

English Writing Skills for Teaching

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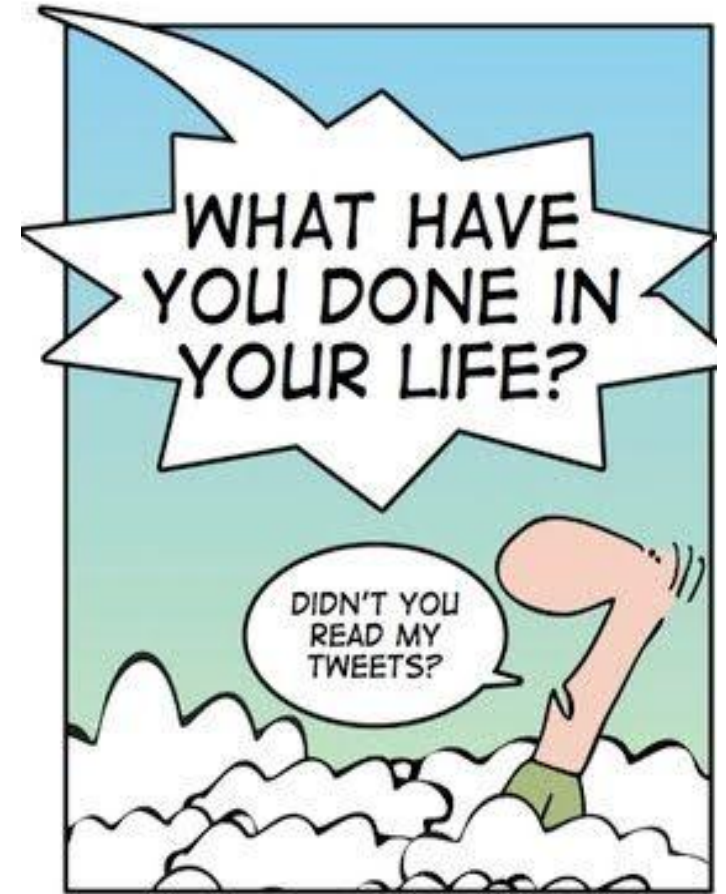
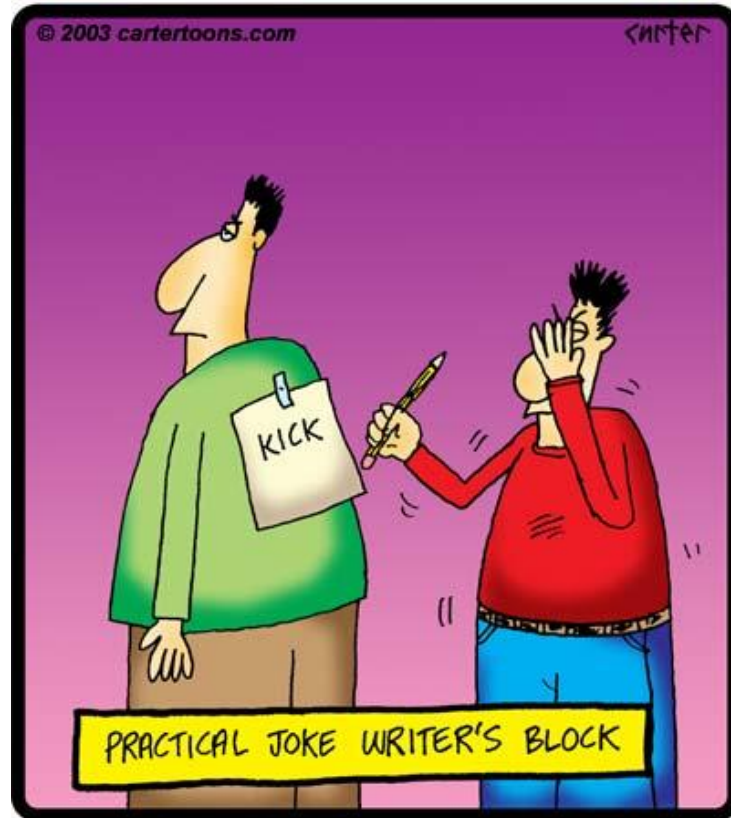


I HEARD THE DATE WITH YOUR WRITER FRIEND DIDN'T GO TOO WELL.

