

# Short answer assignments

Short answer assignments require you to write brief response to questions in your own words. The questions may be about a topic or they may be about a case study. You may refer to your learning materials or other sources if necessary, but you must not copy from them. Each question needs to be answered briefly but fully, and you may use bullet points or lists in place of full sentences where appropriate.

## How do you write short answer assignments?

**Content:** Good short answer responses are relevant to the question. Read each question carefully and pay attention to the instruction words like *identify*, *explain*, *compare*, *discuss*, *analyse* and so on. To determine exactly what the question is asking of you, it is a good idea to underline key words and phrases.

Once you've analysed the question, brainstorm ideas for your response and look for information in your course materials to help support your ideas.

**Structure:** It is a good idea to include the numbered questions in your assignment so it is clear exactly which question you are responding to (however, check this with your educator). The box on the right shows a good example of a question that has a clear structure and answers each part of the question in turn.

**Style:** Even though your answers to each question are relatively short, it is important that they are written in full sentences using formal language. You may also use bullet points where appropriate. The next page shows an example of a short answer response using full sentences, and the same response using bullet points.



## Sample short answer response

### 1. Why is it important to build rapport with a client? Provide examples of how rapport can be developed.

There two main reasons why it is important for a case manager to develop rapport with a client. First, it can encourage the client to engage in the case management process. If the client and case manager have good rapport and the client feels they are being heard and understood, they may be more willing to participate in the case management process (ACAP, 2015). Second, good rapport can help a case manager gather vital information. Morrison (2014) states that if the client feels comfortable and safe, they may talk more openly and share important personal information that is useful for the case manager to know.

Some ways that rapport can be developed include:

- having receptive body language
- maintaining eye contact
- listening actively and paraphrasing
- acknowledging contributions
- expressing interest in the client

The box below shows an example of a short answer response using complete sentences. Notice that the paragraph flows well because the student has used linking words 'also' and 'additionally'.

### Sample short answer response using complete sentences

#### 1. Describe what is meant by being 'client-centred' as a counsellor.

Being client-centred means focusing on the needs of the client and helping the client to clarify and understand how he or she feels. It also means matching the counselling approach with the client's needs. Additionally, the client rather than the counsellor is seen as the expert in the counselling process.

You may also choose to use bullet points to answer some questions. Here is an example of a short answer response using bullet points. Notice that there is a small lead in phrase, and each point starts with the same type of word (in this case, an "-ing word")

### Sample short answer response using bullet points

#### 1. Describe what is meant by being 'client-centred' as a counsellor.

Being client-centred means:

- helping the client to clarify and understand how he or she feels
- matching the counselling approach with the client's needs
- ensuring the client rather than the counsellor is seen as the expert

### Checklist for completing short answer assignments

- Have you analysed the assignment questions carefully?
- Have you addressed all parts of each question?
- Have you incorporated information from your learning materials or other sources where appropriate?
- Have you checked your work against the marking criteria?
- Have you included the question numbers? (and the questions if requested by your educator)
- Have you written a 'lead in' to your bullet point lists?
- Have you run a spelling and grammar check on your paper?
- Have you formatted your paper clearly and professionally?
- Have you included an assignment coversheet?

