

Preface

Following a BTEC programme is an exciting way to study. It gives you the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that you will need in the world of work.

BTECs are very different from GCSEs; a BTEC puts *you* in charge of your own learning. This guide has been written specially for you, to help you get started and succeed on your BTEC First course.

The **introduction**, Your BTEC First, tells you about your new course. This will be your companion through the BTEC First, as it:

- tells you how your BTEC will differ from GCSE;
- suggests how you can plan your time;
- explains ways to make the most of visits, guest speakers and work experience;
- advises you about resources and how to find information;
- gives you advice on making presentations and doing assignments.

The **activities** give you tasks to do on your own, in small groups or as a class. You will have the opportunity to put into practice the theory you learn. The activities will help you prepare for assessment by practising your skills and showing you how much you know. These activities are *not* intended for assessment.

The sample **marked assignments** (also sometimes called marked assessments) show you what other students have done to gain a Pass, Merit or Distinction. By seeing what past students have done, you should be able to improve your own grade.

Your BTEC First will cover either three or six units, depending on whether you are doing a Certificate or a Diploma. In this guide the activities cover sections from Unit 1 'Understanding Children's Development'. This unit underpins your study of children's care, learning and development.

Because the guide covers only three units, it is important that you do all the other work your tutor sets you. Your tutor will ask you to research information in textbooks, in the library and on the internet. You may also have your own textbook for the course: use it! You should have the chance to visit local organisations or welcome guest speakers to your institution. This is a great way to find out more about your chosen vocational area – the type of jobs that are available and what the work is really like.

This guide is a taster, an introduction to your BTEC First. Use it as such, and make the most of the rich learning environment that your tutors will provide for you. Your BTEC First will give you an excellent base for further study, a broad understanding of public services and the knowledge you need to succeed in the world of work.

Your BTEC First

Starting a new course is often both exciting and scary. It's normally exciting to do something new, and this includes learning different subjects that appeal to you. BTEC First courses are work-related, so you will be focusing on the work area that interests you. It can be nerve-racking, though, if you are worried that there may be some topics that you will not understand, if you are unsure how you will be assessed, or if the prospect of some aspects of the course – such as finding out information on your own, or giving a presentation – makes your blood run cold!

It may help to know that these are worries common to many new BTEC First students. Yet every year thousands of them thoroughly enjoy their courses and successfully achieve the award.

Some do this the easy way, while others find it harder.

The easy way involves two things:

- knowing about the course and what you have to do
- positive thinking

Knowledge of the course means that you focus your time and energy on the things that matter. Positive thinking means that you aren't defeated before you start. Your ability to do well is affected by what goes on in your mind. A positive attitude helps you to meet new challenges more easily.

This guide has been written to give you all the information you need to get the most out of your course, to help you to develop positive thinking skills, and, of course, to help you successfully achieve your award. Keep it nearby throughout your course and re-read the relevant parts whenever you need to.

DO THINK

I'm quite capable of doing well on this course. First I need to check what I know about it and what I don't – and to fill in the gaps.

DON'T THINK

If I struggle a bit or don't like something then so what? I can always drop out if I can't cope.

Knowing about your course

If a friend or relative asked about your course, what would you say? Would you just shrug or give a vague comment? Or could you give a short, accurate description? If you can do this it usually means that you have a better understanding of what your course is all about – which means you are likely to be better prepared and better organised. You are also more likely to make links between your course and the world around you. This means you can be alert to information that relates to the subject you are studying.

- Your family, friends, or other people you know may talk about topics that you are covering in class.
- There may be programmes on television which relate to your studies.
- Items in the news may be relevant.
- You may work in a part-time job. Even if your part-time work is in a different area, there will still be useful links. For example, for most BTEC First courses you need to know how to relate to other people at work, how to assist your customers or clients and how to communicate properly. These are skills you need in most part-time jobs.

If you have only a hazy idea about your course then it is sensible to re-read any information you have been given by your school or college and to check further details on the Edexcel website at www.edexcel.org.uk. At the very least, you should know:

- the type of BTEC award you are aiming for and how many units you will be taking:
 - ◇ BTEC First Diploma – normally taken as a full-time course, with six units
 - ◇ BTEC First Certificate – may be taken as a full-time or part-time course, with three units
- the titles of your core units and what they cover
- the number of specialist units you must take and the options available to you

Core units are compulsory for all students at all centres, and you can find details of them on the Edexcel website. The range of specialist units you can choose will depend upon which award you are taking and where you are studying. Many centres design their courses to meet the needs of the students in their area, in which case you won't have complete freedom to choose your own options. If you do have a choice, find out the content of each of the specialist units available, then think carefully about the ones you would most like to study. Then talk through your ideas with your tutor before you make a final decision.

DO THINK

The more I know about my course, the more I can link the different parts together and see how they relate to other areas of my life. This will give me a better understanding of the subjects I am studying.

DON'T THINK

It's unlikely that any course will have much relevance to my life or my interests, no matter what anyone says.

Knowing the difference: BTEC First versus GCSE

BTEC First awards are different from GCSEs in several ways. In addition to the differences in content, the way the topics are taught and the tutors' expectations of their students are also often different. Knowing about these gives you a better idea of what to expect – and how you should respond.