TOO MUCH BACKSTORY AND HIS PROLOGUE WAS WAY TOO LONG. I LEFT BEFORE THE MAIN COURSE.



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What we will discuss today.....Interactive

- Types of writing teachers use
- Preparing written learning material
- Writing styles
- English articles in writing – common mistakes
- Writing emails
- Practice exercises

What do teachers need to write?

Discuss all the types of writing you do as a teacher:

What do teachers need to write?

- Emails / responses to emails
- Lecture notes / seminar notes etc
- Assignments / projects / tests / exams
- Marking / comments / feedback
- Other?

Reflective Questions ???

Where do problems come up in these tasks?

What areas do you find challenging?

Which areas are you less confident expressing yourself in English?

What do you need to improve in your written English?

Written Material in English (lecture notes, seminars etc).

What should you consider?

Is it different preparing written material for students learning in a second language? Why?

How will you present your course information clearly, but completely in English?

Little Johnny Had a Confusion

A three-year-old walked up to a pregnant lady while waiting with his mother in the doctors office.

He inquisitively asked the lady, "Why is your stomach so big?"

She replied, "I'm having a baby.."

With big eyes, he asked, "Is the baby in your stomach?"

She answered, "He sure is."

Then the little boy, with a puzzled look, he asked, "Is it a good baby?"

She said, "Oh, yes. It's a real good baby."

With an even more surprised and shocked look, he asked,



"Then why did you eat him??"

Reference: www.funnythreat.com

Group task – 5 mins

Discuss with your group any ideas you may have in creating effective seminars or lectures for your students learning in English?

Structuring Lecture Material

Your lectures are likely to be more effective for international students (and all students) if you focus on:

- Transparent structure
- Essential content
- Improved understandability
- Effective note taking

Structuring Lecture Material

Transparent structure – how can we improve the structure of a seminar or lecture for our international students?

Structure

Try to be more explicit and transparent about how the lecture is organised:

- Use an **introduction and a summary** and **repeat key ideas** eg. ‘This is an introduction/summary....’
- **State links** to previous/future lectures and topics
- **Signal moves** between sections as in ‘Now I am going to talk about how you apply this idea with an example....’.
- State the importance of ideas: ‘**This is a key point....**’
- **Repeat.** ‘In the last section, I talked about (a) and now in (b), I will cover....’
- ‘This building up and rehearsal of the content of a lecture as it develops can help us to **link chains of ideas together**, and can work well when the lecture is structured as a story, investigation, or other logical sequence’
(www.heacademy.ac.uk).

Content of Lecture Material

What is important to consider when creating the content of a lecture / seminar?

Content

If you devote time to structure and making a lecture more understandable, you may cover less material. It has been reported that teachers may cover **10-15% less material** when the audience is **listening to English as a 2nd or 3rd language** (www.heacademy.ac.uk).

To address this you might:

- **Provide additional readings**, handouts or supplemental multimedia instruction
- **Explore and develop ideas** rather than only introduce new knowledge
- Use **video / audio recordings** for sessions that may contain a lot of content, so that **students can review the material**, more than once if necessary.

Understandability

How can we try and make sure our students understand as much as possible in a second language?

Understandability

International students may only **understand 50% or less** of lectures at the start of their studies (see <http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/archive/2513>). You can help them:

- Be aware of your own use of English - **slower pace, shorter and clearer** content.
- **Use plain English** and straightforward sentence structure. **Cut out wordy clauses** in spoken and written work ('So, whilst not wishing to underestimate the importance of....').
- Choose **vocabulary that is in common use** eg. 'living in' rather than 'domiciled at'.
- **Provide pre-reading.** Consider making a discipline-specific glossary, and offer lecture notes or Powerpoint slides in advance.
- Encourage students to **ask questions and clarify information.** Students appreciate being able to ask individually after the lecture, via email etc.
- Provide ways for students to **record and replay lectures.**

Effective Note Taking

Is note taking important for students?

