

# Developing your information skills

Enrichment Week  
2 March 2021

University Library. [Explore the possibilities.](#)

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CSE





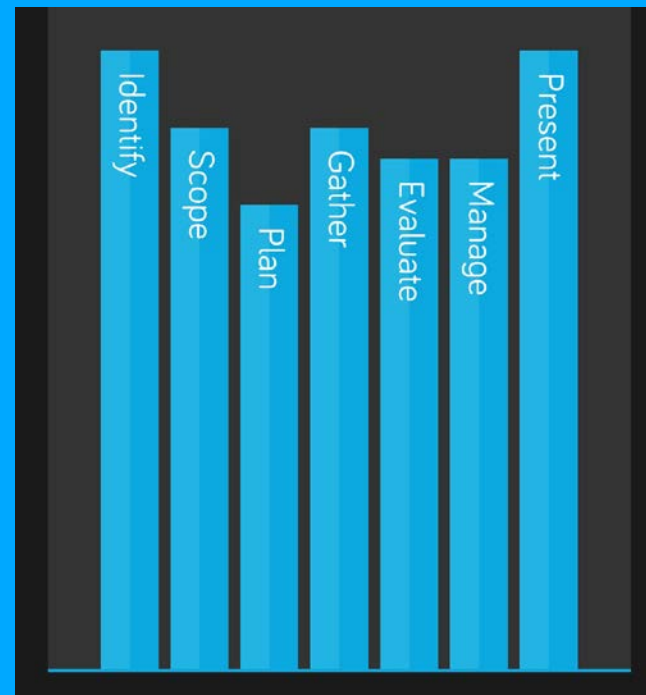
# Today's Session

In this session you will:

- **Reflect on your information and digital skills using our Skills Quiz**
- **Share your experiences and advice for building skills independently**
- **Find out where to look for help in building your skills**

# Information and Digital Skills

## What are they?



# Why are information and digital skills important?

## Strong information and digital skills:

- help you to create **good quality academic work**
- enable you to **learn independently**
- allow you to **think critically** about information, avoiding fake news
- link to Newcastle University's [Graduate Attributes](#): **Curious, Critical Thinker, Digitally Capable**
- can help you **prepare for interviews and be included on CVs**
- are useful **life-long skills**

## Academic Skills Kit (ASK)

- **Useful advice on favourite topics**, such as good academic practice and referencing, exams and revision, learning online, and academic writing
- **New topics on critical thinking**, and digital and information skills that can help you manage information and collaborations online
- **A wide range of informative videos** filled with great advice and tips to help you study
- **Reflective quizzes** that help you check your learning and identify your next steps
- **New downloadable guides** that you can keep and reference as you study



Learn about writing essays and dissertations, taking exams and delivering presentations.



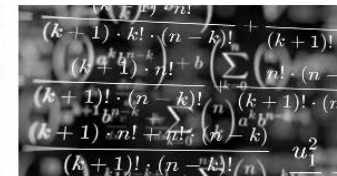
Develop your academic writing and grammar.



Develop the skills you need to become an effective independent learner.



Build good referencing habits and find out how to develop your academic writing skills to help you avoid plagiarism.