- BTEC First awards are work-related. All the topics you learn relate to the skills and knowledge you will need in the workplace.
- They are practical. You will learn how to apply your knowledge, both on your own and as a member of a team, to develop your skills and abilities.
- Most full-time BTEC First Diploma courses in colleges are completed in one year. If you are taking a BTEC First Certificate course alongside your GCSEs, then you will probably be doing this over two years.
- There are no exams. So you won't be expected to revise and learn lots of facts, or to write answers to questions in a hot exam room next June. Instead, you will complete assignments set by your tutors, based on learning outcomes set by Edexcel. You can read more about assignments on page 19, but for now you can think of them as being similar to coursework. They will be given to you through the year, and each will have a deadline. See page 19 for advice on coping with assignments, and page 9 for advice on managing your time effectively.
- On a BTEC First course you will achieve Pass, Merit and Distinctions in your assignments. You will then be awarded an overall Pass, Merit or Distinction for the whole course.

- BTEC First students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Your tutors won't expect to have to stand over you all the time to check what you are doing. This helps you to develop the skills to be mature and independent at work. You will be expected to be keen and interested enough to work hard without being continually monitored. You will also be expected to become more self-reliant and better organised as the course progresses. Some students thrive in this situation. They love having more freedom, and are keen to show that they can handle it, especially when they know that they can still ask for help or support when they need it. Other students – thankfully, a minority – aren't mature enough to cope in this situation, so it goes to their head and they run wild.
- If you've just left school and are going to study for your BTEC First in a college, then you will find many other differences. No bells or uniforms! Maybe fewer timetabled hours; probably longer lesson periods. You will mix with a wider range of people, of different ages and nationalities. You are starting a whole new phase of your life, when you will meet new people and have new experiences. However strange it may seem at the beginning, new students normally settle down quickly. Even if they have been disappointed with some of their grades at GCSE, they are relieved that they can put this disappointment behind them and have a fresh start. If this applies to you, then it's up to you to make the most of it.

DO THINK

On my BTEC First course I can find out more about the area of work that interests me. I will enjoy proving that I can work just as well with less direct supervision, and know I can get help and support when I need it.

DON'T THINK

Doing a BTEC First will be great because the tutors won't be breathing down my neck all the time and won't care if I mess around on the course.

Knowing how to use your time

How well organised are you? Do you always plan in advance, find what you've put away, and remember what you've promised to do without being reminded? Or do you live for the moment – and never know what you will be doing more than six hours in advance? Would you forget who you were, some days, unless someone reminded you?

School teachers cope with young students like this by giving homework on set nights, setting close deadlines, and regularly reminding everyone when work is due. They don't (or daren't!) ask students to do something over the next couple of months and then just leave them to it.

Although your BTEC First tutor will give you reminders, he or she will also be preparing you for higher-level courses and for having a responsible job – when you will be expected to cope with a range of tasks and deadlines with few, if any, reminders. On your BTEC First course some work will need to be completed quickly and done for the next session. But other tasks may take some time to do – such as finding out information on a topic, or preparing a presentation. You may be set tasks like this several weeks in advance of the deadline, and it can be easy to put them off, or to forget them altogether – with the result that you may not do the task at all, or end up doing a sloppy job at the last minute because you haven't had time to do it properly.

This problem gets worse over time. At the start of a new course there always seems to be a lot of time and not much pressure: the major deadlines may seem far in the future, and you may find it easy to cope day by day.

This situation is unlikely to last. Some tasks may take you longer than you had thought. Several tutors may want work completed at the same time. And deadlines have a nasty habit of speeding up as they approach. If you have lots of personal commitments too, then you may struggle to cope, and get very stressed or be tempted to give up.

The best way to cope is to learn to manage your own time, rather than letting it manage you. The following tips may help.

- Expect to have work to do at home, both during the week and at weekends, and plan time for this around your other commitments. It's unrealistic to think that you can complete the course without doing much at home.
- Schedule fixed working times into your week, taking your other commitments into account. For example, if you always play five-a-side football on Monday evening, keep Tuesday evening free for catching up with work. Similarly, if you work every Saturday, keep some time free on Sunday for work you have to complete over the weekend.
- Get into the habit of working at certain times, and tell other people in your life what you are doing. If you've no work to do

on one of these days, then that's a bonus. It's always easier to find something to do when you unexpectedly have free time than to find time for a task you didn't expect.

- Write down exactly what you have to do in a diary or notebook the moment you are told about it, so that you don't waste time doing the wrong thing – or ringing lots of people to find out if they know what it is you're supposed to be doing.
- Normally you should do tasks in order of urgency – even if this means you can't start with the one you like the best. But if, for example, you need to send off for information and wait for it to arrive, you can use the time to work on less urgent tasks.
- Don't forget to include in your schedule tasks that have to be done over a period of time. It's easy to forget these if you have lots of shorter deadlines to meet. Decide how long the whole task is likely to take you, break the total time up into manageable chunks, and allocate enough time to complete it by the deadline date.
- Always allow more time than you think you will need, never less.
- Be disciplined! Anyone who wants to get on in life has to learn that there are times when you have to work, even if you don't want to. Try rewarding yourself with a treat afterwards.
- If you are struggling to motivate yourself, set yourself a shorter time limit and really focus on what you are doing to get the most out of the session. You may be so engrossed when the time is up that you want to carry on.
- Speak to your tutor promptly if you have a clash of commitments or a personal problem that is causing you serious difficulties – or if you have truly forgotten an important deadline (then vow not to do so again)!
- If few of these comments apply to you because you are well organised, hard-working and regularly burn the midnight oil trying to get everything right, then don't forget to build leisure time and relaxation into your schedule. And talk to your tutor if you find that you are getting stressed out because you are trying too hard to be perfect.

