

Scots CPD induction activities
Activity 9 Writing critically

Table 1 Differences between descriptive writing and critical/analytical writing

Descriptive writing	Critical/analytical writing
States what happened	Identifies the significance
States what something is like	Evaluates (judges the value of) strengths and weaknesses
Gives the story so far	Weights one piece of information against another
States the order in which things happened	Makes reasoned judgements
Says how to do something	Argues a case according to evidence
Explains what a theory says	Shows why something is relevant or suitable
Explains how something works	Indicates why something will work (best)
Notes the method used	Indicates whether something is appropriate or suitable
Says when something occurred	Identifies why the timing is important
States the different components	Weights up the importance of component parts
States options	Gives reason for the selection of each option
Lists details	Evaluates the relative significance of details
Lists in any order	Structures information in order (e.g. of importance)
States links between items	Shows the relevance of links between pieces of information
Gives information	Draws conclusions

(OpenLearn (n.d.), adapted from Cottrell, 1999)