Getting your ideas in order: 1

Getting some order
In any written assignment you will be expected to organise and structure information from a range of sources. This can mean you end up with a lot of notes and bits of writing you need to link together.

• What should you select?
• What are the relationships between ideas and concepts?
• How can you reorganise these in response to the task set?

These are suggestions – experiment and find out what works for you.

Aim to get a list of sections for your writing.
There will be more than one possible order so experiment with the order.
You need to link your ideas and points together to form a persuasive line of reasoning.

Highlight and group

Shuffle your key ideas around
• Putting material into groups makes it easier to see how you might link the material together.
• Playing around with the order can help you arrive at a line reasoning that will convince the reader.
• Your readers will be able to follow your argument more easily if you have thought about the best order to use.

On screen
Copy and paste key ideas as short summaries.
Shuffle these around in your document.
Draft a outline plan based on the order you arrive at.
Getting your ideas in order: 2

Post up your ideas

- Put key ideas on sticky notes or cards
- Move them around to get an order
- Group together
- Use a table or a wall
- Colour code

Stick in a notebook

You can link your ideas together roughly in sketchy spider diagrams, grouped in family trees or more formally as well-thought out concept maps.

Either way can help you to:

- Link points
- Create a structure

Inspiration diagram view

Inspiration outline view

Using Inspiration software is an option and using it allows you to turn your diagram into an outline for your writing. Inspiration can be used on all open access lab computers throughout the University.