DO THINK

I am quite capable of planning and scheduling the work I have to do, and being self-disciplined about doing it. I don't need a tutor to do this for me.

DON'T THINK

I can only work when I'm in the mood and it's up to my tutors to remind me what to do and when.

Knowing about resources

Resources for your course include the handouts you are given by your tutor, the equipment and facilities at your school or college (such as the library and resource centre), and information you can obtain on the internet from websites that relate to your studies. Resources that are essential for your course – such as a computer and access to the internet – will always be provided. The same applies to specialist resources required for a particular subject. Other resources – such as paper, file folders and a pen – you will be expected to provide yourself.

- Some popular (or expensive) resources may be shared, and may need to be reserved in advance. These may include popular textbooks in the library, and laptop computers for home use. If it's important to reserve this resource for a certain time, don't leave it till the last minute.
- You can only benefit from a resource if you know how to use it properly. This applies, for example, to finding information in the library, or using PowerPoint to prepare a presentation. Always ask for help if you need it.
- You cannot expect to work well if you are forever borrowing what you need. Check out the stationery and equipment you need to buy yourself, and do so before the course starts. Many stationers have discounts on stationery near the start of term.
- Look after your resources, to avoid last-minute panics or crises. For example, file handouts promptly and in the right place, follow the guidelines for using your IT system, and replace items that are lost or have ceased to work.

DO THINK

I have all the resources I need for my course, and I know how to use them or how to find out.

DON'T THINK

I can find out what's available if and when I need it, and I can always cadge stuff from someone else.

Knowing how to get the most from work experience

On some BTEC First courses – such as Children's Care, Learning and Development – all students must undertake a related work placement. On others, work placements are recommended but not essential, or may be required only for some specialist units. So whether or not you spend time on work experience will depend upon several factors, including the course you are taking, the units you are studying, and the opportunities in your own area. You will need to check with your tutor to find out whether you will be going on a work placement as part of your course.

If you need evidence from a work placement for a particular unit, then your tutor will give you a log book or work diary, and will help you to prepare for the experience. You should also do your best to help yourself.

Your placement

- Check you have all the information about the placement you need, such as the address, start time, and name of your placement supervisor.
- Know the route from home and how long it will take you to get there.
- Know what is suitable to wear, and what is not – and make sure all aspects of your appearance are appropriate to your job role.
- Know any rules, regulations or guidelines that you must follow.
- Check you know what to do if you have a problem during the placement, such as being too ill to go to work.
- Talk to your tutor if you have any special personal worries or concerns.

- Understand why you are going on the placement and how it relates to your course.
- Know the units to which your evidence will apply.
- Check the assessment criteria for the units and list the information and evidence you will need to obtain.

DO THINK

Work experience gives me the opportunity to find out more about possible future workplaces, and link my course to reality.

DON'T THINK

Work experience just means I'll be given all the boring jobs to do.

Knowing how to get the most from special events

BTEC First courses usually include several practical activities and special events. These make the work more interesting and varied, and give you the opportunity to find out information and develop your skills and knowledge in new situations. They may include visits to external venues, visits from specialist speakers, and team events.

Some students enjoy the chance to do something different, while others can't see the point. It will depend on whether or not you are prepared to take an active involvement in what is happening. You will normally obtain the most benefit if you make a few preparations beforehand.

- Listen carefully when any visit outside school or college, or any arrangement for someone to visit you, is being described. Check you understand exactly why this has been organised and how it relates to your course.
- Find out what you are expected to do, and any rules or guidelines you must follow, including any specific requirements related to your clothes or appearance.
- Write down all the key details, such as the date, time, location, and names of those involved. Always allow ample time so that you arrive five minutes early for any special event, and are never late.
- Your behaviour should be impeccable whenever you are on a visit or listening to a visiting speaker.

- Check the information you will be expected to prepare or obtain. Often this will relate to a particular assignment, or help you understand a particular topic in more detail.
- For an external visit, you may be expected to write an account of what you see or do, or to use what you learn to answer questions in an assignment. Remember to take a notebook and pen with you, so that you can make notes easily.
- For an external speaker, you may be expected to prepare a list of questions as well as to make notes during the talk. Someone will also need to say 'thank you' afterwards on behalf of the group. If your class wants to tape the talk, it's polite to ask the speaker for permission first.
- For a team event, you may be involved in planning and helping to allocate different team roles. You will be expected to participate positively in any discussions, to talk for some (but not all) of the time, and perhaps to volunteer for some jobs yourself.
- Write up any notes you make during the event neatly as soon as possible afterwards – while you can still understand what you wrote!