What techniques or tools might we use to assist our students
with this process?

Effective Note Taking

To improve students' notes, you could:

- **Structure explicitly** (see above) so the students are more likely to add headings and sections in their notes. Relate your lecture clearly to the written lecture notes and refer to it.
- **Record the lecture** so that students can listen, translate and record at their own pace.
- **Provide handouts** with key information and any complex diagrams or data.
- Some lecturers provide **gapped handouts** where students can annotate or **add new information** as the lecture is delivered.
- **Provide pauses** so students can review and reconstruct their notes during the lecture itself.

Pausing

Why is it helpful to have mini-breaks or pauses during a lecture or seminar?



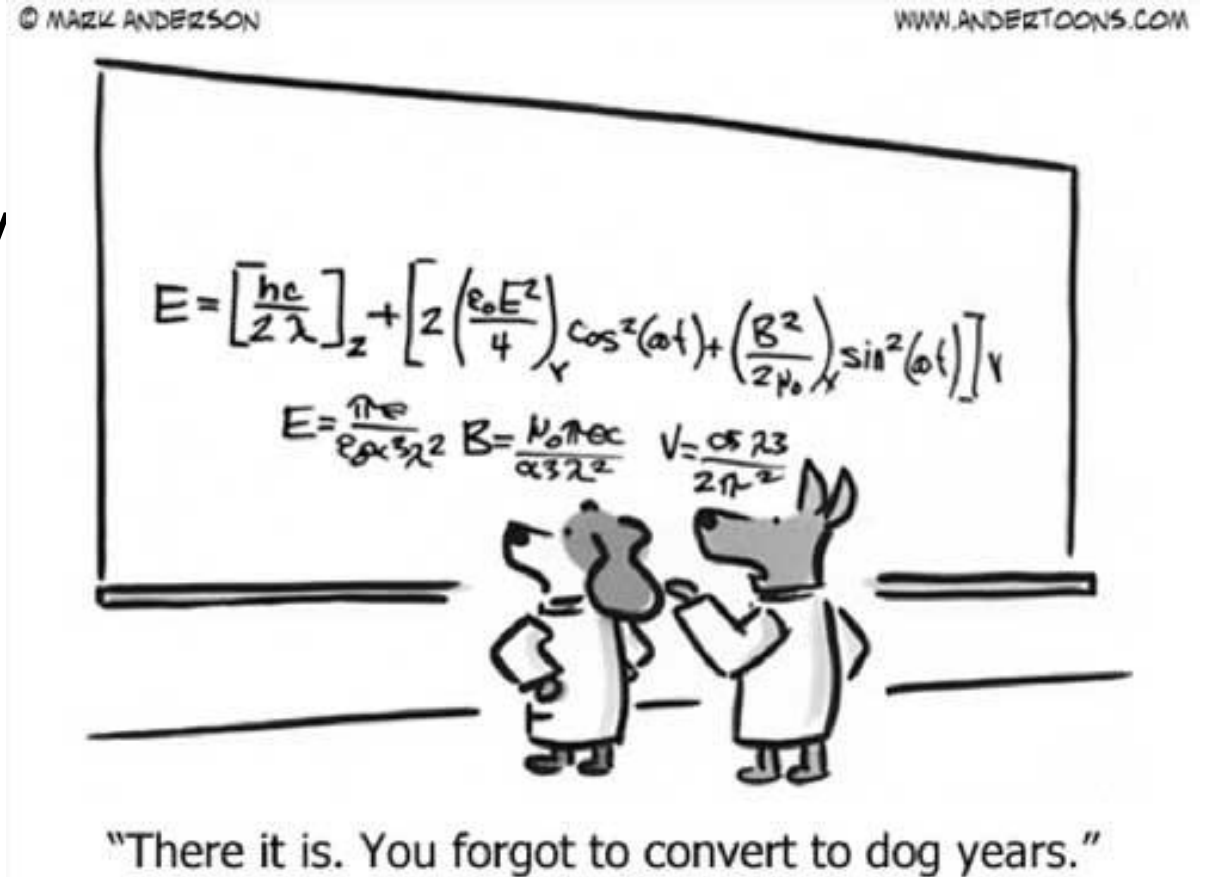
Top Tip – Pause for Effect:

