

# Literacy Lessons

## WRITING SURVIVAL SKILLS

at a glance

### your Learning

These lessons will help you

- Understand kinds of writing often required at college, e.g., note-taking, short reports, email
- Use strategies for writing effectively
- Use strategies for avoiding writing pitfalls, e.g., plagiarism.

### your Literacy

Literacy is key. In these lessons, you will engage and boost your literacy by

- Reading good examples of the kind of texts you need to write.
- Making sure your understanding of the task matches your instructor's understanding.
- Being strategic: Use strategies, e.g., a R.A.F.T.S., to support your writing.
- Using the writing process—not as a formula, but as a guide.
- Avoiding plagiarism and documenting your sources.

### Learning about your

### Learning

Learning about your learning is powerful. Here are some questions you will think about to reflect on your learning in these lessons:

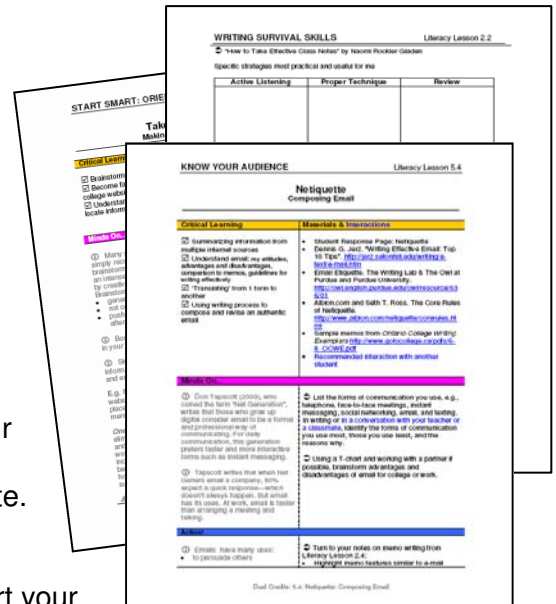
- Do you know what you know about writing?
- Do you know what writing tasks you can do?
- Do you know what next steps to take to improve your writing?

### About the lessons

Each Literacy Lesson includes the following parts:

- **Critical Learning**, which outlines the main goals of the lesson.
- **Materials and Interaction**, which lists the handouts, resources and collaboration you will need to complete the lesson. Use this as a checklist to prepare for your learning. The **blue-coloured text** in the lessons show when collaboration is required or recommended. To access the Internet addresses, use **CTRL + click** to follow the link.
- **Minds On**, which begins the lesson, turns your “mind on” to the learning of the lesson.
- The **Action!**, usually the main part of the lesson, is intended to engage you more deeply in the topic, and to exercise and develop your knowledge and skills.
- **Consolidation**, which concludes the lesson, allows you to strengthen and reflect on your learning.
- **Connections and Next Steps**, which provides suggestions for further study and gives direction about what follows the lesson.

Throughout the lessons, look for the **i**, information, and **a**, action icons in the lesson, and use them as a guide for your learning.



Literacy  
Lessons

**WRITING SURVIVAL SKILLS**

Literacy Lessons

Knowledge and Skills	Reading about Writing	For the Record	Note-taking	Memos	Writing Reports	The Plain Explain
	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
<b>Self-understanding</b>						
Reflect on feelings about writing	✓		✓			
Identify personal goals	✓		✓			
Identify strengths as a writer		✓	✓			
Identify and reflect on accomplishments	✓		✓	✓		
<b>Writing Process and Strategies</b>						
Get started – freewriting	✓					
Get started – brainstorming	✓					
Get started – understanding the instructor’s goals	✓		✓			
Get started – understanding the task				✓	✓	
Get started – identifying the audience	✓			✓	✓	
Get started – identifying the purpose	✓			✓	✓	
<b>Plan – using R.A.F.T.S.</b>						
Plan – outlining	✓				✓	
Plan – using ABCC	✓					
<b>Draft – start where you are, turn off your inner critic, don’t be afraid to modify the outline, use your own voice, forget about it</b>						
Draft – start where you are, turn off your inner critic, don’t be afraid to modify the outline, use your own voice, forget about it	✓			✓	✓	
<b>Revise – read aloud, take the long view, be ruthless, check sequence and logic, check punctuation and spelling, make it pleasing to the eye</b>						
Revise – read aloud, take the long view, be ruthless, check sequence and logic, check punctuation and spelling, make it pleasing to the eye	✓			✓	✓	
Revise – comparison		✓		✓		
Revise – seeking feedback		✓		✓	✓	
<b>Reflect – accomplish the goal, put yourself in the instructor’s shoes, rethink the message, rethink the method, rethink mechanics</b>						
Reflect – accomplish the goal, put yourself in the instructor’s shoes, rethink the message, rethink the method, rethink mechanics	✓		✓		✓	
<b>Reflect – timeliness, active process, broad view, concept maps</b>						
Reflect – timeliness, active process, broad view, concept maps			✓			

Literacy  
Lessons

**WRITING SURVIVAL SKILLS**

<i>Note-taking</i>						
Use strategies for Note-taking from articles, lectures, video, textbooks, discussion		✓	✓			
Use Cornell Note-taking or Outlining		✓	✓			
Use Rockler Garden's three-part strategy		✓				
Understand the difference between copying and note-taking			✓			
Understand Forms and Features of Writing		✓	✓	✓	✓	