DO THINK

I will get more out of external visits, visiting speakers and team events if I prepare in advance, and this will also help me to get good grades.

DON'T THINK

Trips out and other events are just a good excuse to have a break and take it easy for bit.

Knowing how to find out information

Many students who are asked to find out information find it difficult to do so effectively. If they are online, they often print out too much, or can't find what they want. Similarly, too many students drift aimlessly around a library rather than purposefully search for what they need.

Finding out information is a skill that you need to learn. You need to know where to look, how to recognise appropriate information, and when to stop looking in order to meet your deadline, as well as what to do with the information when you've found it.

The first thing to realise is that you will never be asked to find out information for no reason. Before you start, you need to know what you are looking for, why it is needed, where you can find it, and the deadline.

This means you target your search properly and start looking in the right place.

Researching in the library

- Find out the order in which books are stored. This is normally explained to all students during their induction.
- Know the other resources and facilities that are available in your library besides books – for example, CD-ROMs and journals.
- Take enough change with you so that you can photocopy articles that you can't remove. Remember to write down the source of any article you photocopy.
- If you need specific books or articles, and aren't sure where they will be, try to visit during a quiet time, when the librarian can give you help if you need it.
- If you find two or three books which include the information you need, that's normally enough. Too many can be confusing.
- Check quickly if a book contains the information you need by looking in the index for the key words and then checking you can understand the text. If you can't, then forget it and choose another. A book is only helpful to you if you can follow it.

Researching online

- Use a good search engine to find relevant websites. Scroll down the first few pages of the search results and read the descriptions to see which sites seem to be the best.
- Remember to read all parts of the screen to check what's available on a website, as menus may be at the foot of the page as well as at the top or on either side. Many large sites have a search facility or a site map which you can access if you are stuck.
- Don't get distracted by irrelevant information. If your searches regularly lead nowhere, ask your IT resource staff for help.
- Don't print out everything you read. Even if printouts are free, too much information is just confusing.
- Bookmark sites you use regularly and find helpful.

Researching by asking other people

This doesn't mean asking someone else to do the work for you! It means finding out about a topic by asking an expert.

- Think about the people you know who might be able to help you because they have knowledge or experience that would be useful.
- Prepare in advance by thinking about the best questions to ask.
- Then contact the person and (unless you know the person well) introduce yourself.
- Explain politely and clearly why you need the information.
- Ask your questions, but don't gabble or ask them too quickly.
- Write notes, so that you don't forget what you are told. Put the name and title of the person, and the date, at the top of the first page.
- Ask if you can contact the person again, in case there is anything you need to check. Write down their phone number or email address.
- Remember to say 'thank you'.

Using your information

- Keep all your information on a topic neatly in a labelled folder or file. If you think you might want to reuse the folder later, put the title on in pencil rather than ink.
- Refresh your memory of the task by re-reading it before you start to sift the information. Then only select pages that are relevant to the question you have been asked. Put all the other paper away.
- Remember that you will rarely just be asked to reproduce the information that you have obtained. You will need to make decisions about which parts are the most relevant and how you should use these. For example, if you have visited a sports facility to find out what is available, then you may have to explain which activities are targeted at certain groups of people. You would be expected to disregard information that didn't relate to that task. Or you may be asked to evaluate the facilities, in which case you would have to consider how well the centre met the needs of its users and how it could do better.
- Never rewrite copied information and pretend they are your own words! This is plagiarism, which is a serious offence with severe penalties. You need to state the source of your material by including the name of the author or the web address – either in the text, or as part of a list at the end. Your tutor will show you how to do this if you are not sure.
- Write a draft and then ask your tutor to confirm that you are on the right track. You can also check with your tutor if you are unsure whether or not to include certain types of information.

DO THINK

Researching can be fun, and practice makes perfect. If I'm struggling to find something or to know what to include, I'll ask for help. Then it will be easier next time.

DON'T THINK

The more I find the better, because collecting or writing a lot always impresses people.

Knowing how to make a presentation

Presentations are a common feature of many BTEC courses. Usually you will be asked to do a presentation as a member of a team. If the team works together and its members support each other then this is far less of an ordeal than it may first seem. The benefits are that you learn many skills, including how to be a team member, how to speak in public, and how to prepare visual aids (often using PowerPoint) – all of which are invaluable for your future career.

Many students get worried about the idea of standing up to speak in front of an audience. This is quite normal, and can even improve your performance if you know how to focus your anxieties productively!

Presentation tasks can be divided into three stages: the initial preparations, the organisation, and the delivery.

Preparation

- Divide up the work of researching fairly among the team.
- Bear in mind people's individual strengths and weaknesses and allow for these, so that you all gain from working as a team.
- Work out how long each person must speak so that you don't exceed your time limit (either individually or as a team).
- Agree on the type of visual aids that would be best, given your topic. Keeping things simple is often more effective than producing something elaborate that doesn't work properly.
- Decide on any handouts that are required, prepare these and check them carefully.
- Check you know when and where the presentation will be held and what you should wear.

- Think in advance about any questions you may be asked, both individually and as a team.

