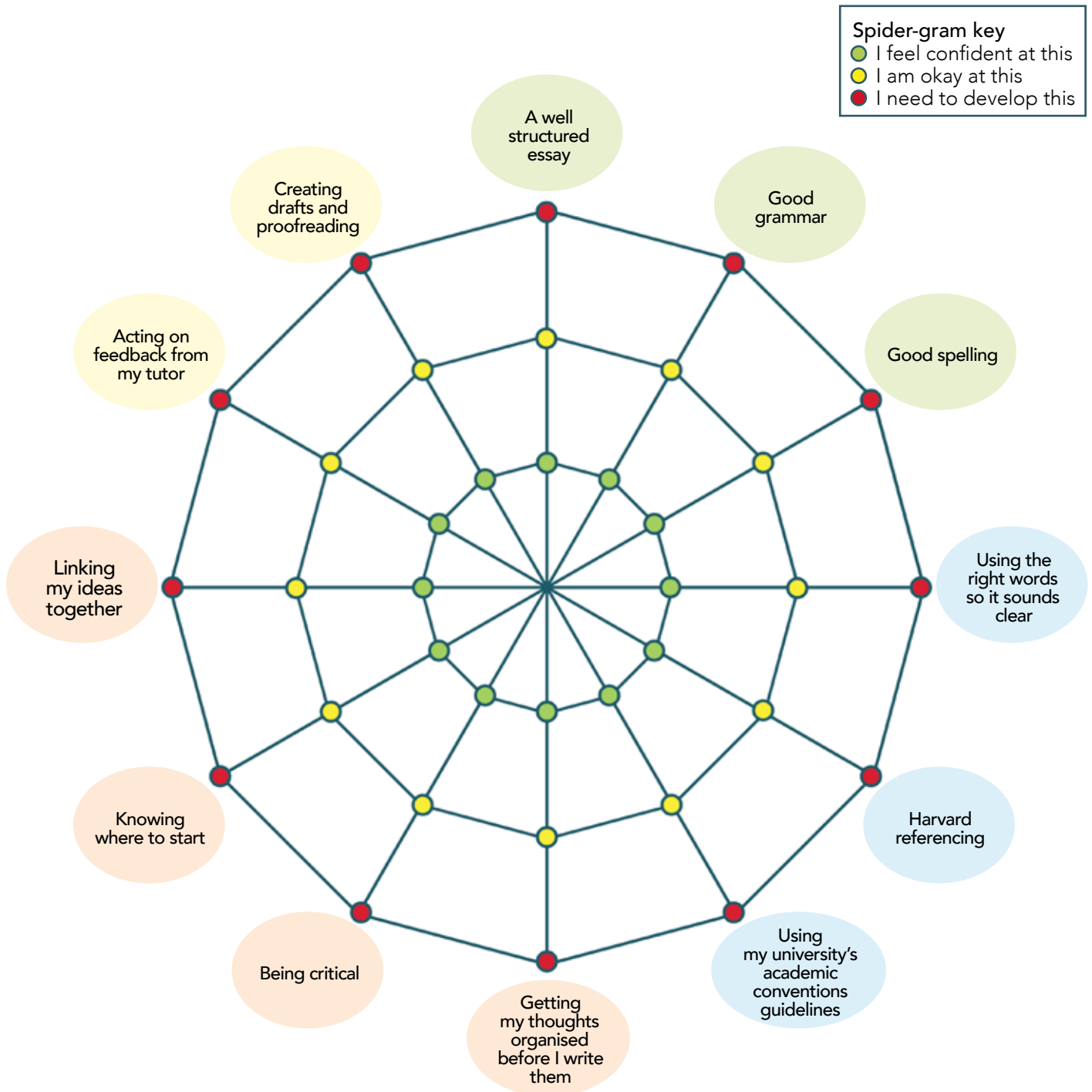




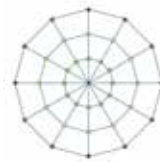
# WRITING ASSESSMENT



This spider-gram will help you to assess your academic writing skills and consider the areas which require development. It is a simple exercise which will give you a visual image highlighting the areas for development. For each of the skill bubbles, consider whether you feel confident at it (●), you are okay at it (●) or you need to develop this skill (●).

Join the dots together to create a random star shape. The edges sticking out into the red are the areas for development. Next, read through the next page to help you consider the actions you may wish to take next.

Academic writing isn't just important to help you write essays. Being able to write well is a key employability skill that will help you throughout your life. The ability to express your thoughts clearly is an important communication skill. You need it for writing important emails, job applications and many other official communications. Mastering the writing conventions expected at this level will help you understand how to write well in future jobs you may have. There are many aspects to good writing. Working out where your strengths and weaknesses lie will help you to understand what to work on. Take the test on the previous page first so you can see where you are.



There are four parts to academic writing, which the spider-gram activity explored; they are thinking and planning, academic conventions, starting to write and time management. It is important to consider all four of these stages when you are preparing to write.

### 1. Thinking and Planning

**Thinking and planning is the crucial first stage in academic writing. If we haven't read, used critical thinking to analyse what we have written and link ideas together and found our argument as a starting place then we can't and planned we have nothing to write about.**

Being critical; Getting my thoughts organised before I write them down; Knowing where to start; Linking my ideas together

To write an essay effectively you need to first have thought about your topic - taking notes in lectures, reading and researching things for you to consider. Then you need a clear plan for how you will structure the essay.

Before you start to write, you need to think and read. Thinking is the start point for all studying-thinking about how you will approach the topic, what aspects are important to you and what resources and time you need to achieve your plan. You also need to research your subject - reading and discussing and thinking more about it. As your ideas come together then you start to write. See the Critical Thinking and Academic Reading sections on how to get your thoughts together before you start writing.

### 2. Academic Conventions

**Academic Conventions - Understanding your university's academic conventions, using Harvard referencing and finding the right words so that your writing sounds clear.**

Each university will have its own conventions on how to write and how to set out your written assessment. These are based on making work legible and having the same format for each student. Good, general academic conventions for setting up your essay are to have margins of 2cm; choose a sans serif font (xxx) such as Arial or Calibri in font size 11, and have a line spacing of 1.5 to 2. These create easy to read text with plenty of white space around them.

### 3. Starting to Write

**Starting to Write - A well-structured essay with good spelling and good grammar.**

Writing is about communication, a well-written essay communicates your ideas more easily to your reader. An assessor marking your work will have a much easier time identifying your thinking if you have set out your essay clearly and there is an easy to follow thread or story leading them through.

### 4. Time Management

**Time Management - Listening to feedback from my tutor, Creating drafts and proofreading**

Managing your time is an important aspect of studying. Success isn't just about the ideas and the writing, it is about managing the time you have to give yourself the space to write, edit, send a draft to your tutor, have time to respond to their feedback. Whenever a first draft is submitted it is clear to the assessor that this is just a draft. The ideas are not clearly thought out, the academic conventions may not have been followed and the structure, grammar and spelling create obstacles to easy reading.



**Top Tip:** If you can, try to find an aspect of the subject you have to write about that is interesting to you. The more relevant and interesting it is, the more likely you are to be motivated to write it well.