**Reading about Writing**  
*Advice from Power Learning*

Critical Learning	Materials and Interaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Become aware of feelings about and approaches to writing</li> <li>☑ Understand strategies for getting started</li> <li>☑ Understand strategies for drafting and revising</li> <li>☑ Evaluate the success of a current or previous writing assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Power Learning</i></li> <li>• A current or previous writing assignment</li> <li>• Student Response Page: Reading About Writing</li> <li>• <a href="#">Work with a partner</a></li> </ul>
Minds On	
<p>📍 Prepare: “Confronting the Blank Page”, on pages 203-207 of <i>Power Learning</i> offers advice on getting started writing. As you read, place 3 sticky notes on the most useful advice. You can move them if you change your mind as you read.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ Complete <b>Journal Reflections: How I Feel about Writing</b> in <i>Power Learning</i>, page 205.</li> <li>➡ List what you consider the most useful advice on getting started with your writing from pages 203-207 of <i>Power Learning</i>. Limit yourself to 3 points maximum.</li> </ul>
Action!	
<p>📍 Pages 211-215 of <i>Power Learning</i> provides advice on writing and revising your draft. As you read, place 5 sticky notes on the most useful advice. You can move them if you change your mind as you read.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ List what you consider the most useful advice on writing and revising your draft from pages 211-215. Limit yourself to 5 points maximum.</li> </ul>
Consolidation	
<p>📍 Evaluate: “Acting as Your Own Best Critic and Rethink: Reflecting on Your Accomplishment” (pages 216-217) make 6 recommendations of what to do after drafting your writing assignment. Can you predict what the recommendations are? Read these pages to see if you’ve predicted accurately.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ Refer to a writing assignment you are working on now, or a previous assignment. Answer the questions, based on the <i>Power Learning</i> reading, on your Student Response page.</li> </ul>

**Reading about Writing – Student Response**  
*Advice from Power Learning*

➡ You can: (1) Work on this template online and print a completed copy. It will expand as you work or (2) print a blank copy after adjusting the spacing to leave room to write or (3) use this as a guide to structure responding in a notebook.

**Minds On...**

➡ **Journal Reflections: How I Feel about Writing**, *Power Learning*, page 205

➡ The most useful advice from pages 203-207 of *Power Learning*

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- 
- 

**Action!**

➡ The most useful advice from pages 211-215

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**Consolidation**

➡ Answer these questions:

- Does/Did your assignment accomplish what you set out to do?
- Does/Did your assignment fit the assignment requirements?
- Does/Did the assignment successfully communicate the message?
- Are you putting/Did you put your best foot forward in terms of spelling, punctuation and grammar?
- What did you learn about writing from this assignment?
- What did you learn about yourself from doing this assignment?

**Teacher's Feedback**



Successfully completed

Still to do: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

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## Reading about Writing

### Advice from *Power Learning*

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### Literacy Learning Self-Assessment Checklist

➡ Check items you have completed confidently in this lesson. Highlight items about which you have questions or need to consolidate further.

#### Critical Learning

- Become aware of feelings about and approaches to writing
- Understand strategies for getting started
- Understand strategies for drafting and revising
- Evaluate the success of a current or previous writing assignment

#### Minds On...

- I understand my feelings about and approaches to writing
- I can use strategies to get started writing

#### Action!

- I can use strategies to scaffold (support) drafting and revising my writing

#### Consolidation

- I can use question prompts to reflect on and assess my own writing

**For the Record**  
**Making Notes from Articles, Lectures and Textbooks**

Critical Learning	Materials and Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Understand strategies for note-taking</li> <li>☑ Practise strategies for taking notes from an article, lecture and textbook</li> <li>☑ Use a Cornell Note-taking Organizer</li> <li>☑ Use active listening skills</li> <li>☑ Understand my strengths and note-taking habits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Response Page: For the Record</li> <li>• Access to the Internet</li> <li>• Rockler Gladen, Naomi. <i>How to Take Effective Class Notes</i>. Suite101.com. Available: <a href="http://collegeuniversity.suite101.com/article.cf/m/how_to_take_effective_class_notes">http://collegeuniversity.suite101.com/article.cf/m/how_to_take_effective_class_notes</a></li> <li>• Two-column Cornell note-taking organizer</li> <li>• <i>Notes and More Notes</i>, McMaster Centre for Student Development. Available at <a href="http://maclife.mcmaster.ca/academicskills/online_resources.cfm">http://maclife.mcmaster.ca/academicskills/online_resources.cfm</a></li> </ul>
Minds On	
<p>❗ College students say that they frequently have to take notes in lectures and from textbooks. While some professors post their lecture notes online, others do not permit recordings of lectures, so you have to be prepared to take effective notes.</p> <p>❗ It has been noted that in general we don't recall much of what we hear. Therefore, it's critical to <i>take action</i> that helps you actively engage with the content and hold your thinking. This is the purpose of note-taking strategies.</p> <p>❗ The article by Rockler Gladen, an authority on note taking, outlines a three-part strategy for taking notes in a lecture: Active Listening, Proper Technique, and Review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ Complete the "Making Lecture Notes Self-Assessment" on your Student Response page.</li> <li>➡ Locate the article "How to Take Effective Class Notes" by Naomi Rockler Gladen at the internet address above.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 1:</b> Read the article, highlighting the specific note-taking strategies in each of the three sections that are most practical and useful <i>for you</i> based on your responses to the self-assessment.</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> Commit to using these by recording them on your the Student Response page.</p>
Action!	
<p>❗ Setting 2 things side by side and comparing them is an effective thinking strategy. For example, we become more aware of the height of a tall person when that person stands beside a short person. Actively seeking opportunities to compare (identify similarities) and contrast (identify</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ Locate the video "Notes and More Notes" on the McMaster's Centre for Student Development at the URL above. Apply Rockler Gladen's advice in the activity below:</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 1:</b> As you watch the video, make notes using the <b>Cornell Note-Taking Organizer</b></p>

differences) can promote higher thinking skills, improve recall, and produce insights.