‘The pause is one of the most critical tools of public speaking. It is an important device for gaining attention. Pauses can be used as punctuation - to mark a thought, sentence, or paragraph - and also for emphasis, before or after a key concept or idea. If you suddenly stop in midsentence, students will look up from their notes to see what happened. Planned pauses also give you and your audience a short rest. Some faculty take a sip of coffee or water after they say something they want students to stop and think about. Other faculty deliberately pause, announce, "This is the really important consideration," and pause again before proceeding.’

(Barbara Goss Davis, Tools for Teaching, University of Berkeley, <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/delivering.html>)

Writing Style

- Written style can differ greatly
- Different subject areas require different styles of writing
- Look at the following examples:



Look at these three different styles of writing. What do you notice about the statements? What is the academic style?

1. Beaut weather mate!

2. What a splendiferous day.

3. Evidence from the Bureau of Meteorology indicates that a temperature of approximately 25 degrees is expected.

(Adapted from Alison Brown, 2007)

*They are broadly saying the same thing...
using different language.*

1. Beaut weather mate! - ocker (Australian slang...)
2. What a splendiferous day. - posh (British upper class...)
3. Evidence from the Bureau of Meteorology indicates that a temperature of approximately 25 degrees is expected. - academic, scientific

(Adapted from Alison Brown, 2007)

In the following examples, the same message is expressed in 6 different styles, from an extremely formal written style, to a very informal spoken one.

- *Worksheet exercise in small groups: Match the sentences with the styles, then discuss with the group.*
- Jargon, very formal.
 - Written, formal, clear.
 - Written style for the general public (scripted radio or TV news style).
 - Formal spoken style (seminar, talk).
 - Informal spoken style (discussion).
 - Very informal spoken style (chat).

Answers:

a) Jargon, very formal. **3** Used in official reports, a style of written English, full of verbal nouns, technical words and passives.

b) Written, formal, clear. **6** This is clear, written English, as found in the press or in documents aimed at ordinary educated readers.

c) Written style for the general public (scripted radio or TV news style). **1**
Written style for the general public, scripted radio or TV news style.

d) Formal spoken style (seminar, talk). **5** Formal spoken style - radio, seminar, talk.

e) Informal spoken style (discussion). **4** Relaxed, informal spoken style: discussion

f) Very informal spoken style (chat). **2** Relaxed, simplified, chat, very informal spoken style

Note the addition of repetition and fillers.

1. As the value of Sterling increased compared to other currencies, the government was forced to take tax measures to head off a rapid increase in consumer spending spurred on by cheaper imports. C) Written style for general public

2. And you see, Sterling got more and more valuable, so as a result, the government had to go round putting up taxes, you see, to stop everyone going out and splashing out, spending all their money on cheap imports. F) Very informal spoken / chat

3. Consequent to the appreciation in the exchange value of Sterling against other currencies, necessary fiscal measures were introduced by the government in order to reduce the likelihood of an import-led consumer spending surge. A) jargon v formal

4. As Sterling went up in value, the government had to put up taxes to stop consumers splashing out on too many cheap imports. **E) Informal spoken style**

5. As Sterling's international value went up, the government had to take tax measures to head off a consumer spending boom spurred on by cheaper imports.

D) Formal spoken style

6. After the international value of Sterling rose, the government was obliged to take fiscal measures to reduce the likelihood of a surge in consumer spending led by cheaper imports. **B) Written formal clear**

Style

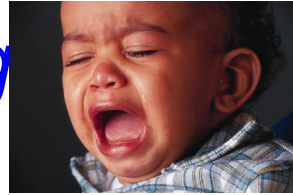
There are many different styles of writing...