Organisation

- Decide who will start and how each person will be introduced. Sometimes the lead person introduces everyone; on other occasions people introduce themselves.
- Decide the most logical order in which to speak, bearing in mind everyone's contribution and how it fits into the overall presentation.
- Prepare prompt cards. It's easy to forget some of the things you want to say, so put your main points down in the right order on a prompt card. Never read from this! Instead, write clearly and neatly so that you can just glance down to check on your next point.
- Check you have sufficient copies of any handouts, and that these are clear and easy to read.
- Rehearse several times and check your timings.
- Get your clothes ready the night before.
- Arrive at the event in plenty of time so that you're not in a rush.

Delivery

- Take a few deep breaths before you start, to calm your nerves.
- Make eye contact with your audience, and smile.
- Keep your head up.
- Speak a little more slowly than usual.
- Speak a little more loudly than usual – without shouting.
- Answer any questions you are asked. If you don't know the answer, be honest – don't guess or waffle.
- Offer to help a team member who is struggling to answer a question, if you know the answer.

DO THINK

If I am well prepared and organised then my presentation will be OK, even if I'm really scared. The audience will always make allowances for some nerves.

DON'T THINK

I'm confident about speaking in public so I don't have to bother preparing in advance.

Knowing the importance of assignments

All BTEC First students are assessed by means of assignments. Each assignment is designed to link to specific learning outcomes. Assignments let you demonstrate that you have the skills and knowledge to get a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade. At the end of your course, your assignment grades together determine the overall grade for your BTEC First Certificate or Diploma.

Each assignment you are given will comprise specific tasks. Many will involve you in obtaining information (see page 14) and then applying your new-found knowledge to produce a written piece of work. Alternatively, you may demonstrate your knowledge by giving a presentation or taking part in an activity.

To get a good grade, you must be able to produce a good response to assignments. To do so, you need to know the golden rules that apply to all assignments, then how to interpret your instructions to get the best grade you can.

The golden rules for assignments

- Read your instructions carefully. Check that you understand everything, and ask your tutor for help if there is anything that puzzles or worries you.
- Check that you know whether you have to do all the work on your own, or if you will have to do some as a member of a group. If you work as a team, you will always have to identify which parts are your own contribution.
- Write down any verbal instructions you are given, including when your tutor is available to discuss your research or any drafts you have prepared.

- Check you know the date of the final deadline and any penalties for not meeting this.
- Make sure you know what to do if you have a serious personal problem and need an official extension. An example would be if you were ill and expected to be absent for some time.
- Remember that copying someone else's work (plagiarism) is always a serious offence – and is easy for experienced tutors to spot. Your school or college will have strict rules which state the consequences of doing this. It is never worth the risk.
- Schedule enough time for finding out the information and making your initial preparations – from planning a presentation to writing your first draft or preparing an activity.
- Allow plenty of time between talking to your tutor about your plans, preparations and drafts and the final deadline.

Interpreting your instructions to get the best grade you can

- Most assignments start with a command word – for example, 'describe', 'explain' or 'evaluate'. These words relate to the level of answer required. A higher level of response is required for a Merit grade than for a Pass, and a higher level still for a Distinction.
- Students often fall short in an assignment because they do not realise the differences between these words and what they have to do in each case. The tables below show you what is usually required for each grade when you see a particular command word.
- As you can see from the tables, to obtain a higher grade with a given command word (such as 'describe'), you usually need to give a more complex description or use your information in a different way. You can refer to the example answers to real assignments, and tutor comments, from page 57 onwards.
- You can check the command words you are likely to see for each unit in the grading grid. It is sensible to read this carefully in advance, so that you know the evidence that you will have to present to obtain a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade.
- Be prepared to amend, redraft or rethink your work following feedback from your tutor, so that you always produce work that you know is your best effort.
- Learn how to record your achievement so that you can see your predicted overall grade. Your tutor will show you how to do this, using the Edexcel *Recording your Achievement* form for your subject.

The following tables show what is required to obtain a Pass, Merit and Distinction, for a range of different 'command words'. Generally speaking:

- To obtain a Pass grade, you must be able to show that you understand the key facts relating to a topic.
- To obtain a Merit grade, you must be able to show that, in addition to fulfilling the requirements for a Pass grade, you can also use your knowledge in a certain way.
- To obtain a Distinction grade, you must be able to show that, in addition to fulfilling the requirements for a Pass and a Merit grade, you can also apply your knowledge to a situation and give a reasoned opinion.

Obtaining a Pass

Complete...	Complete a form, diagram or drawing.
Demonstrate...	Show that you can do a particular activity.
Describe...	Give a clear, straightforward description which includes all the main points.
Identify...	Give all the basic facts which relate to a certain topic.
List...	Write a list of the main items (not sentences).
Name...	State the proper terms related to a drawing or diagram.
Outline...	Give all the main points, but without going into too much detail.
State...	Point out or list the main features.