① The Cornell note-taking organizer is an example of an effective format to use for note taking.

Cornell is an American university. As noted in *Power Learning* (page 144) you can read about it at

[www.econ.ilstu.edu/Mark\\_Walbert?ECO101/Other/CornellINTS.html](http://www.econ.ilstu.edu/Mark_Walbert?ECO101/Other/CornellINTS.html)

① Signal words and phrases are *really* important. Effective speakers use them a lot. It has been shown that when students take notes from a lecture where the speaker used no signal words, the notes are just lists of facts. When students take notes from a lecture with signal words, the notes focus on important ideas and how things are related to each other. These notes are more meaningful.

provided in this lesson. Listen carefully for indicators (signals).

**Step 2:** Compare your notes either to the **verbatim transcript** or to the **summary** available on the web site. Check to see whether you must add or change your information.

**Step 3:** *If possible, compare your notes to those of a partner or consult with your teacher.*

**Consolidation**

( Being able to reflect on (look back at and think about) is essential for effective learning. It’s somewhat like studying yourself in a mirror and using what you see to adjust your clothing. Make opportunities to think about your thinking.

( Understanding the ways different subjects write about things will help your note taking, e.g.,

- Math textbooks often work towards the main point instead of putting it at the beginning. Details are very important. Often words you know have specialized meanings.
- History often tells the story of what happened in the order that it happened.
- Classification is important to science. Science writing often includes a lot of terms.
- Figure out how to think in different subjects and read or note-take accordingly!

( Reflect on your note-taking skills by responding to the questions on your Student Response page. You can respond there, in a journal/notebook, in conversation with your teacher, or by composing on a computer.

( “Notes and More Notes” explains 3 ways to take notes from your textbook.

Step 1: Select one note-taking strategy.

Step 2: Take notes from a chapter or section of one of your textbooks or something else you need to read or study.

Step 3: Show your notes to your teacher or a partner. Explain how well the strategy worked (or didn’t) and why.

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( College students tell us that some recommended textbooks are more useful than others. Evaluating reading or viewing material to focus on what you need to read and to ignore what you don't is a useful reading skill.

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**Connections and Next Steps**

( Taking notes is a good way to prepare for tests and exams. Try it!

( Practise note-taking using other videos from the Centre for Student Development page.

( Explore the Suite101.com site and study topics important to your own learning, e.g., multiple-choice questions and writing essays.

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For the Record – Student Response  
 Making Notes from Articles, Lectures and Textbooks

( You can: (1) Work on this template online and print a completed copy. It will expand as you work or (2) print a blank copy after adjusting the spacing to leave room to write or (3) use this as a guide to structure responding in a notebook.

**Minds On...**

**➤ Making Lecture Notes Self-Assessment**

Statements	Yes	No
1. I prepare for the lecture by reading the course outline and my assigned readings.		
2. I look at non-verbal cues (hand gestures, eye contact, etc.) to support my understanding of key content.		
3. I know that listening to an iPod or MP3 player may distract me from taking good notes.		
4. I use abbreviations. (e.g., on, etc.)		
5. I meet with my classmates and compare notes.		
6. I pay attention to indicators, or signal, words like "next, also, first of all..." so that I can organize my notes.		
7. I make sure that I don't write everything the instructor says.		
8. I reread my lecture notes and use highlighters and sticky notes whenever possible to highlight important ideas.		
9. I write down the date and topic of the lecture.		
10. I leave a few spaces in my notes when I miss a point so that I can fill it in later.		
11. I make sure that I sit where I can see and hear the instructor and avoid distractions.		
12. I review and edit my notes after listening to the lecture.		

➡ “How to Take Effective Class Notes” by Naomi Rockler Gladen

Specific strategies most practical and useful for me

Active Listening	Proper Technique	Review

**Action!**

➡ “Notes and More Notes” video

**CORNELL NOTE-TAKING ORGANIZER**

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Main Ideas</b> (Key terms, words, concepts)	<b>Explanation</b> (Examples, Details, Comments)

Comparison of notes to the **verbatim transcript** or to the **summary**.

**Consolidation**

➡ Reflect by responding to the following questions question prompts:

1. Did you find the task difficult? If so, why?
2. Did you find yourself having to stop the clip to keep up with the speaker? What would you do if this were a live presentation/lecture and you were asked to take notes?
3. Were you distracted in any way? If so, what did you do to get back on track?
4. Do your notes make sense to you? Do you think you have missed any important information?
5. Which of the strategies outlined in Rockler Gladen’s article helped you the most with your

note-taking skills?

➡ Make notes from a chapter or section of a textbook, using 1 note-taking strategy. Explain to your teacher or another student how well the strategy worked (or didn't) and why.

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### Connections and Next Steps

➡ Complete the Literacy Lesson 2.2

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### Teacher's Feedback



Successfully completed

Still to do: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

**For the Record:  
Making Notes from Articles, Lectures and Textbooks**

**Literacy Learning Self-Assessment Checklist**

☞ Check items you have completed confidently in this lesson. Highlight items about which you have questions or need to consolidate further.

