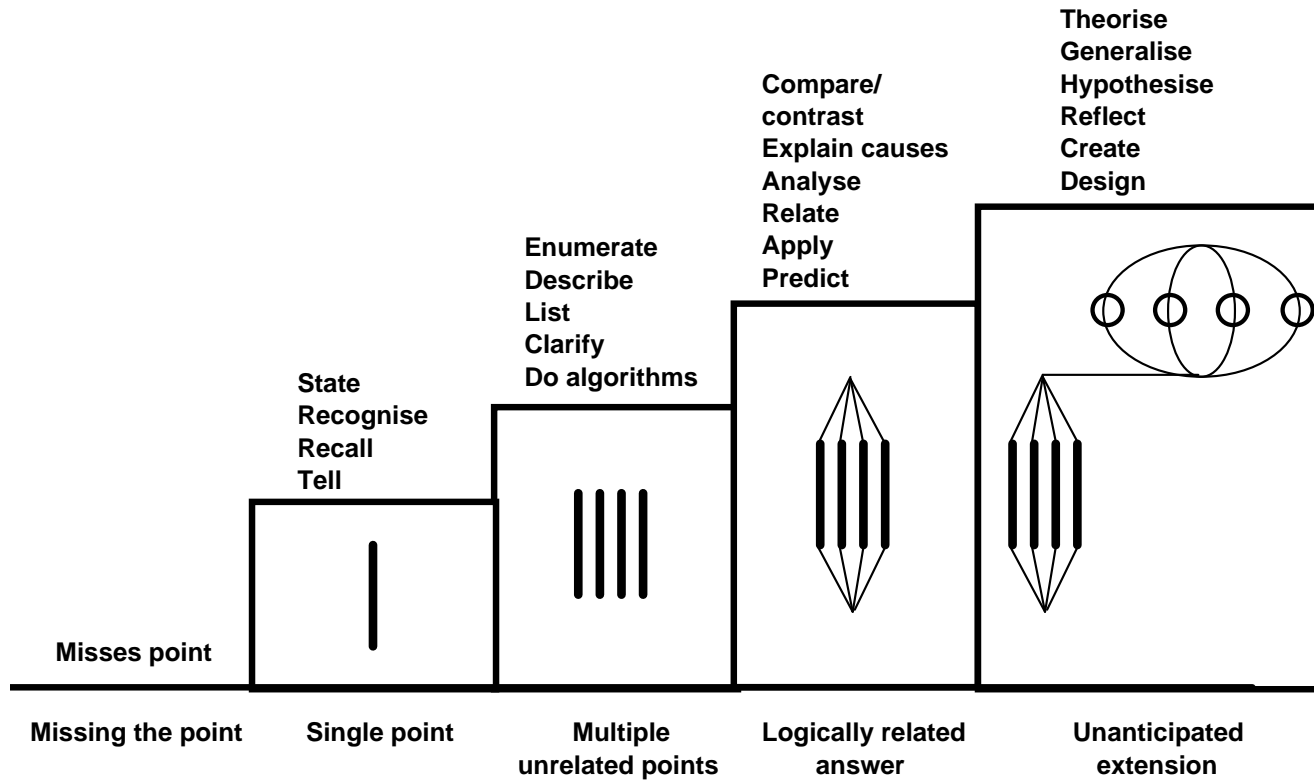
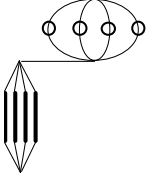



## Sample grade descriptors


The Structure of the Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO) taxonomy as a guide to setting and marking assessment



Biggs, J. (2003). *Teaching for quality learning at university* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press.

Indicative grades	SOLO category	Overall course	Particular assessment tasks			
			(i) Written essay	(ii) Project	(iii) Presentation	(iv) Quantitative problem
Excellent Grade A  Very Good Grade A-	E.g. Create Synthesise Hypothesise Validate Predict Debate Theorise  Unanticipated extension 	Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or subject matter learnt in the course, to novel situations and/or in novel ways, in a manner that would surpass the normal expectation at this level, and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study or research. Has the ability to express the synthesis of ideas or application in a clear and cogent manner.	Well-structured essay with clear introduction and conclusion. Issues clearly identified; clear framework for organizing discussion. Appropriate material selected. Evidence of wide reading from many sources. Clear evidence of sophisticated analysis or innovative thinking.	Project or practical report dealing with real-world ill-defined topic. Clear identification of the aim(s) of the project report, linked to explicit methodology that is more sophisticated than expected. Evidence of wide reading from many sources. Rigorous findings and insightful conclusions.	Well-structured and accurate exposition of material. Logical development with evident depth and complexity of argument. Evidence of creative thought and articulation of own ideas. General appearance of resources is professional (succinct, neat layout, consistent style and correct citations).	Solution to problem which goes beyond anticipated answer. Articulate and complete explanations or mathematical solution.
		A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes. A- Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.				