Examples:

- *List the main features on your mobile phone.*
- *Describe the best way to greet a customer.*
- *Outline the procedures you follow to keep your computer system secure.*

Obtaining a Merit

Analyse...	Identify the factors that apply, and state how these are linked and how each of them relates to the topic.
Comment on...	Give your own opinions or views.
Compare... Contrast...	Identify the main factors relating to two or more items and point out the similarities and differences.
Competently use...	Take full account of information and feedback you have obtained to review or improve an activity.
Demonstrate...	Prove you can carry out a more complex activity.
Describe...	Give a full description including details of all the relevant features.
Explain...	Give logical reasons to support your views.
Justify...	Give reasons for the points you are making so that the reader knows what you are thinking.
Suggest...	Give your own ideas or thoughts.

Examples:

- *Explain why mobile phones are so popular.*
- *Describe the needs of four different types of customers.*
- *Suggest the type of procedures a business would need to introduce to keep its IT system secure.*

Obtaining a Distinction

Analyse...	Identify several relevant factors, show how they are linked, and explain the importance of each.
Compare... Contrast...	Identify the main factors in two or more situations, then explain the similarities and differences, and in some cases say which is best and why.
Demonstrate...	Prove that you can carry out a complex activity taking into account information you have obtained or received to adapt your original ideas.

Describe...	Give a comprehensive description which tells a story to the reader and shows that you can apply your knowledge and information correctly.
Evaluate...	Bring together all your information and make a judgement on the importance or success of something.
Explain...	Provide full details and reasons to support the arguments you are making.
Justify...	Give full reasons or evidence to support your opinion.
Recommend...	Weigh up all the evidence to come to a conclusion, with reasons, about what would be best.

Examples:

- *Evaluate the features and performance of your mobile phone.*
- *Analyse the role of customer service in contributing to an organisation's success.*
- *Justify the main features on the website of a large, successful organisation of your choice.*

DO THINK

Assignments give me the opportunity to demonstrate what I've learned. If I work steadily, take note of the feedback I get and ask for advice when I need it, there is no reason why I can't get a good grade.

DON'T THINK

If I mess up a few assignments it isn't the end of the world. All teachers like to criticise stuff, and I only wanted a Pass anyway.

Knowing what to do if you have a problem

If you are lucky, you will sail through your BTEC First with no major problems. Unfortunately, not every student is so lucky. Some may encounter personal difficulties or other issues that can seriously disrupt their work. If this happens to you, it's vitally important that you know what to do.

- Check that you know who to talk to if you have a problem. Then check who you should see if that person happens to be away at the time.
- Don't sit on a problem and worry about it. Talk to someone, in confidence, promptly.
- Most schools and colleges have professional counselling staff you can see if you have a concern that you don't want to tell your tutor. They will never repeat anything you say to them without your permission.
- If you have a serious complaint, it's a good idea to talk it over with one of your tutors before you do anything else. Schools and colleges have official procedures to cover important issues such as appeals about assignments and formal complaints, but it's usually sensible to try to resolve a problem informally first.
- If your school or college has a serious complaint about you, it is likely to invoke its formal disciplinary procedures, and you should know what these are. If you have done something wrong or silly, remember that most people will have more respect for you if you are honest about it, admit where you went wrong and apologise promptly. Lying only makes matters worse.
- Most students underestimate the ability of their tutors to help them in a crisis – and it's always easier to cope with a worry if you've shared it with someone.

DO THINK

My tutors are just as keen for me to do well as I am, and will do everything they can to help me if I have a problem.

DON'T THINK

No one will believe I have a problem. Tutors just think it's an excuse to get out of working.

Finally...

This introduction wasn't written just to give you another task to do! It was written to help you to do your best and get the most out of your course.

So don't just put it on one side and forget about it. Go back to it from time to time to remind yourself about how to approach your course. You may also find it helpful to show it to other people at home, so that they will understand more about your course and what you have to do.

Activities

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1 The growth and development of children

In this section we will focus on grading criteria P6, M4 and D2 from Unit 1 'Understanding Children's Development'. Activities 3 to 5 link to grading criteria P1, P2, M1, M2, M4 and D1 from Unit 2 'Keeping Children Safe'. Activity 8 links to grading criteria P3 and M3 from Unit 7 'The Development and Care of Babies and Children Under Three Years'.

Learning outcome

Understand the importance of planning in supporting children's needs and development

Content

Planning: use of observation as the basis for planning; use of assessment, e.g. schedules and checklists

Participation: how to contribute ideas and suggestions to support planning, e.g. informal discussion with colleagues, team meetings

Children's needs and development: e.g. materials for play, equipment for activities, toileting, feeding, weaning

Grading criteria

P6: describe the process of planning to support children's development

This means you must be able to outline how you would take part in planning any care or activities to help to maintain a child's development. You should show that you understand the role of observation and assessments in this process.

M4: suggest a plan to support the development of a child you have observed

You have to carry out an assessment, show how you would consider the child's needs and discuss ideas and suggestions with others while preparing a plan.

D2: describe the strengths and possible weaknesses of the plan to support the development of the observed child

Finally you need to evaluate your plan. This means judging it and deciding where it is good and where it is weak, and then suggesting improvements.

Activity 1

The processes of growing and developing are complex and not always uniform. Some areas are faster or slower depending on the individual.

Look at the maze below. Your task is to get from 'Birth' to 'Sixteen'. Your tutor will monitor your progress and check who finishes first and how long it takes them.