**Critical Learning**

- Understand strategies for note-taking
- Practise strategies for taking notes from an article, lecture and textbook
- Use a Cornell Note-taking organizer
- Use active listening skills
- Understand my strengths and note-taking habits

**Minds On**

- I recognize my current note taking practices
- I understand Rockler Gladen's three-part strategy
- I can use writing to record what I hear
- I can commit to using strategies most useful to me

**Action!**

- I understand what active listening is
- I can identify active listening strategies
- I can use active listening strategies to identify how the information is organized
- I can listen for signal words
- I can use the Cornell Note-taking Template to record notes
- I can review my notes by reading the on-line transcriptions
- I can compare my work to transcripts, summaries, other students' notes
- I can make necessary revisions

**Consolidation**

- I can reflect on my learning by reviewing what I learned and making connections to it
- I can apply the note-taking strategies to a chapter in one of my textbooks

## Note-Taking

### Power Learning Approach

Critical Learning	Materials and Interaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Understand the importance of question prompts to learning</li> <li>☑ Understand how to prepare to take notes effectively</li> <li>☑ Practise note-taking from a book, lecture and from a discussion</li> <li>☑ Self-assess a set of notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Response Page: Note-Taking</li> <li>• <i>Power Learning</i></li> <li>• <a href="#">Work with a partner</a></li> </ul>
Minds On	
<p>① Responding to question prompts establishes a mindset for learning by focusing on the topic and cueing you to make connections between it and you. An effective learner internalizes questions like these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do I already know about this topic?</li> <li>• Why do I need to know this?</li> <li>• What attitudes and other obstacles might get in the way of learning this? How can I overcome these obstacles?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ Complete “Journal Reflections: How Do I Take Notes” on page 127 of <i>Power Learning</i>.</li> <li>➡ Read “Prepare: Considering Your Goals” and complete <b>Try It! 1</b> (course goals) on page 124.</li> </ul>
Action!	
<p>① This chapter contains a lot of useful information. Read “Work: Processing—Not Copying—Information” on pages 128-135.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ Complete <b>Try It! 2</b> (lecture notes) on page 131. This activity requires a partner to read the mini-lecture aloud.</li> <li>➡ Complete <b>Try It! 3</b> (discussion notes) on page 132-133.</li> </ul>
Consolidation	
<p>① Read “Rethink: Activating Your Memory” (pages 135-138). This section is about consolidating your learning.</p> <p>① Question prompts that cue you to reflect, or look back on your learning, help you make learning more conscious and help you plan next steps. Effective learners internalize questions like these:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ Complete <b>Try It! 4</b> (self-evaluation) on page 136.</li> </ul>

- What have I learned? Can I explain it to someone else?
- What isn't clear? How can I fix up my understanding?
- How does this connect to my own knowledge and experience?
- How is this like or not like something similar?
- How can I use this?

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### Connections and Next Steps

① It has been said that learning has only occurred when you can *apply* it. Apply your learning in a case study.

➡ Complete ***The Case of...The Human Dictation Machine*** on page 145.

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**Note-Taking – Student Response**  
**Power Learning Approach**

➡ You can: (1) Work on this template online and print a completed copy. It will expand as you work or (2) print a blank copy after adjusting the spacing to leave room to write or (3) use this as a guide to structure responding in a notebook.

**Minds On...**

- ➡ “Journal Reflections: How Do I Take Notes” (page 127)
- ➡ *Try It! 1* (page 124)

**Action!**

- ➡ *Try It! 2* (page 131)
- ➡ *Try It! 3* (pages 132-133)
- 

**Consolidation**

- ➡ *Try It! 4* (page 136)

**Connections and Next Steps**

- ➡ *The Case of...The Human Dictation Machine* (page 145)

**Teacher’s Feedback**



- Successfully completed
- Still to do: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

## Note-Taking

### Power Learning Approach

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### Literacy Learning Self-Assessment Checklist

➔ Check items you have completed confidently in this lesson. Highlight items about which you have questions or need to consolidate further.

#### Critical Learning

- Understand the importance of question prompts to learning
- Understand how to prepare to take notes effectively
- Practise note-taking from a book, lecture and from a discussion
- Self-assess a set of notes

#### Minds On

- I understand how understanding my instructor's and my goals can contribute to better note-taking.
- I understand how to prepare for class.
- I understand my own note-taking habits.

#### Action!

- I understand the difference between copying and note-taking.
- I use at least 1 of the strategies from *Power Learning*.
- I can take notes from a lecture.
- I can self-evaluate my notes, e.g. by comparing them to another student's notes.
- I can take notes from a discussion.

#### Consolidation

- I understand what is meant by "rethinking".
- I have used 1 of the strategies from this part of *Power Learning*.
- I can evaluate my notes, e.g. by using a checklist.

**Memos:  
Communicating Clearly, and Concisely**

Critical Learning	Materials and Interaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Understand that memos serve as examples of clear, concise communication</li> <li>☑ Understand the purpose, content, tone and format of memos (critical attributes).</li> <li>☑ Understand and interpret the wording of an assignment.</li> <li>☑ Understand the preparation that goes into brief writing</li> <li>☑ Use a R.A.F.T.S. template</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Response Page: Memos</li> <li>• Access to the Internet</li> <li>• Level 4 sample memos from <i>Ontario College Writing Exemplars</i> available at <a href="http://www.gotocollege.ca/pdfs/6-8_OCWE.pdf">http://www.gotocollege.ca/pdfs/6-8_OCWE.pdf</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Work with a partner to analyze and revise sample memos</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Conferences (2) with your teacher</a></li> </ul>
Minds On	
<p>① The memo is a useful, practical format often used in employee-employer communications. Organizations in education, business, and healthcare use memos, to structure relationships and organize information. Even if memos aren't studied in your courses, they can teach you about purpose, audience, and clear, concise writing.</p> <p>① Reading examples of good memos is one way to learn about its purpose, content, style and format. An effective strategy for learning is to compare examples to find common features. These are the <b>critical attributes</b>, or essential characteristics, that distinguish memos from other types of writing.</p> <p>① The <i>Ontario College Writing Exemplars</i> Document contains authentic samples of Ontario college student writing. These have been graded using a four-level scale, with 4 being the highest.</p>	<p>➡ Locate the <i>Ontario College Writing Exemplars</i> website using the internet address above.</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b> Read and compare the Level 4 samples on pages 33 and 34, looking for similarities in the form, topic, purpose, and tone (i.e., the attitude of the writer). Aim for at least 5 key similarities.</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> List the critical attributes of the two memos, e.g., a memo begins with a list of the topic, sender and recipient (form).</p> <p><b>Step 3:</b> <a href="#">Compare your list of critical attributes with that of a partner or your teacher.</a> Alternatively, 'test' your critical attributes against the Level 3 memo on page 37.</p> <p><b>Step 4:</b> Finalize the list and keep it as a checklist for your own memo writing.</p>
Action!	
<p>① Understanding the instructor's task is essential to success in college. Ask questions or rephrase the task directions to</p>	<p>➡ Locate the memo, <i>Development Session Video Review: "Listening Actively"</i>, on page 33 of The Ontario</p>

