Task analysis

Task analysis involves breaking a task down into a series of **smaller sub-tasks or steps**. For example, if you are asked to write a 2,000 word essay, your task analysis may include:

1.   Develop a rough essay plan

2.   Conduct your research

3.   Select suitable examples, quotes, and so on, for inclusion in your essay

4.   Write the first draft of your essay, including tables, diagrams, and so on

5.   Redraft essay (usually at least two or three times)

6.   Proof-read your essay

7.   Construct a bibliography/list of references

8.   Submit your essay

Once you have identified all of the sub-tasks that constitute the task, ask yourself what **resources** are needed for each sub-task. Do you need particular skills, equipment, software, access to the expertise of others, services such as broadband or the Library, time, a quiet space, or books? How will you ensure that you have access to all required resources when you need them?

Be honest about which sub-tasks are especially **challenging** for you and that you might try to avoid. Save your most difficult or unpleasant tasks for those times when you are at your most creative and productive. Reward yourself after completing less pleasant tasks. Vary your activities – do something that you find challenging, followed by something that you like.

Start **earlier** than you think you need to: very little good quality work is done at the last minute and, with difficult tasks, leave time between bursts of activity to give you a chance to reflect.

Use the **task analysis steps** overleaf to help you to break your tasks down into sub-tasks.

1. Select **one** of your 'urgent and important' or 'A' tasks (see our **To-do list** template):

2. Identify **all** of the sub-tasks or steps required to successfully complete this task:

3. For **each sub-task or step**, figure out:

•   Estimated time needed to complete, and completion deadline

•   Resources required to successfully complete

•   Which sub-tasks do you think will be most challenging?

•   How are you going to tackle these challenges?