Which style would be most appropriate for your subject area?

Which is most appropriate for tertiary level education in English?

Grade your language – keep it simple and straightforward

Grammar in the English Writing



What is aspect of English you find most challenging when you write?

Do you find using the English Grammar a difficult?



What would you like to improve in your writing?

Do you make the mistakes when youre writing email?

Do you get confused with the English articles?

Use of Articles in English – common mistakes

1. Use **a/an** with a singular, countable noun:

- There's been **an** accident...
- There is **a** young boy over there who...
- We want to do **an** experiment...

NOT – we want to do experiment, there's been accident.....

2. You **can't** usually use a/an with **uncountable** nouns:

- I'm sorry, I don't have time right now...
- Ok let's go, do you have any luggage?
- Oh, you have really nice furniture in here...

NOT – I don't have **a** time now, you have **a** really nice furniture!

Use of Articles in English – common mistakes

3. When a noun is first talked about, we often use **a/an**, when it's already been mentioned we use **the**:

- There's been **an** accident.....Oh really? What happened in **the** accident?
- There is **a** young boy over there....Is that **the** young boy you were talking about?
- We want to do **an** experiment....How did **the** experiment go yesterday?

4. We use **the** when referring to something specific (individual or group)

- I've sent him **the** letter that we discussed....
- Where is **the** money that I put on the table?

Use of Articles in English – common mistakes

5. We **don't use** 'the' when talking about a town, city, country, continent etc.

- I'm going to Prague on the weekend...
- Have you been to Italy? Not but I've been to Greece...
- Exceptions: The UK, the US, the Czech / Slovak / Dominican Republic etc.

6. Plural vs singular....we **use** 'the' with plurals eg. groups of islands, mountain ranges, families.

- The Alps, the Andes, the Bahamas, the Floyds, the Smiths

We **don't use** 'the' with singular items with a name, eg:

- Mount Everest, Mont Blanc, Cuba, Sicily, Crete, Mr Floyd, Ms Smith.

Practice: Complete with a/an/the or zero article

Data collection in Sports Science – articles practice
worksheet

Read and complete the worksheet with the appropriate
English article: a/an, the or zero article

Writing Emails

How often do you write emails as a teacher / lecturer?

What problems / difficulties have you experienced?



What do you think of the email below?

Dear Peter,

many greetings from the research centre here and I hope that everything is OK with you. I am contacting you to clarify the situation regarding experiments done by our student during her stay in your lab (April 2018). Unfortunately, communication with her was a little difficult since last year and her study at our university has been cancelled this month. However, it would be a pity to throw away all the results. Would it be possible for you to send me all the results obtained during her stay in your lab?

Thank you and wish you a nice day!

Jirka

How would you classify it?

Dear Peter,

many greetings from the research centre here and I hope that everything is OK with you. I am contacting you to clarify the situation regarding experiments done by our student during her stay in your lab (April 2018). Unfortunately, communication with her was a little difficult since last year and her study at our university has been cancelled this month. However, it would be a pity to throw away all the results. Would it be possible for you to send me all the results obtained during her stay in your lab?

Thank you and wish you a nice day!

Jirka

What do you think of the email below?

Dear Professor Smith,

I would like to request a vacation from Monday March 9th until Friday March 13th.

My current projects and tasks are all progressing well, and I don't anticipate any problems with my overall workload as a result of the vacation. I have also ensured that several of my colleagues will be available to cover any problems that could arise during my absence.

Thank you for considering my request,

Yours sincerely,

Jack Hammersley

How would you classify it?

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Thank you for considering my request,

Yours sincerely,

Jack Hammersley

*How could the email below be better worded?
How would you respond to it?*

Dear Alex,

I'm really sorry assignment hasn't been submitted yet, I know I'm very late with it. But my work and study schedule are both crazy recently and so I simply have forgotten about the date to supply the work.