make sure your understanding is the same as your instructor's.

① Assignments like this always involve more than just “filling in the blanks” and following instructions. Even short memos require considerable planning and thought.

Writing Exemplars website.

**Step 1:** Locate the task; the task describes the assignment (in a grey box online). List the task requirements on your Student Response page.

**Step 2:** Read the memo on page 33 and verify that the writer has completed all the items you listed on the Student Response page. Check items the writer completed.

**Step 3:** Backmap from the memo on page 33, to imagine what the writer needed to consider *before* beginning to write. Answer the following questions on your Student Response page:

1. From your prior knowledge and experience, what do you think someone should do before making a recommendation?
2. If you were going to recommend a video, what factors would you consider?
3. If you are an employee, how do you compose your memos that your employer will read and respect?

**Step 4:** Complete the middle column of the R.A.F.T.S. below for the level 4 memo.

**Consolidation**

① We tend to think of memos as little notes, but memos can be extremely important in the workplace. Memos

- are formal and official
- are public (in the sense of not personal and private)
- can be kept and tracked and forwarded to other people
- have implications for accountability
- can have legal implications.

For these reasons, it is essential to be clear, to the point, and accurate. Do not include anything you wouldn't want to be shared at large. Be careful about your phrasing.

① R.A.F.T.S. is a strategy for clarifying 5

➡ Plan a memo about a college campus issue. Sample topics include health and safety concerns, access to computer labs, signage, academic policies. Brainstorm or freewrite to discover topics. (See Literacy Lesson 2.1)

➡ Complete the right-hand column of the R.A.F.T.S. below. Ask your teacher for the Sample Analysis if an example would help understand how to think through a R.A.F.T.S.

➡ Draft the memo, 1/2 page maximum, using your list of critical attributes and the Level 4 memo as your guide. Use one of the drafting strategies from Literacy

important aspects of any piece of writing:

- your **R**ole and relationship to the intended reader
- the **A**udience, or intended reader, whose needs for information you must respond to
- the **F**orm, or shape or format, that the writing will take; many forms are already set and accepted; putting information into a familiar form makes it easier for the reader to understand it
- the **T**opic, or what you're writing about:
- a **S**trong Verb that captures what you hope to achieve.

These components are interdependent. For example, a change in audience or purpose would likely require a change in form.

Lesson 2.1, e.g., go with the flow or start where you are.

- ➡ Use a revising strategy from Literacy Lesson 2.1, e.g., by reading aloud or taking the long view.
- ➡ Submit your memo [to your teacher](#). [In a conference, read your memo aloud and explain how it demonstrates the critical attributes of a memo.](#)
- ➡ Send your memo.

**Connections and Next Steps**

- ➡ All that you have learned about memos applies to e-mails in the world of work. Check out the lesson 5.4 on **Netiquette** for guidelines about email. Rewrite either the sample level 4 memo or your own memo as an email.
- ➡ Check out the actual or online bulletin boards in your college. How many examples of memos can you find? How well written are they?

**Memos – Student Response**  
**Communicating Clearly and Concisely**

➡ You can: (1) Work on this template online and print a completed copy. It will expand as you work or (2) print a blank copy after adjusting the spacing to leave room to write or (3) use this as a guide to structure responding in a notebook.

**Minds On...**

➡ Critical attributes of a memo:

- Form
- Topic
- Purpose
- Tone
- 

**Action!**

➡ List the task requirements:

1. From your prior knowledge and experience, what do you think someone should do before making a recommendation?
2. If you were going to recommend a video, what factors would you consider?
3. If you are an employee, how do you compose your memos that your employer will read and respect?

**Consolidation**

➡ Use the R.A.F.T.S. to plan your memo. Ask your teacher for the Sample Analysis if an example would help understand how to think through a R.A.F.T.S.

	Level 4 Memo, p. 33	Planning a Memo
<b>Role</b> What role is the student		

playing?		
<p><b>Audience</b> Who is the intended audience for the memo? Who is expected to read it?</p>		
<p><b>Format</b> What critical attributes of the memo does the writer include? Why is a memo an appropriate form in this situation?</p>		
<p><b>Topic</b> What is the memo about?</p>		
<p><b>Strong verb (purpose)</b> What is the purpose of the memo? What is the action verb that expresses the purpose?</p>		

➡ Draft, revise, edit and send your memo.

