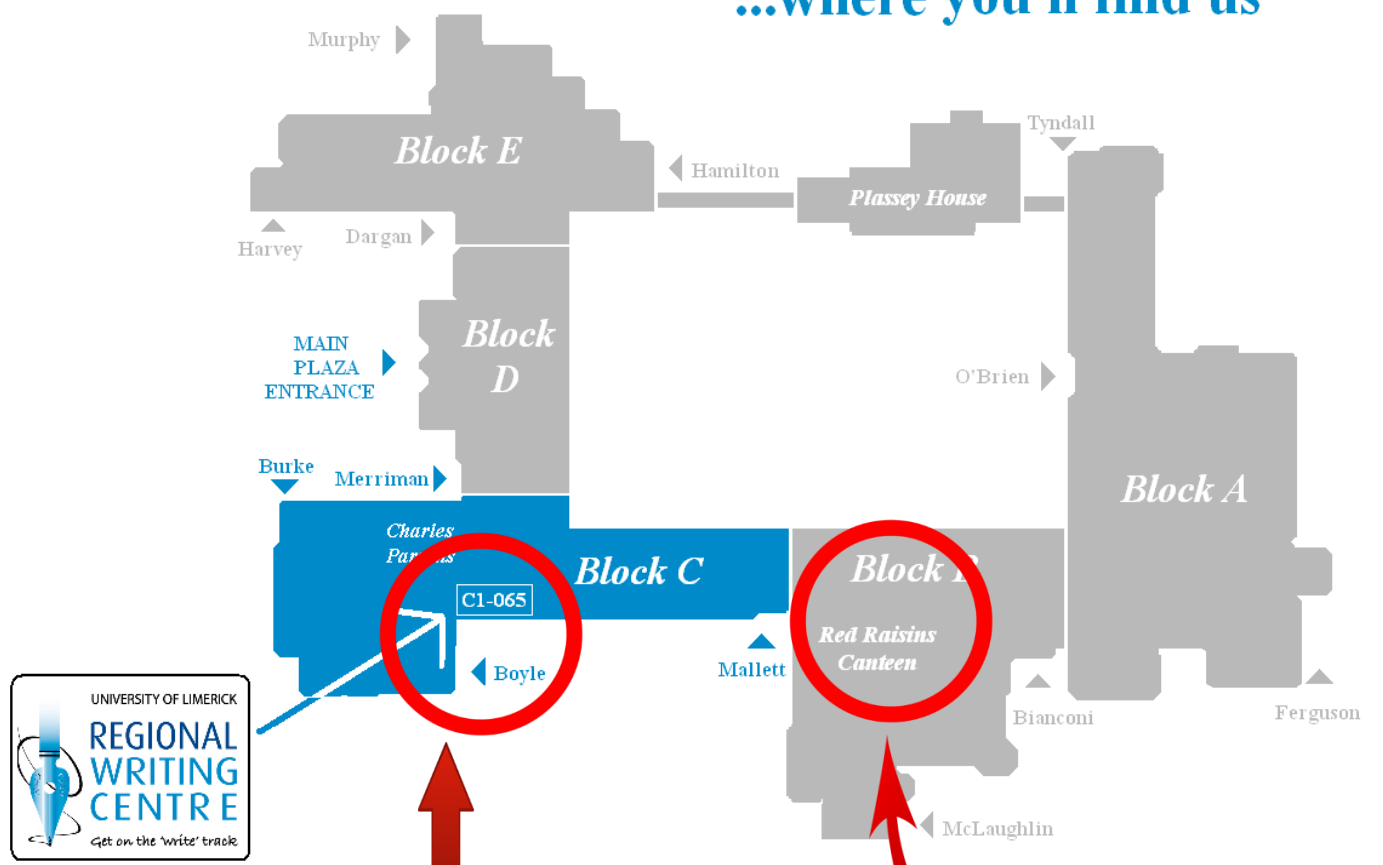


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...where you'll find us



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Regional Writing Centre located on C1 corridor

Red Raisins located here

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REGIONAL WRITING CENTRE

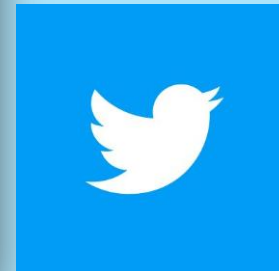
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