

# Teach the task

Assessment tasks require sophisticated skills, such as critical thinking and knowledge of genre requirements. Such skills need to be explicitly taught; you cannot expect that your students will already have them.

A useful strategy for increasing students understanding of the requirements of assessment is 'teaching the task' during class. It involves engaging students in analysing the task, brainstorming the question, creating mind maps and discussing a student model of the task.

The following guide goes through the steps in an approach to assessment as a tool for learning.

## Teaching the assessment task: an 8-step guide



1. Analyse the task



2. Teach instructional concepts



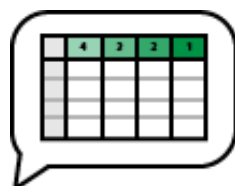
3. Teach genres



4. Students brainstorm question



5. Students draft a plan from a mind map



6. Explain assessment rubrics



7. Discuss a model of the task



8. Allow for questions

## 1. Analyse the task

Engage students with the following questions regarding the task requirements:

- What are the key content words/phrases?
- What are the instructional words?
- What are the limiting words?
- How many parts are there to the task?
- What skills and knowledge am I learning? (What is the purpose of the task?)

## 2. Teach instructional concepts

Investigate with students the meanings of instructional words.  
what does it mean to:

- discuss?
- critically analyse?
- compare and contrast?
- apply theory to practical contexts?
- evaluate?
- reflect?

## 3. Teach the genre

Discuss the following questions with students:

- Is this assessment task an essay, report, case study, research proposal, book review, literature review, reflective writing piece?
- What are the essential qualities required?
- What is the structure and format?
- In class, access the Study and Learning Centre's [Learning Lab](#)
- Go to the relevant assignment tutorial e.g. essay, report
- Use the online tutorial to emphasise the requirements of the genre

## 4. Students brainstorm the question

Instruct students to brainstorm the question in small groups and create a mind-map including:

- headings, sub-headings
- questions to guide research
- what they already know about the topic

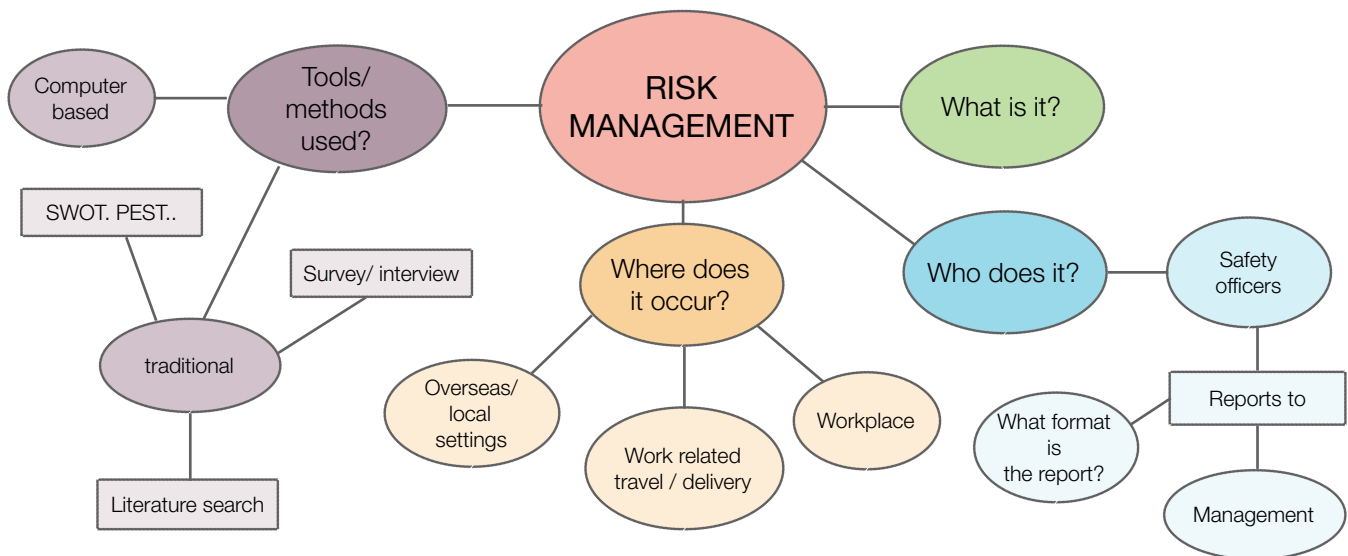
#### 4. Students brainstorm the question

Engage students with the following questions regarding the task requirements:

- headings, sub-headings
- questions to guide research
- what they already know about the topic

#### 5. Students make a plan for their assignment from their mind-map

The following example is of a mind-map structured around questions. You can see how the headings lend themselves to a plan for an assignment.



The Learning Centre, The University of New South Wales - <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au>

#### 6. Explain the assessment rubrics

Give students a copy of the relevant assessment rubric

Explain the categories and discuss the standards of each marking level

#### 7. Discuss a model of the task

Provide students with a model of a similar task that meets the requirements to a high standard. Students appreciate knowing what they are aiming for.

- Instruct students to read the model assignment before class
- Students discuss and evaluate the assignment in groups in class
- Refer to the rubrics to demonstrate how the model assignment met the requirements of the question it answered

#### 8. Allow time in class for questions