I'm now sending you the assignment, please it is attached to this email. I know that it was meant to be in 3 weeks ago but at least it is here at last, I'm happy about that. Can you tell me please if that means I have finished everything now for the course?

BR,

Pavel

*How could the email below be better worded?
How would you respond to it?*

Dear Mr Floyd,

I would like to apologise for submitting my assignment late, I realise it is now some time past the due date. My work and study schedule have both been extremely busy recently and so I simply forgot to submit the work on time.

I'm now sending you the assignment, please find it attached to this email. I know that it was due in 3 weeks ago but I hope it is not too late for it to be finally accepted. Please let me know if there is anything else you require at this stage in order for me to successfully complete the course.

Yours sincerely,

Pavel

Email etiquette – discuss:

- What's important to remember when writing emails? What should you do? ★
- What should you try and avoid? X

Email etiquette

Do:

- Open with a polite address eg. Dear Dr Smith, Dear John....
- Pay attention to the recipient's name and title (including spelling). Check on the school /university website if need be.
- Sign off with an appropriate, polite address, eg yours sincerely, Kind regards etc.

Don't:

- Don't address someone by their first name unless you are on quite familiar terms with them. If someone uses both their names it's usually an indication of formality.
- Avoid opening emails with overly informal or unusual language..eg. Hiya John, Hello there....etc.
- Avoid unnecessary spelling errors, especially in a professional context.

(University of Bristol)

Email wording

	Formal	Informal
Name	Dear Mary, Dear Mrs Hat	Hi Mary, Hello Mrs Hat
Previous Contact	Apologies for my late reply, however..	Thanks for the email.....
Reason for email	I'm writing in connection with	Just a quick email about...
Giving Information	We regret to inform you that...	Just a note to say....
Attachments	Please find attached....	Here is theyou wanted..

Pairs task – compose two short emails:

- An email to a colleague who has complained to you about a misplaced item of value missing in the department. You need to address their concerns.
- An email to a university professor at an English university department, requesting that one of your students be allowed to visit for a 3 month research placement.

When I **set off** for work this morning, my car **broke down**, so I **ended up** taking the bus. As soon as I **got off**, I **bumped into** an old schoolmate, Mark. While we were talking, he **brought up** something I had already **found out** from some mutual friends—that he had **come into** some money and had **set up** his own business. He told me that there was a lot to **sort out**, and offered to **take me on**, but I **turned him down** straight away.

When I **clocked in**, my boss **had a go at** me, **telling me off** in front of everyone. When I **got over** the initial shock, I told her I'd **make up for** being late, but it **turned out** that she had **blown up** over a deal that had **fallen through**, after a client of mine had **pulled out of** a contract. She told me that I wouldn't **get away with** it, that I'd **let everybody down**, and just **went on and on....**

Eventually, I **ran out of** patience and **answered back**— I said I was not going to **put up with** it anymore, and if she wanted to **lay me off**, she should **go ahead**. Anyway, to cut a long story short, I **stormed out**, phoned Mark's secretary, who **put me through** to him. I told Mark I'd like to **take him up on**

A Valentine's Day Love Story (with lots of <3 idioms)



Even though Joe and Sue met on a **blind date**, it was **love at first sight**. The couple **hit it off** from the first day.

But after dating a year the relationship was **on the rocks** because Sue couldn't say those **three little words**.

Sue was scared. A few years before her fiancé had **left her at the altar**. But after a short time apart, Sue knew that Joe was **Mr. Right** and they **kissed and made up**.

Two months later, Joe **popped the question** and they **tied the knot** on Valentine's Day.

It's been 60 years since Joe and Sue **got hitched** and their marriage has been a **match made in heaven**.

OysterEnglish.com



Summary

- Teachers need to write.....think about what and how you write for your EMI class.
- Consider your audience...whether it's an email, group seminar or individual communication.
- Structure your lecture material clearly, don't cover too much, guide and repeat important points.
- Grade your language, make it understandable in both written and spoken form.
- Consider the most appropriate style of writing for your group.
- Keep working on your own English ability to teach more effectively!



Enjoy the rest of
the summer school!