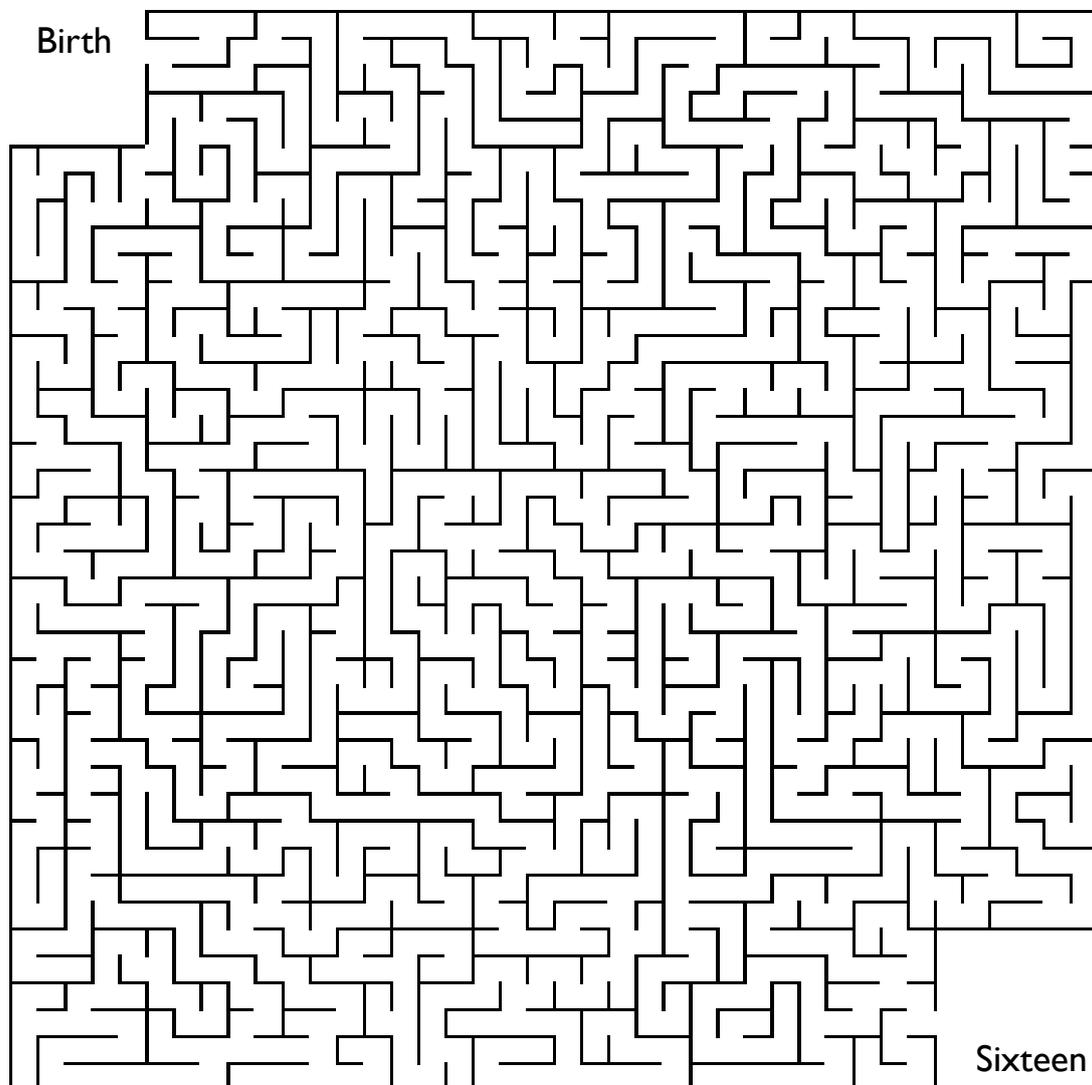
What made the maze difficult?

What skills are you using?

At what age do you think these skills develop?

How long did it take you to complete?

Try timing yourself with others. Why do you think some people are faster than others?



Activity 2

A glossary is a list of words and their meanings, like a little dictionary.

You will make a glossary containing all the new words and terms you come across as you study children's care, learning and development. Many specialist terms are used to describe the growth and development of children. You may never have heard of many of them before you started your course, but you need to be able to use them properly in your assessments.

Creating the glossary and adding new words to it will help you to remember their meanings. Having a glossary also means you can quickly check on meanings.

You may prefer to word-process your glossary. This enables you to keep the list in alphabetical order, making the words easier to find.

Below is an example to help you to get started.

Task 1

Work in pairs. Decide on a sentence that shows the word 'diversity' used properly. Then decide on a definition and an example for the term 'equal opportunities'.

Task 2

Compare your ideas as a class, and decide which ones are the best. Enter these into your new glossary.

Word or phrase	Definition	Example
discriminate	There can be two meanings: (1) to tell apart (2) to treat unfairly because of prejudice	(1) <i>How do I discriminate between the identical twins?</i> (2) <i>She claims she is discriminated against because her male colleague earns more than she does.</i>
diversity	accepting that people are not the same and celebrating their differences	
equal opportunities		

Activity 3

During your course, you will learn about and observe five main areas of growth and development:

- physical
- intellectual
- emotional
- social
- speech

(Speech is often included with intellectual development.)

