

IGA – Academic and Project Writing

Seminar 6

Homework Task from seminar 5:

- * Find an example of your own academic writing – eg. an abstract, a section of an introduction / methodology / conclusion / research proposal etc.*
- * Look at the language used in the writing and underline / highlight examples of the passive / active voice used in the writing. Also look at the language more generally in terms of use of formal / academic language, nominalisation, academic style, etc.*
- * Reflect on the writing, (make some notes if needed) on how you think it may be improved, what was good about it, etc.*
- * Upload your writing onto MS Teams prior to the next class - please name it again, eg. Floyd HW5 etc.*
- * Be prepared to share and peer review it with the group next week.*

Academic Writing – Titles and Structure

1. Title

- * Why is the title of your research paper important? What are the most important characteristics of titles from an academic perspective?*

** For more info: Watch the video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGJYYGIAZpU>).*

2. Which of the below are titles of high quality?

* *Decide which titles could be of high quality from an academic perspective and which could not. Explain your opinion.* * *Discuss in pairs / small groups, then with the class.*

1. Gender Issues in Reproductive Health and Promoting Male Responsibility
2. Early Prediction of Response to Chemotherapy and Survival in Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma
Using a Novel Semiautomated 3-Dimensional Volume-Based Analysis of Serial ¹⁸F-FDG PET Scans
3. Shells
4. Pretty Feet Hit the Street
5. The Impact of Herbivory on Plants in Different Resource Conditions: A Meta-Analysis
6. A Study of Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity
7. Diffusion on a curved surface coupled to diffusion in the volume: Application to cell biology
8. The Effect of Institutional Culture on Change Strategies in Higher Education: Universal Principles or Culturally Responsive Concepts?
9. This is a research on Female Tragic Hero in English Renaissance Drama.
10. Study on Parallel Translations of Passages from the Seventh Chapter of: *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite into Old Church Slavonic and Church Slavonic
11. Direct Discrimination, Indirect Discrimination and Autonomy
12. How Do We Introduce the Next Generation of Radiotracers into Clinical Practice?
13. Cold War to Cold Peace: Explaining U.S.-French Competition in Francophone Africa
14. Statistics for ESC in AO, PO and IO
15. Why The Axioms and Theorems of Arithmetic are not Legal Norms

3. Sentence

* *Discuss sentences as a group – how should a good sentence look?*

Sentence definitions and characteristics

- ▶ The classical definition: that a sentence expresses a complete thought.
- ▶ Every sentence in academic writing should be included for a specific reason and should connect with the sentences around it and the overall topic. Each sentence should make logical and grammatical sense and be expressed in an appropriate style.
- ▶ There is no right or wrong method for sentence combining as long as you punctuate correctly; create logical, understandable sentences; and do not write fragments. No one method of sentence combining is better than another, but do not use the same method for combining all your sentences. The objective is to achieve variety.

Consider the sentences below. Which ones could be appropriate for academic writing?

1. Although the study results were not conclusive.

2. Throughout the cold war, the Baltic States, recognising the futility of asserting their independence against the overwhelming strength of the Red Army, stoically remained parts of the Soviet Union, which needed to use their ports as naval and military bases to protect the littoral between Kaliningrad and Leningrad.

3. He loves to write research papers he would write at least one a week if he had the time and anyway it's not just his profession but also a study that is on one of his favourite common interests which is sport and in fact any type of sport as he loves sport in general.

(Adapted from: 3. Jim Gleeson (2007))

4. Paragraph

What is a paragraph? What is its function?

** Discuss with the group*

Paragraph Structure:

- 1) TOPIC SENTENCE - (the major premise) which introduces the topic of the paragraph, is the most general sentence in the paragraph and is the most important sentence in the paragraph. It also communicates the specific parts of the general subject that will be developed in the paragraph.
- 2) DEVELOPMENT - (supporting sentences) which support the topic sentence (proof, details, examples, explanations etc) three to eight sentences (minor premises connected to the major premise). Examples in the paragraph should be as specific as possible.
- 3) CLOSING SENTENCE - concluding/wrap-up sentence leading the reader towards the next paragraph. The final sentence of the paragraph summarizes the content. This sentence may either repeat the main ideas of the paragraph in a new way or give a conclusion based on the information in the paragraph.

Example of paragraph structure:

Topic sentence (expressing the "problem")	→	The emphasis of the criminal justice system has until recently been on the battle between the offender/defendant and the state/prosecutor and not the actual harm experienced by the victim. <i>In Fact</i> victims have had minimal participation in the criminal justice process; their role being primarily to provide information to the state prosecutor with no involvement in prosecution and sentencing. McShane and Williams (1992, p. 260) contend that "victim neglect is not simply a result of indifference, it is a logical extension of a legal system which defines crime as an offence against the state". <u>They argue that this neglect can be remedied by training of personnel within the criminal justice system and through victim support services.</u>
Expansion of point	→	
Evidence/ support	→	
<u>Closing sentence</u> (e.g. solution)	→	

(Adapted from Alison Brown, 2007)

A paragraph should:

- ▶ be supportive ▶ a supportive paragraph's main idea clearly develops the argument of the thesis.
- ▶ be strong ▶ a strong paragraph develops its main idea, using sufficient evidence; is neither too long because of irrelevant evidence or redundant sentences, nor too short lacking supporting argument.
- ▶ be considerate ▶ a considerate paragraph considers its relationship to other paragraphs; it is a coherent one that makes sense within the text as a whole.
- ▶ length: "As long as it takes." A good paragraph develops its idea fully, in a manner that a reader can follow with ease. It would certainly usually be less than a page and more than a sentence...