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## Connections and Next Steps

- ➡ Rewrite a memo as an email.
  - ➡ Check out memos on a college bulletin board.
- 

## Teacher's Feedback



Successfully completed

Still to do: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

**Memos**

**Communicating Clearly and Concisely**

**R.A.F.T.S. Sample Analysis of Level 4 Memo, p. 33**

<p><b>Role</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The writer of the memo, <i>Development Session Video Review, "Listening Actively"</i>, is a first-year college student, writing in the character of a medical imaging technologist writing to the department manager.</li> <li>• The writer effectively maintains this role throughout the memo. "I'm just giving you a quick update..."; "I think this video will most certainly aid in improving the staff's interpersonal skills".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Audience</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The audience is one person, the department manager.</li> <li>• Because the audience is a supervisor, the writer refers to the assigned task ("...a quick update on the video you requested I review...") and demonstrates initiative ("...I have taken it upon myself to retrieve it from the IAHS Resource Center and will have it for you for the session.)</li> <li>• The supervisor knows what the acronym IAHS means.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Format</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The memo format dictates a clear statement of purpose in the opening sentence.</li> <li>• The format is brief and clear, about a single issue.</li> <li>• The writer uses the informal tone permitted in a memo ("See you then!"), but uses professional language ("the staff's interpersonal skills").</li> </ul>
<p><b>Topic</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The topic is a review of a video on listening skills for a staff development session. ("it did an excellent job...")</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strong verb (purpose)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The writer provides a clear statement of purpose—the technician's review of the suitability of the video for staff development purposes.</li> <li>• The purpose is to state the aspects of the video that make it suitable for its intended audience—a staff development session. Three important points are listed and a conclusion is provided. "This video should provide the staff insight into improving their communication skills...".</li> </ul>

See *Think Literacy Subject-Specific Examples:Language/English 7-9*, p. 36. The *Development Session Video Review: "Listening Actively"* memo is from *Ontario College Writing Exemplars*, p. 33, and is included in this resource document at the end of Literacy Lesson 2.6.

## Memos

### Communicating Clearly and Concisely

## Literacy Learning Self-Assessment Checklist

☞ Check items you have completed confidently in this lesson. Highlight items about which you have questions or need to consolidate further.

### Critical learning

- Understand that memos serve as examples of clear, concise communication
- Understand the purpose, content, tone and format of memos (critical attributes).
- Understand and interpret the wording of an assignment.
- Understand the preparation that goes into brief writing
- Use a R.A.F.T.S. template

### Minds On...

- I can identify 5 critical features of an effective memo
- I am familiar with a R.A.F.T.S. graphic organizer
- I have used the organizer to understand the format, audience, purpose, content and voice of a memo

### Action!

- I have used a R.A.F.T.S. graphic organizer to plan a memo of my own for an audience of my peers
- I consulted my teacher/peer to compare results
- I made necessary revisions

### Consolidation

- I reflected on my learning by reviewing what I learned and making connections to electronic memo-writing
- I have noted examples of memos in the college environment

## Writing Reports: Gathering, Organizing, and Communicating Information

Critical Learning	Materials & Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Understand the actions/terms used in the task description</li> <li>☑ Understand what a Level 4 report looks like</li> <li>☑ Prepare and create a report</li> <li>☑ Become more familiar with college services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet access</li> <li>• Student Response Page: Writing Reports</li> <li>• Level 4 reports from <i>Ontario College Writing Exemplars</i>, available at <a href="http://www.gotocollege.ca/pdfs/6-8_OCWE.pdf">http://www.gotocollege.ca/pdfs/6-8_OCWE.pdf</a></li> <li>• Durham College Learner Support Centre at Durham College available at <a href="http://www.dcuoit.ca/EN/main/learnersupportcentre/writing_academic_services.html">http://www.dcuoit.ca/EN/main/learnersupportcentre/writing_academic_services.html</a></li> <li>• Work with a partner</li> </ul>
Minds On	
<p>① Reports are vehicles of communication used to provide information in a concise, clear and easy-to-read format. Reports are commonly used to communicate progress, provide new information, and analyze results. College students are often asked to show their knowledge or research in a report format. <i>The Ontario College Writing Exemplars</i> contains many examples of both short and longer, technical reports by college students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ Locate the Level 4 exemplar about the gym at Welland Campus on page 77 of the <i>Ontario College Writing Exemplars</i>. See the internet address above.</li> <li>➡ Use the <b>Investigative Report Outline</b> on your Student Response page. If possible, <b>work with a partner</b> to answer the questions in the right-hand column. The outline addresses each of the actions required by the assignment and listed in the task.</li> </ul>
Action!	
<p>① Writers use many strategies. You can try the following to decide which strategies work best for you. Your teacher can provide a handout on these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid writing (Think Literacy, p. 98)</li> <li>• Setting the context (Think Literacy, p. 102)</li> <li>• Adding Content (Pass It On!) (Think Literacy, p. 104)</li> <li>• Webbing, mapping and More (Think Literacy, p. 108)</li> <li>• Supporting the main idea (Think</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ Locate the Durham College Learner Support Centre at Durham College available at the internet address above.</li> <li>➡ Select one of the services offered by the centre and complete the <b>Planning an Investigative Report Outline</b> on your Student Response page as if planning to write a short report. To collect the information you need, use the 5W's. Some possible questions are:</li> </ul>

- Literacy, p. 112)
- Writing an Information Report (Think Literacy, p. 144)
  - Writing a Business Report (TL, p. 147)

ⓘ Reports answer the 5W questions- Who? What? Where? When? Why? The report writer must investigate, ask questions and record the information accurately before preparing a report.

ⓘ Templates are scaffolds (temporary supports) that cue us to provide certain information and help us organize information. Don't let these trap you, however; modify them if necessary. For example, reports don't have to be 5 paragraphs long. That is a guideline.

ⓘ When we read over our own work, we often 'see' what we think we've written. Reading *backwards* word-by-word or sentence-by-sentence helps with spelling and grammar because it disrupts the "flow" of your reading and expectation. Reading aloud can intensify this effect.

- Where is the service located?
- When can students access the service? Who provides the service?
- Why is this service necessary?

➡ Use the **Information Report Template** on your Student Response page to organize your information.

