

English for Writing Research Papers

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The Objectives of this course

- How to use Proper English?
- How to read the English Text books or materials?
- How to understand Academic English properly?
- How to write research papers/ thesis in English?
- How to present your papers in English?
- How to publish your academic writing?

Structure of the Lectures

- **Planning and Preparation**
- **Word Order**
- **Breaking up Long Sentences**
- **Structure Paragraph and Sentences**
- **Being Concise and Removing Redundancy**
- **Avoiding Ambiguity and Vagueness**

Structure of the Lectures: Writing Skill

- Clarifying Who Did What
- Highlight Your Finding
- Hedging and Criticizing
- Paraphrasing and Plagiarism

Structure of the Lectures: Sections of Paper

- **Titles**
- **Abstracts**
- **Introduction**
- **Review of the Literature**
- **Methods**
- **Results**

Structure of the Lectures: Sections of Paper

- **Discussion**
- **Conclusion**
- **Useful Phrases**
- **The Final Check**

Part I: Writing Skill

Chapter 1: Planning and Preparation

- To write a well – structured paper in good clear English you need to have a method
- You must have the clear preliminary ideas regarding:
 - What sources of materials are you looking for
 - Standard phrases used in English in research

Chapter 1: Planning and Preparation

- How a typical paper is structured in your field
- What makes your research unique
- What referees' expectations may be

Planning and Preparation

- Think about why you want to write and publish your papers/thesis
- Give yourself enough time to plan and write your manuscript
- Choose an appropriate journal, preferably with a high impact factor
- Learn the instructions for author from your chosen sources and from a high impact source in the same field
- Read and Analyze papers for your literature review, and note how they are structured

Planning and Preparation

- Identify what the editor is looking for
- Choose one paper as a model and note down useful phrases
- Think about the order in which to write the various sections
- Create separate files for each section

Planning and Preparation

- Chat with non experts
- Give mini presentations to colleagues
- Decide what your key findings are and whether you really have a contribution to make
- For each section, think about how you can highlight your key finding
- Always have the referees in mind

Planning and Preparation

- Referees and English level
- How to keep the referees happy
- Write directly in English and find ways to improve your writing skills
- Consult resources
- Summary

Chapter 2: Word Order

Word Order

- We need to focus on putting words in a sentence in the correct order.
- Basic word order in English
- Compare word order in your language with word order in English
- Choose the most relevant subject and put it at the beginning of the sentence
- Choose the subject that leads to the most concise sentence
- Don't make the impersonal it the subject of the sentence

Word Order

- Don't use a pronoun (it, they) before you introduce the noun (i.e. the subject of the sentence) that the pronoun refers to
- Put the subject before the verb
- Keep the subject and verb as close as possible to each other
- Avoid inserting parenthetical information between the subject and verb
- Don't separate the verb from its direct object

Word Order

- Put the direct object before the indirect object
- How to choose where to locate an adverb
- Put adjectives before the noun they describe, or use a relative clause
- Do not insert an adjective between two nouns or before the wrong noun
- Avoid creating string of nouns that describe other nouns
- Ensure there is no ambiguity in the order of the words
- Summary

Chapter 3: Breaking up Long Sentences

Breaking up Long Sentences

- It is a good idea to write short clear sentences from the very beginning of your paper
- Think above all about reader
- The longer your sentence, the greater the chance it will be misunderstood
- Short sentences are not a sign of inelegance and superficiality
- Why and how long sentences are created

The proper use of words

- **And**
- **As well as**
- **Other link words that introduce additional information: moreover, in addition, furthermore**
- **Link words that compare and contrast: whereas , on the other hand; although, however**
- **Link words that give explanations: because. Since, as, in fact**

The proper use of words

- **Link words that express consequences: owing to, due to, as a result of, consequently, thus etc**
- **Which and relative clauses**
- **- ing form**
- **In order to**
- **Excessive numbers of commas**

The proper use of words

- Semicolons
- Semicolons in lists
- Phrases in parentheses
- Summary

Chapter 4: Paragraphs and Sentences

Paragraphs and Sentences

- One of the most common reasons why referees reject a paper is poor readability
- The key to good writing: always think about the reader
- General structure of a paragraph
- How to structure a paragraph: an example
- First paragraph of a new section – begin with a mini summary plus an indication of the structure

Paragraphs and Sentences

- **First paragraph of a new section – go directly to the point**
- **Deciding where to put new and old information within a paragraph**
- **Deciding where to put new and old information within a sentence**
- **Link each sentence by moving from general concepts to increasingly more specific concepts**
- **Present and explain ideas in the same logical sequence**
- **Don't force the reader to have to change their perspective**

Paragraphs and Sentences

- Use a consistent numbering system to list parases, states, parts, etc.
- Begin a new paragraph when you talk about your study and your key findings
- Break up long paragraphs
- Look for the markers that indicate where you could begin a new sentence
- Concluding a paragraph: avoid redundancy
- Summary

Chapter 5: Being Concise and Removing Redundancy

Being Concise and Removing Redundancy

- Being concise is very important: how to be concise without losing any important content
- Cut, cut and then cut again
- Write less, make less mistakes
- Cut redundant words
- Prefer verbs to nouns
- Use one verb (e.g. analyze) instead of a verb + noun (e.g. make an analysis)