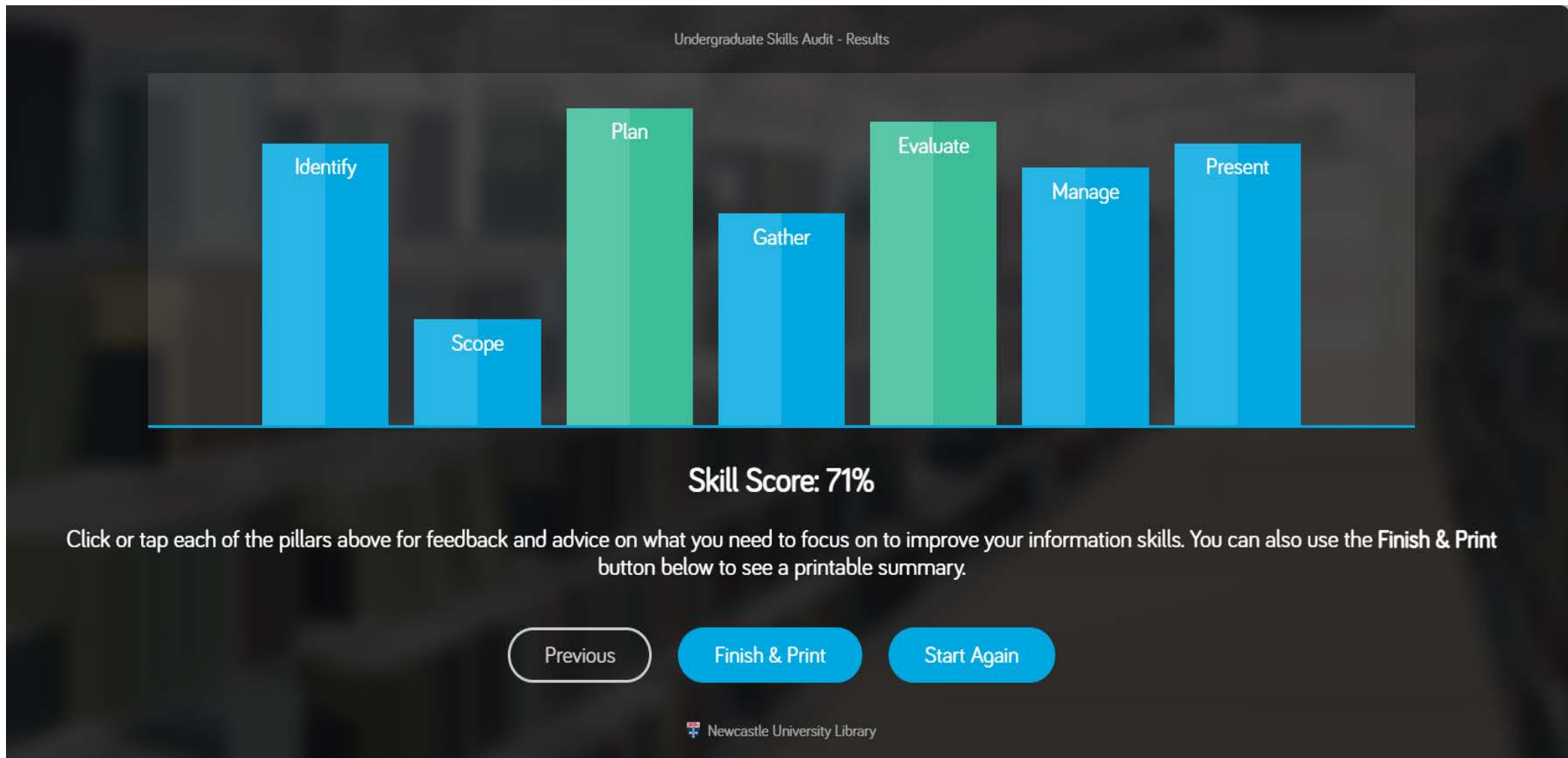
Learning resources to help with maths in your course.



Build the skills you need to find and engage critically, creatively and collaboratively with digital information.

## The Skills Quiz







Here's your Undergraduate Skills Audit results...

 Want to save your results? Try [printing this page](#) and selecting Save as PDF.

## My Undergraduate Skills Audit Results



Skill Score: 71%

Completion Date: 23/02/2021

### 1: Identify

Can you identify the key concepts of your topic?

You scored 80%

Great, you are confident defining your research question! You may find it useful to look at using Library Search and Subject Database records to identify more alternative keywords and subject headings on your topic. To refine your keyword skills further, go to the [Starting your Search page](#) of our [Finding Information Guide](#).

### 2: Scope

Can you identify and use a wide range of information types?

You scored 30%

Each type of information has its particular use and depending on your search question or essay title you might find it helpful to explore material beyond books and journal articles. You can find out more about [Information Types](#) in our [Finding Information Guide](#). Your Subject Guide also includes links and advice for using databases and other online resources that are specific to your area of study. You can find your guide on the [Resources and Study Support](#) section of the Library website.

### 3: Plan

Can you create a strategy for finding academic information that is relevant to your topic?

You scored 90%

Excellent, you know how to plan ahead to make your search for information effective. You might like to look at the [Advanced Searching page](#) of our [Finding Information Guide](#) to see how you can add phrase searching (""), truncation (\*) and wildcard (?) symbols to your search string and how 360 degree searching can help you find more information. Also, don't forget that our interactive [Search Planner](#) is there to save you time in your search planning.



# Skills Round Up

Identify

Scope

Plan

Gather

Evaluate

Manage

Present

# Identify

Being able to describe your topic using simple words and phrases, including synonyms and related relevant terms.

### Tips:

- Read! Reading around your topic will help you to become familiar with the type of vocabulary used to describe it.
- Look out for subject / index terms in databases that are used to describe articles relevant to your topic.
- Use Google to find synonyms of keywords on online thesauri.