Indicative grades	SOLO category	Overall course	Particular assessment tasks			
			(i) Written essay	(ii) Project	(iii) Presentation	(iv) Quantitative problem
Good Grade B  B+ B B-	E.g. Apply Outline Distinguish Analyse Classify Contrast Summarise Categorise  Logically related answer 	Demonstrates the ability to state and apply the principles or subject matter learnt in the course to familiar and standard situations in a manner that is logical and comprehensive. Has the ability to express the knowledge or application with clarity.  Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.	Well-structured essay with a clear introduction and conclusion. Framework exists which is well-developed. Appropriate material. Content has logical flow, with ideas clearly expressed. Clearly identifiable structure to the argument with discussion of differing views.	Well-structured project or practical report on an open task where decisions need to be made about a preferred solution. Clear methodology for the design of the project. Good rationale for decision making.	Well-structured and accurate exposition of material, Logical development with some complexity of argument. Evidence of creative thought and some use of own ideas. General appearance of resources is professional (succinct, neat in layout, consistent style and correct citations).	Elegant solution to a complex problem showing clear identification of the strategies used.

Indicative grades	SOLO category	Overall course	Particular assessment tasks			
			(i) Written essay	(ii) Project	(iii) Presentation	(iv) Quantitative problem
Satisfactory Grade C  C+	Intermediate 	Demonstrates the ability to state and partially apply the principles or subject matter learnt in the course to most (but not all) familiar and standard situations in a manner that is usually logically persuasive. Has the ability to express the knowledge or application in a satisfactory and unambiguous way.  Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes.	Essay fairly well-structured. Some issues identified. Attempt at a limited framework. Most of the material selected is appropriate. Introduction and conclusion exists. Logical presentation attempted and successful in a limited way. Satisfactory structure to the argument but only limited number of differing views and no new ideas.	Reasonably well-structured project or practical report on open task where decisions need to be made about a preferred solution. However, the rationale for decision-making may be limited.	Satisfactory structure and accurate exposition of material. Logical development of argument. Some evidence of creative thought and some use of own ideas. General appearance of resources is professional (succinct, neat in layout, consistent style and correct citations).	Solution to a multiple part problem with most parts correctly solved but some errors.

Indicative grades	SOLO category	Overall course	Particular assessment tasks			
			(i) Written essay	(ii) Project	(iii) Presentation	(iv) Quantitative problem
C C-	E.g. Explain Define List Solve Describe Interpret  Multiple unrelated points  	Demonstrates the ability to state and apply the principles or subject matter learnt in the course to most (but not all) familiar and standard situations in a manner that is not incorrect but is somewhat fragmented. Has the ability to express the separate pieces of knowledge in an unambiguous way.  Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes with one or a few notable weaknesses or omissions.	Essay poorly structured. A range of material has been selected and most of the material selected is appropriate. Weak introduction and conclusion. Little attempt to provide a clear logical structure. Focus on a large number of facts with little attempt at conceptual explanations. Weak or inconsistent linking of material between sections in the essay or report.	Poorly structured project report or practical report on open task where decisions need to be made about a preferred solution. Weak rationale for decision-making.	Satisfactory structure and accurate exposition of material. Weak development of argument. Some use of own ideas. General appearance of resources is competent (neat in layout, consistent style and correct citations).	Correct solution to a multiple-part problem requiring substitution of data from one part to the next.

Indicative grades	SOLO category	Overall course	Particular assessment tasks			
			(i) Written essay	(ii) Project	(iii) Presentation	(iv) Quantitative problem
Supplementary Grade D D	E.g. State Recognise Recall Quote Note Name  Single point 	Demonstrates the ability to state and sometimes apply the principles or subject matter learnt in the course to some simple and familiar situations in a manner that is broadly correct in its essentials Has the ability to state the knowledge or application in simple terms.  Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.	Poor essay structure. One issue identified and this becomes the sole focus. No framework for organizing discussion. Dogmatic presentation of a single solution to the set task. This idea may be restated in different ways. Little support from the literature.	Poorly structured project report or practical report on open task. Many aspects of the context ignored or grossly simplified.	Unclear structure and inaccurate exposition of material. Weak development of argument. Some use of own ideas. General appearance of resources lacks clarity (in layout, consistency of style and use of correct citations).	Correct answer to simple algorithmic problem requiring substitution of data into formula.  Correct solution of one part of more complex problem.
Fail F	Misses the point	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.	Inappropriate or few issues identified. No framework for discussion and little relevant material selected. Poor structure to the essay. Irrelevant detail and some misinterpretation of the question. Little logical relationship to the topic and poor use of examples.	Failure to understand the scope or nature of the project. Poorly written account of work.	Illogical structure and inaccurate exposition of material. No development of argument. Absence in use of own ideas. General appearance of resources lacking care and clarity (in layout, consistency in style and use of correct citations).	Completely incorrect solution.