# Assessment for distance learning (ADL) 1 & 2 **Handout 2:** Example assessment question and guidance

This is an example assessment question and guidance based on the *Example teaching text*: *Recording your personal water use and report writing.*

## **Question 1**

Write a report about your personal daily water use at home following the procedure described in the *Recording your personal water use activity*.

## Learning outcomes (LO)

In this assignment you should demonstrate you have achieved the following learning outcomes:

* Demonstrate aspects of measuring, collecting and recording data
* Write a report following standard conventions.

## **Guidance for answering Question 1**

Question 1 has two main purposes: firstly, to give you an opportunity to collect your own data by practical investigation, and secondly, to develop your skills in writing reports. Marks are awarded for both doing the practical activity and for the written report.

The detailed instructions for the procedures you need to follow to collect the water use data are described in the *Recording your personal water use* activity. You need to work through all sections of the activity before you can answer this question.

### Word counts and marks

Question 1 has a word limit of 1000 words. There are word count guidelines in Table 1. These are guidelines only and it is fine if some sections are slightly shorter or longer, providing the report stays within the overall limit. Include the total word count at the end of your report.

**Table 1** Question 1 word counts and marks

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Word count guidelines | Maximum marks |
| Title | - | 4 |
| Introduction | 150 | 12 |
| Methods | 300 | 16 |
| Results | -\* | 16 |
| Discussion | 500 | 36 |
| Conclusion | 50 | 8 |
| Overall presentation | - | 8 |
| Total | 1000 | 100 |

\*There is no word count for the results section, because it will consist of a table of numerical data.

## Report structure and style

Before you write the report, look again at the section on *Reports and how to write them*. In terms of writing style, you should use a formal report style but it is acceptable to use the first person in some sections if you wish, because you are reporting on your own activities.

Your report should be structured as follows:

**Title**

This should be clear, brief and indicate the subject of the report.

**Introduction**

This should explain the aim of the report and include a brief description of your situation; for example, the number of days you measured water use, the number of people in your household and other relevant details. It should also include an outline of how the rest of the report is organised.

**Methods**

In the *Recording your personal water use* activity you are asked to complete measurements for all your regular water-using activities but it is not possible to include full details of them all in the word limit of the report. In the Methods section, therefore, you should outline your overall approach, and then include a full description of your measuring procedure for ONE of the following activities:

* washing your hands and face
* brushing your teeth
* taking a bath
* taking a shower.

The description should explain how you measured the volume of water used each time for your chosen activity and must include the calculations and assumptions you made in the course of your measurements. For example, for hand washing you should describe how you estimated the volume used on each occasion, including the calculation of the flow rate from the tap. You can refer to the methods described in the activity, but do not simply copy them into your report.

It is important to include any events or circumstances that may have affected the results. This section should be a description of what you actually did – including any difficulties or mishaps.

Calculations in this section do not need to be presented in sentences, but, as usual, you should show your working. Remember to include the appropriate units.

**Results**

Your results should be presented in a summary table that includes all the activities measured, not just the one that you described under ‘Methods’. Your table can be based on ‘Table 1 – template table for recording your water use’ given in the activity. Or you can prepare your own table with the water-using activities (rows) and number of days (columns) that are relevant to your own investigation.

**Discussion**

There are two aspects to this section. First, you need to comment on your results and outline any limitations that they may have. Second, you need to develop a discussion of relevant wider implications. You need to include both aspects, although they do not have to be equally weighted. You can use other information from the module materials if you wish.

**The process word used here is discuss**. In essay-type questions, this would mean to present the various sides of an issue (using supporting evidence). In a scientific report like this, the discussion needs to refer to the results and their implications, but it can sometimes also take a broader view – in this case, a wider discussion of water use.

You have quite a lot of freedom to choose what you write about in the ‘discussion’ section. It is up to you to decide which points of interest you want to include. There are a few suggestions listed below, but please note that these are just prompts for your thinking and not required parts of the answer. Do not attempt to answer each of them in turn. The choice of what to include is yours as long as it is relevant and of interest.

Possible points to consider from your results:

* What is your overall assessment of the validity of your results?
* What assumptions did you make that may have influenced your results, if any?
* If you have doubts about the accuracy of one or more of your measurements, can you identify any possible reasons for this?

Possible points to consider about water use more generally:

* How does your water use compare with average UK?
* Can you think of any possible reasons why your water use may, or may not, differ from the average data?
* Do you think any water is wasted in your home?
* Could you reduce the volume of water you use?

**Conclusion**

Taking into account your results and the points you have made in your discussion, summarise your conclusions about this investigation and your water use. You need to refer back to the original aim of the report, as stated in the introduction.