Can you remember what they involve?

Task 1

In pairs, take five sheets of paper, and on the top of each, write one of the five headings above and prepare a table. If you have access to a computer you may find this easier to do as a table or spreadsheet. Your table should look like this example:

Physical development

Definition: the process that enables children to use and control their muscles and develop movement.

0-3 years	4-7 years	8-12 years	13-16 years

With your partner, discuss each area in turn, decide on a definition and record what is involved – finding examples for the different age ranges.

Task 2

As a class, make a display of the tables. Discuss and compare your answers.

Task 3

Decide upon one definition that you all agree on for each area, and pick several suitable examples (at least four different ones for each age range) that demonstrate your understanding.

Write this final definition and the examples on a separate sheet of paper and display this on the wall. Make sure that you all have a copy of the final version.

Task 4

Now test yourself!

Individually, read the following descriptions of developmental stages and put each number against the correct definition and age range on your final list of examples.

1. can walk easily up and down stairs with alternating feet
2. highly developed gross and fine motor skills
3. speech fully understood – asks 'why' frequently
4. shows attachment to main carer
5. co-operative with companions and fully understands the rules of fair play
6. prefers to spend time in the bedroom
7. throws a tantrum when thwarted
8. becoming less dependent on parents, can control behaviour
9. can ride a tricycle
10. can put two or more words together to form a simple sentence

Task 5

As a class, compare and discuss your answers.

Activity 4

The children in the picture below are 10 years old, 7 years old, 5 years old and 4 months old.

Assuming normal development, for each child identify one activity that he or she can do easily, and one that is too advanced.

Compare your ideas as a class.



Activity 5

Look at the picture at the bottom of the page.

Jamie Oliver has campaigned to stop schools serving processed junk food, like Turkey Twizzlers, for dinner. He wants them to provide nutritious food, freshly prepared, every day. You will need to do some research, either on the internet or in your textbook, to answer the following questions.

Task 1

List four foods Jamie Oliver would ban from a school dinner menu and four he would include. Give at least one reason for banning each food item you have mentioned.

Task 2

Why does Jamie Oliver think nutritious food for schoolchildren is so important? Give your reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with him.

Task 3

Children going to nurseries and before-school clubs early in the morning tend to have only a snack or to miss breakfast completely. What do you think the effect may be on the rest of their day? What do you think could be done to ensure children have a good breakfast to start the day?

Task 4

Some families may not be able to afford a healthy balanced diet. What do you think could be done to ensure children have access to healthy meals every day?



Activity 6

Work in groups of two or three.

Your tutor will assign you one of the following age ranges:

- birth to 3 months
- 3 months to 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 year to 2 years
- 2 years to 3 years
- 3 years to 5 years
- 5 years to 7 years
- 7 years to 12 years

Do not tell anyone from another group which age range you have been allocated.

Task 1

As a group, decide on the developmental 'norms' for children of your assigned age bracket, and prepare a poster to illustrate your findings.

Task 2

Present and describe the poster to the rest of the class, who should be able to state the age range you were given.

If they are struggling, help them by giving them further clues. Be prepared to answer any other questions they might have.

Activity 7

In this activity you will be thinking about factors that affect growth and development. These can be positive (if they help growth and development) or negative (if they prevent or slow down growth and development).

In a group of four or five, take two flipchart sheets. On one, draw a large gingerbread man or teddy with space to write inside, and head the sheet 'Internal Factors'. On the second, draw a smaller gingerbread man or teddy and head the sheet 'External Factors'.

Task 1

In your group, identify as many internal factors as you can. Write them down inside your gingerbread man or teddy. When you can think of no more, start to identify external factors and write down as many as you can outside your gingerbread man or teddy on the second sheet of paper.

Task 2

Decide which factors are negative and which are positive. Underline the negative ones in red and the positive ones in blue.

Task 3

Compare your ideas with other groups. Add to your charts any factors that other groups suggested but you missed.

Task 4

Choose two factors. As a group, prepare a presentation for the rest of the class that will illustrate and clearly explain the effect these factors will have on the future development of a child. You can decide on the age of the child.

Activity 8

Young children aren't the only ones who skip breakfast. Many 12–16 year olds also miss it, for various reasons. In fact, teenagers can be their own worst enemies when it comes to ensuring their own healthy growth and development.

Test out your own group with the following activity!

Task 1

In small groups, list the unhealthy habits or behaviours often associated with teenagers – from smoking to eating fast food or playing computer games for hours on end.

Task 2

Combine your lists to see how many items the class has identified.

Task 3

Suggest the possible effects on a young person's growth and development of each item on the combined list.

Task 4

As a class, discuss the different factors that can affect the behaviour of teenagers.

Task 5

On your own, choose one behaviour or habit on the list, and design a leaflet to illustrate the risks involved.

Task 6

Research described in *New Scientist* recently claimed that at puberty there is an alteration in the body clock of teenagers that makes them evening-type people. In other words, teenagers' clocks run a few hours behind those of other people, making it easier for them to stay up late but harder for them to get up in a morning. Scientists are actually recommending that schools and colleges should therefore not start before 11am. As a class, discuss this issue and vote on whether you think it would improve your life or not!