### Tools:

- [Subject Guides](#)
- [Library Search](#)
- Reference Works
- [Finding Information Guide: Starting your Search](#)
- [Online Thesauri](#)

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# Scope

Being able to find and use a range of information types / resources in order to assess what information is currently available on your topic and what the information gaps are.

### Tips:

- Adjust your expectations from the start and accept that you aren't going to find all the information you need in one place.
- Before searching, ask yourself what types of information you need to answer your question. This will determine where best to search e.g., where you look for statistics (maybe on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or [Statista](https://www.statista.com)) is going to be different to where you locate journal articles (e.g., [Library Search](#) or a specialist database)

### Tools:

- [Finding Information Guide: types of information](#)
- [Subject Guides](#)
- [Resource Guides](#)

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# Plan

Being able to create a search plan by identifying keywords, setting search limits, selecting appropriate sources of information and deciding how to manage the information you find.

### Tips:

- Stepping back and making a plan will save you time in the long run, helping you to stay focused and ensuring relevant results.
- Keep your plan beside you and add to it during your research. It is an organic document which will best serve you if it changes along with your needs.
- Evaluate your plan as you go along, to make sure it is fit for purpose.

### Tools:

- [Interactive Search Planner](#)
- [Finding Information Guide: advanced Searching](#)
- [Managing Information Guide](#)

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# Gather

Being able to use appropriate search techniques to find information (both digitally and in print), including use of AND / OR to combine keywords, refine options and email alerts.

### Tips:

- Get to know the database you are using and the features available by checking out the database's help section.
- Create well organised database folders to save searches in so you can easily find what you need.
- If you find a really useful article, look at what references they have used and who has cited it since. This is an easy and useful way of finding other potentially relevant information (also called 360 degree searching).

### Tools:

- [Subject Guides](#)
- [Finding Information Guide](#) (advanced searching section and starting a search section)

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# Evaluate

Being able to critically think about the quality and accuracy of potential sources of information, making appropriate selections for your needs. Also critically evaluating your search itself and make improvements.

### Tips:

- Download [the evaluation prompt sheet](#) and keep it beside you when reading and reviewing any information sources.
- Make the most of 'peer reviewed' filter options in databases. You will still need to evaluate these articles, but it can help as a first stage of evaluation if you are overwhelmed by a large quantity of results.
- If your search isn't working, don't keep re-running it. Go back to your search plan and try a different approach.

### Tools:

- [Evaluating Information Guide](#)
- [Fake News Guide](#)

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# Manage

Being able to select appropriate, helpful tools in order to accurately create and proofread references. Understand copyright and be able to find creative commons images for use in work where relevant.

### Tips:

- Decide at the start how you are going to organise and collect your references and make sure you reference as you go along, noting down any page or volume numbers you may need to refer back too.
- Get to know your referencing style from the start so you can easily spot mistakes.
- Make use of the referencing tools available to you, including cite them right online, the 'pin feature' in Library Search, and the citation features and folder options in many of the specialist databases.

### Tools:

- [Managing Information Guide](#)
- [Cite them right online](#)
- [Images Guide](#)

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# Present

Being able to combine information from a range of sources and use these to develop own ideas and evidence arguments. Also to present them in a way that is suitable for your audience.

### Tips:

- Always check your assignment / project brief to understand how your academics want you to present the information.
- Ask for help if you are unsure on how to build your own argument. The writing development centre runs free one to one tutorials and workshops, which can be booked in advance.
- Use feedback from previous assignments to target areas that you need to improve on.
- Reading examples of other academic work and looking at how they present information can be a useful guide.

### Tools:

- [Finding Information Guide](#)
- [ASK website](#) (Assessments and writing sections might be particularly useful)
- [Writing Development Centre](#)
- [Careers – CV writing](#)

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# Next Steps

## Set a goal

- Make it SMART

## Explore:

- The [Academic Skills Kit](#) – remember to preview the new site
- The Library's [Skills Guides](#)
- The Library's [Employability Guide](#)

## Think about how to keep track of your progress:

- [NCL ePortfolio](#)
- [Library's Student Development and Progression Document](#) (UG)
- [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#) (PG)



**Live chat 24/7**

**Library Help online at [libhelp.ncl.ac.uk](http://libhelp.ncl.ac.uk)**

**E-mail: [lib-liaison@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:lib-liaison@ncl.ac.uk)**

**Twitter: [@ncllibarts](https://twitter.com/ncllibarts), [@ncllibsoc](https://twitter.com/ncllibsoc), [@ncllibsage](https://twitter.com/ncllibsage)**

**Website: [ncl.ac.uk/library](http://ncl.ac.uk/library)**



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