



Understanding tutorials (tutes)

Tutorials, or tutes, are small classes where you discuss the unit topic for each week in depth.

In tutes, you will unpack the lecture and unit readings for the week's topic so be prepared – make sure to attend the lectures and do the unit readings for each week.

A tutor will facilitate the class discussion, but they will expect you to participate by asking questions, responding to other people's comments and sharing your own thoughts and observations.

Note: tutes are different from lectures, where you listen and make notes; in tutes you and the other students are the people doing the talking! Listen to what's being said but also add to the discussion.

Your unit outline sets out the topics, readings and tasks for each week, and the percentage of marks allocated for tute participation.

Keep yourself up to date by checking your unit LMS regularly.

Preparing for tutes

Before each tute

- Attend the lecture and take notes. Write down any questions or points to follow up on.
- Do the required reading set out in your unit outline (and check your unit LMS regularly as additional readings may be added each week). Make notes as you read, including any questions or observations you want to raise in the tute.
- Complete any tasks your tutor/Unit Coordinator has set for your tute.

- Review your notes and develop some questions as well as points you want to raise for discussion in the tute.

Speaking in tutes

If you are a new student, you may feel nervous or shy about speaking in tutes at first. If so, you won't be the only one – other people in your tute group will likely be feeling nervous or shy too!

Some suggestions to get you started

- Start by talking to people in your tute group in the first session – introduce yourself to the people sitting next to you and ask them about themselves. You will feel more confident if you already know some people.
- Plan what you want to say – ask a question or raise a point you've prepared in advance. If you do this in your first tute it will be easier next time.
- Plan to make at least one or two comments in each tute, to build your confidence.
- Ask for clarification if anything is unclear – other students might have the same question and the answer will help them too.
- Ask someone to repeat what they said or to speak more slowly if you don't catch it the first time.
- Find different ways of joining the discussion – if you're unsure, watch how others in the tute join the discussion.

To get a discussion started, you can try asking a question or offering a comment/opinion for others to respond to.

Remember your perspective is unique; adding your voice to the discussion creates diversity and helps others to think differently.

Responding to other people

Discussion in tutes requires you to listen carefully to what other people say and consider their ideas, before responding.

Some ways you can respond

- Ask them a follow-up question.
- Ask them for clarification/further information.
- Comment on their point and add your own thoughts or observations.
- Agree or disagree with their point and explain why you agree/disagree (see the next slide for more on this).

If you find the discussion moves too quickly for you to add your ideas and comments, it's okay to bring the discussion back to the point you want to make.

Below are some phrases you could use to respond to other people's comments and to bring the discussion back to your point.

Responding to others' comments

- I'd like to refer to (name)'s comment ...
- I'd like to ask (name) what she/he/they meant...
- I'm not sure I understood the argument made by...
- I'd like to ask (name) how they came to this conclusion...

Bringing the discussion back to an earlier point

- Coming back to what (name) raised earlier...
- I'd like to add to the point made earlier about...
- Earlier we discussed...
- I'd like to respond to what (name) raised before...

Taking a position

Tutes help you develop your critical thinking. Take a position on what you read/see/hear, and argue your position. This will involve agreeing and disagreeing with others, so make sure to express your views respectfully. It's okay to criticise ideas, but don't criticise the people you disagree with!

Provide reasons, evidence and/or examples to support your position. Try out your ideas and remember that your opinions are as valid as anyone else's.

Below are some phrases you could use to agree or disagree.

To agree

- I agree with this idea / proposal *because*...
- This is a good argument / theory *because*...
- I support this idea *because*...
- In my opinion this is a good approach to take *because*...
- This is a strong argument for/against...

To disagree

- The weakness in this argument is that...
- While this opinion/theory may be valid, we should also consider...
- In my opinion this does not really address the issue...
- The problem with this approach is that...
- This is a strong argument; however...
- I disagree with this idea *because*...

Getting the most from your tutes

Tutes are a great opportunity to learn through listening to other students and contributing your own ideas.

Use your tutes to:

- ask questions and get answers
- develop your communication skills
- hear a range of opinions, ideas and perspectives
- 'unpack' the material covered in the lectures and readings
- test your understanding of the unit content
- develop your critical thinking skills
- form your own views.

Remember that tute discussions will help inform your writing for assessments and exams, so actively contribute to discussions to get the most from your tutes!