➡ Using your **Information Report Template** as a guide, draft your report. Use drafting strategies from Literacy Lesson 2.1, e.g., go with the flow and don't be afraid to modify your outline.

➡ Revise using revising strategies from Literacy Lesson 2.1, e.g., check the sequence and logic or be ruthless.

- ➡ To proofread without a partner:
- Check spelling by beginning with the last word of your draft. Read backwards word by word.
  - Check sentence structure, punctuation and grammar by reading the last sentence of your draft, then the second-last sentence, then the third-last sentence, and so on.

**Consolidation**

➡ Share your report **with a partner**. Have your partner ask questions about the information in your report. Ask your partner to verify that s/he can find the service and can understand its purpose.

**Connections and Next Steps**

ⓘ Reports are everywhere, for example, wherever people are accountable. Employees, for instance, submit reports to supervisors or employers.

**Writing Reports – Student Response**  
**Gathering, Organizing and Communicating Information**

➡ You can: (1) Work on this template online and print a completed copy. It will expand as you work or (2) print a blank copy after adjusting the spacing to leave room to write or (3) use this as a guide to structure responding in a notebook.

**Minds On...**

➡ Complete the **Investigative Report Outline**:

<b>The writer's actions</b>	<b>Welland Gym</b>	<b>Your answers</b>
<p><b>Collect</b>  (Locate information)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where did the writer find the information?</li> <li>• Are these sources reliable? Varied? Unbiased? Accurate? Complete? Useful to my audience?</li> <li>• What additional source(s) would you have consulted?</li> <li>• What additional questions would <i>you</i> have asked gym users? What would you have asked the Athletic Director?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Reframe</b>  (Select information this audience needs to know and decide how to say it for this audience)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the purpose, or goal, of this report?</li> <li>• What are the key words in the introduction that focus and direct its purpose?</li> <li>• Who will read it?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Analyze</b>  (Make decisions about what is important and why)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is this information important?</li> <li>• What action might result?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Organize</b>  (Arrange in the most effective order)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are headings used in the report?</li> <li>• In what order does the writer arrange the information?</li> <li>• How and when are bullets</li> </ul>	

	used effectively?	
<p><b>Categorize</b></p> <p>(Label sections and paragraphs with subheadings)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reread the section entitled “Equipment”. Highlight the key word in each paragraph that describes what issue is discussed.</li> <li>• What categories could be used for the section on maintenance?</li> </ul>	

**Action!**

➡ Plan a report using the **Planning an Investigative Report Outline:**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Guiding Questions</b>	<b>Your answers for your report</b>
<p><b>Collect</b></p> <p>(Locate information)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do I find information for my topic that is correct and complete?</li> <li>• Is this information useful to my audience?</li> <li>• Who or what are the sources of information for your report?</li> <li>• Are these sources reliable (trustworthy? Unbiased? Accurate?)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Reframe</b></p> <p>(Select information this audience needs to know and decide how to say it for this audience)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the purpose of my report?</li> <li>• What are the key words in the introduction that focus and direct its purpose?</li> <li>• Who will read it? Does my report ‘speak to’ my intended audience?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Analyze</b></p> <p>(Make decisions about what is important and why)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the most important information?</li> <li>• What action do I expect from my readers?</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Organize</b></p> <p>(Arrange in the most effective order)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What order is most effective?</li> <li>• Where can I use bullets?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Categorize</b></p> <p>(Label sections and paragraphs with subheadings)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What categories could be used for each section of the report?</li> <li>• What headings do I need?</li> <li>• Does any information need rearranging because of the labeling?</li> </ul>	

➡ Using the **Information Report Template below**, organize your information.

Introduction:
<p>First sub-topic:</p> <p>Key points from your research:</p> <p>Transitional sentence:</p>
<p>Second sub-topic:</p> <p>Key points from your research:</p> <p>Transitional sentence:</p>
<p>Third sub-topic:</p> <p>Key points from your research:</p> <p>Transitional sentence:</p>
<p>Conclusion: Re-state some of your key points.</p> <p>Write an emphatic concluding sentence.</p>

From *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12*, page 146.

➡ Now, write your draft.

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**Consolidation**

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↻ Obtain feedback on the success of your report's communication from a partner.

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**Connections and Next Steps**

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**Teacher's Feedback**



Successfully completed

Still to do: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

## Writing Reports

### Gathering, Organizing and Communicating Information

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### Literacy Learning Self-Assessment Checklist

➡ Check items you have completed confidently in this lesson. Highlight items about which you have questions or need to consolidate further.

#### Critical learning

- Understand the actions/terms used in the task description
- Understand what a Level 4 report looks like
- Prepare and create a report
- Become more familiar with college services

#### Minds On...

- I can recognize the format, purpose and organization of a report
- I can understand the key actions/terms used in the description of the task

#### Action!

- I can locate and investigate a college service on a college web site
- I can collect and organize information for a report
- I can follow a model to create a report for my peers
- I can make necessary revisions

#### Consolidation

- I can verify that my report is successful by seeking feedback from a fellow student