Two or more sentences ...not one sentence!!The average paragraph in English, according to research, is five to ten sentences, with 75 to 150 words.

4.1. Topic Sentence exercises:

** Choose the best among the four possible topic sentences for the paragraphs below which are missing the first sentence:*

A) _____ . Whatever you decide, make sure you adopt a systematic or logical approach that is transparent to your readers. Keep them informed about the steps in your exposition (the presentation of your viewpoint). You are not writing a mystery or thriller, so do not leave the reader in suspense until the end; make your argument explicit and make sure every paragraph in the main body of your essay links to the ones before and after it. If it helps – and if it is appropriate – you could divide your essay into sections and subsections, giving each section a subheading or summary in a few words; you can always remove subheadings afterwards.

- a. The main body is important and it takes a lot of time to write it.
- b. Readers are interested in your essay and you must write correctly and precisely.
- c. “To be or not to be” that is the question.
- d. It is up to you to decide on the best way to organise your essay.

B) _____ . Distilling complicated ideas into simple explanations is challenging, but you’ll need to acquire this valuable skill to be an effective communicator in the sciences. Complexities in language use and sentence structure are perhaps the most common issues specific to writing in the sciences.

- a. In science, we must simplify the language, otherwise the academic paper is not worth much.
- b. The professors at universities always repeat and emphasize the same point.
- c. Take an English communication and writing class first before continuing your research.
- d. When you’re writing about complex ideas and concepts, it’s important that you can communicate this information clearly and concisely to the reader.

C) _____ .The strictest military discipline imaginable is still looser than that prevailing in the average assembly-line. The soldier, at worst, is still able to exercise the highest conceivable functions of freedom -- that is, he or she is permitted to steal and to kill. No discipline prevailing in peace gives him or her anything remotely resembling this. The soldier is, in war, in the position of a free adult; in peace he or she is almost always in the position of a child. In war all things are excused by success, even violations of discipline. In peace, speaking generally, success is inconceivable except as a function of discipline.

- a. Soldiers need discipline.

- b. We commonly look on the discipline of war as vastly more rigid than any discipline necessary in time of peace, but this is an error.
- c. Although soldiers are not always disciplined, they serve an important social function in wartime.
- d. In times of peace, soldiers often convert easily from wartime pursuits to the discipline necessary successfully to complete in even the most competitive marketplace.

4.2. Closing sentence exercises

** Choose the best among the four possible closing sentences for each paragraph below:*

A) As it has already been mentioned, there is a certain format of writing university assignments. There are general recommendations on how to structure your paper, regardless of the type of writing you have. All types of academic papers should start with an introduction, followed by at least two to three paragraphs for the main body and finally should be completed with the conclusion. Try not to hurry while developing your paper and structure it according to the required format.

_____.

- a. To summarise, we need an introduction, a main body and a conclusion in academic writing.
- b. You should do a lot of work before you start writing.
- c. The format is often dictated by the professor, supervisor or the structure and curriculum of your particular course.
- d. This means that you should take enough time for your assignment / paper.

B) Nearly every form of scientific communication is space-limited. Grant proposals, journal articles, and abstracts all have word or page limits, so there's a premium on concise writing. Furthermore, adding unnecessary words or phrases distracts rather than engages the reader. Avoid generic phrases that contribute no novel information. Common phrases such as "the fact that," "it should be noted that," and "it is interesting that" are cumbersome and unnecessary. Your reader will decide whether or not your paper is interesting based on the content. _____.

- a. We also suggest that you use lots of bullet points, so that the text is more concise.
- b. And the most important thing is that your paper is interesting.
- c. In any case, if information is not interesting or noteworthy it should probably be excluded.
- d. Also your professor will give you feedback about your paper and its content.

C) The skill of being able to construct an effective argument in your university level, academic writing is essential. A good argument (a 'sound' argument) is a point of view that is presented in a clear and logical way, so that each stage of reasoning is transparent and convincing. It should include evidence and possible counterarguments. _____.

- a. Professors love a good argument but make sure that you have lot of references to support your argument.

- b. Counterarguments must be even more logical than arguments, but may help to support your overall perspective.
- c. It may even help to make the assumption that the reader is in disagreement with you.
- d. A bad argument can be mentioned but must be well explained.

Homework tasks:

a) Choose the best among the three possible closing sentences for the paragraph below which is missing the last sentence:

When it comes to the arts, there is a clear case for subsidy. The arts have nothing to do with making money. They exist in order to express certain essential truths about human beings by means of new kinds of poetry, music, painting, and so on. However, these new kinds of art may not be popular, and thus there may be little support by the general public for them, and so artists cannot rely on selling their work to provide them with an income. In fact, history shows that many artists have not been properly appreciated while they were alive. For example, Mozart, whose works are so popular nowadays, lived close to poverty for most of his life.

(Adapted from: Waters,M., Waters,A.: 1995, p.110.)

Possible closing sentences:

1. Thus, in order to ensure their survival, it is essential for the arts to be subsidised.
2. If he had been subsidised, Mozart would not have been so poor.
3. When the arts have to make money, they are no longer fulfilling their true purpose, but instead become a branch of commerce.

b) Write or create a title for your own research project:

- * Write down or create 1 or more titles for your own PhD work / academic article / research proposal.
- * Cut and paste it into the file on MS Teams that I will create (**Homework task – Titles**)
- * Be prepared to share and peer review your title with the group next week. You may have several titles you are trying to choose between, you can use this exercise for some feedback.