## The Plain Explain

### Understanding, Organizing and Explaining a Concept

Critical Learning	Materials and Interaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Understand and appreciate the importance of clear instructions</li> <li>☑ Take into account the point of view of the listener/reader and the context</li> <li>☑ Develop and organize new concepts using a concept map</li> <li>☑ Explain a new concept explicitly to a new audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to the internet</li> <li>• Student Response Page: Wiki Work</li> <li>• <i>Wikis in Plain English</i> video available at <a href="http://www.commoncraft.com/video-wikis-plain-english">http://www.commoncraft.com/video-wikis-plain-english</a></li> <li>• Wiki Websites: <a href="http://www.pbwiki.com">www.pbwiki.com</a> <a href="http://www.wetpaint.com">www.wetpaint.com</a> <a href="http://www.wikispaces.com">www.wikispaces.com</a></li> <li>• Work with a partner.</li> </ul>
Minds On	
<p>❶ Not only is following instructions an essential skill, giving instructions you would like others to follow is also important. An excellent model can be found at The Common Craft website available at the above address and on YouTube.</p> <p>❶ <b>Visualizing</b> is forming pictures in the mind, a technique that is useful preparation for writing instructions that readers can follow.</p> <p>❶ <b>Concept Maps</b> can be used to organize, clarify and reflect upon new ideas. Examples are available on-line in <i>Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches</i>, “Webbing, Mapping and More” page 108.</p>	<p>➡ Locate the video at the internet address above. In 3:52 minutes, it explains a “wiki” in plain English. If necessary, view the video several times or read the transcript which is also available on the web page.</p> <p>➡ Draw your own single-page concept map to illustrate how a wiki works. For example, a circle of bubbles might be a simple method to show the “edit-save-link” steps of this process. See your Student Response page for additional concept map web sites.</p> <p>➡ Use your wiki concept map to guide your writing of the explanatory paragraph under <i>Action!</i>.</p>
Action!	
<p>❶ To write clear concise instructions requires the writer to think from the point of view of ‘other’ and consider what that person needs to know and understand in order to follow your instructions.</p>	<p>➡ Visit one of the wiki web sites listed in <i>Materials and Interaction</i>.</p> <p>➡ Set up a wiki web site where you prepare a list of advantages and disadvantages of a wiki. Record the internet address <i>accurately</i> on your Student Response page.</p>

① Remember the R.A.F.T.S. strategy from Literacy Lessons 1.4 and 2.4. You could use this strategy here!

R.A.F.T.S. is a strategy for clarifying 5 important aspects of any piece of writing:

- your **R**ole and relationship to the intended reader
- the **A**udience, or intended reader, whose needs for information you must respond to
- the **F**orm, or shape or format, that the writing will take; many forms are already set and accepted; putting information into a familiar form makes it easier for the reader to understand it
- the **T**opic, or what you're writing about:
- a **S**trong Verb that captures what you hope to achieve.

➡ Prepare an email message for **your partner**. Your purpose is to invite your partner to your wiki so that your partner can revise your list of advantages and disadvantages. Use this length guideline: 5-7 sentences.

**Step 1:** Draft the content. Here is a sample outline:

- Define wiki. (What is it? Where do you find it? When do you use it?)
- Explain how a wiki works.
- Tell why a wiki is useful.
- Convince **your partner** that a wiki would be beneficial for a group work project.
- Invite **your partner** to the wiki to revise your list of advantages and disadvantages of this experience.

**Step 2:** Revise your email using the checklist on the Student Response page before you send it.

**Step 3:** Print a copy for **your teacher** to evaluate, and attach it to your Student Response page.

**Consolidation**

- ➡ Send this message to **your partner** in an email and invite the partner to your wiki
- Test the clarity of your explanation by **meeting the partner at your wiki** to revise and edit the list you prepared based on your wiki experience.
  - Invite **your teacher** to the wiki to verify your work.
  - Reflect upon your wiki work.

**Connections and Next Steps**

➡ View additional Common Craft in Plain English videos on a variety of subjects, available at [www.commoncraft.com/show](http://www.commoncraft.com/show) View another video (e.g. RSS or Twitter) and attempt to understand and execute the instructions.

➡ Develop a common craft concept of your own that would be useful to students in your program or college.

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## The Plain Explain – Student Response

### Understanding, Organizing and Explaining a Concept

#### Wiki Work

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➡ You can: (1) Work on this template online and print a completed copy. It will expand as you work or (2) print a blank copy after adjusting the spacing to leave room to write or (3) use this as a guide to structure responding in a notebook.

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#### Minds On...

➡ Create a concept map of your own or use the internet address below to find one that works for you.

<http://www.2learn.ca/construct/graphicorg/concept/conceptmapindex.html#>

➡ Attach the map to this page.

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#### Action!

➡ The URL for my wiki is: \_\_\_\_\_

➡ Checklist for explanatory paragraph:

- My reader knows what a wiki looks like
- My reader knows where to find a wiki
- My reader knows the steps needed to use a wiki
- My reader can visualize how a wiki can assist a group work project
- My reader will be persuaded to try a wiki

➡ Attach email to partner.

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#### Consolidation

➡ My explanations can be made clearer if I.....

➡ A wiki is useful when....

➡ A wiki is not useful when....

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#### Connections and Next Steps

➡ My concept for a Common Craft Video for College Students is...

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**Teacher's Feedback**



Successfully completed

Still to do: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

## The Plain Explain

### Understanding, Organizing and Explaining a Concept

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### Literacy Learning Self-Assessment Checklist

➡ Check items you have completed confidently in this lesson. Highlight items about which you have questions or need to consolidate further.

#### Critical Learning

- Understand and appreciate the importance of clear instructions
- Take into account the point of view of the listener/reader and the context
- Develop and organize new concepts using a map/web
- Explain a new concept

#### Minds On...

- I can visualize a new concept as it is described to me
- I can create/use a concept map that accurately represents the new idea

#### Action!

- I can follow instructions to create and use my own wiki
- I can use a concept map to guide my explanatory paragraph
- I can write instructions that are clear and easy for my reader to follow
- I can create and use a wiki to share information with another student

#### Consolidation

- I can reflect upon my own learning and recognize ways to clarify instructions.
- I can identify applications in college situations where clear instructions are needed
- I can assess the role of a technology such as a wiki