Being Concise and Removing Redundancy

- Reduce the number of link words
- Choose the shortest words
- Choose the shortest expressions
- Use the shortest adverbial expression
- Avoid pointless introductory phrases
- Avoid impersonal expressions

Being Concise and Removing Redundancy

- Reduce your authorial voice
- Be concise when referring to figures and tables
- Use the infinitive when expressing an aim
- Redundancy versus Conciseness: an example
- Constantly ask yourself – does what I am writing add value for the reader?
- Summary

Chapter 6: Avoiding Ambiguity and Vagueness

Avoiding Ambiguity and Vagueness

- A sentence or phrase is ambiguous or vague when it has more than one interpretation or its interpretation is not obvious
- Which/ who vs. that
- Which, that and who
- -ing form vs. that
- Ing form vs. subject + verb
- Ing form with by and thus

Avoiding Ambiguity and Vagueness

- **A, one and the**
- **Uncountable nouns**
- **Pronouns**
- **Referring backwards: the former, the latter**
- **Above and below**
- **Use of respectively to disambiguate**

How to use proper words

- And
- ~~Both... and, either... or~~
- False friends
- Latin words – i.e. versus e.g.
- Monologophobia – the constant search for synonyms
- Be as precise as possible
- Choose the least generic word
- Summary

Chapter 7: Clarifying Who did What

Clarifying Who did What

- Check your Publicist's style – first person or passive
- How to form the passive and when to use it
- Ensure you use the right tenses to differentiate your work from others, particularly when your publicist prohibits the use of we
- For publicists that allow personal forms, use we to distinguish yourself from other authors
- Do not use we to explain your thought process

Clarifying Who did What

- When we is acceptable. Even when you are not distinguishing yourself from other authors
- Make good use of references
- Ensure that readers understand what you mean when you write the authors
- Use short paragraphs
- Make logical connections between other authors finding and yours
- Summary

Chapter 8: Highlight Your Findings

Highlight Your Findings

- How to use visual techniques and good use of language to make readers notice your key finding
- Ensure that referees can find and understand the importance of your contribution
- Help your findings to stand out visually on the page by beginning a new paragraph
- Make your sentences shorter than normal

Highlight Your Findings

- Present your key finding in a very short sentence and list the implications
- Consider using bullet and headings
- Use tables and figures to attract attention
- Signal to the reader that you are about to say something important by using more dynamic language
- Only use specific terms when describing your key finding
- Avoid flat phrase when discussing key findings

Highlight Your Findings

- **Be explicit about your findings, so that even a non-expert can understand them**
- **Convincing readers to believe your interpretation of your data**
- **Show your paper to a non- expert and get him/her to underline your key findings**
- **Beware of overstating your project's achievements and significance**
- **Summary**

Chapter 9: Hedging and Criticizing

Hedging and Criticizing

- Learn to anticipate possible objection to your claim
- Criticize the work of other authors in a constructive manner by building upon their finding rather than underlining their inadequacy
- Why and when to hedge
- Highlighting and hedging
- Toning down verbs
- Toning down adjectives and adverbs

Hedging and Criticizing

- Toning down strong claims by inserting adverbs
- Toning down the level of probability
- Anticipating alternative interpretation of your data
- Telling the reader from what standpoint you wish them to view your data
- Dealing with the limitations of your research
- Saving your own face: revealing and obscuring your identity as the author in humanist subjects

Hedging and Criticizing

- Saving other author's faces: put their research in a positive light
- Saving other author's faces: say their findings are open to another interpretation
- Don't overhedge
- Hedging: An extended example from a discussion section
- Summary

Chapter 10: Paraphrasing and Plagiarism

Paraphrasing and Plagiarism

- You need to understand what is and what is not plagiarism
- Plagiarism is not difficult to spot
- How to use generic phrases
- How to quote directly from other papers, how to quote by paraphrasing
- Examples of how and how not to paraphrase
- How to check whether you have inadvertently committed plagiarism
- Summary

Part II: Section od a paper

Chapter 11: Titles

- What key skills are needed when writing a Title?
- Every word in your title is important
- How can I generate the title?
- How can I make my title more dynamic?
- Can I use my title to make a claim?
- Are questions in titles a good way to attract attention?

Titles

- When is a two-part title a good idea?
- How should I punctuate my title?
- What words should I capitalize?
- What types of words should I try to include?
- What other criteria should I use to decide whether to include certain words or not?
- Will adjectives such as innovative and novel attract attention?

Titles

- How Can I make my title shorter?
- Is it a good idea to make my title concise by having a string of nouns?
- Should I use prepositions?
- Are articles (a, an, the) necessary?
- How do I know whether to use a or an?
- Is using an automatic spell check enough?
- Summary: How can I assess the quality of my title?

Chapter 12: Abstracts

Abstracts

- **What key skill are needed when writing an Abstract?**
 - Attracting the curiosity and stimulating readers to want to read the complete paper
 - Writing very clear and short sentences (max. 25 words)
- **What is an abstract? How long should it be ?**
- **When should I writ the abstract?**
- **What should I structure my abstract?**

Abstracts

- Formal, natural and applied sciences.
- How should I structure my abstract?
- How much background information?
- Social and behavioral sciences.
- How should I structure my abstract?
- How much background information?

Abstracts

- I am historian. We don't necessarily get "results" or follow a specific methodology. What should I do?
- I am writing a review. How should I structure my abstract?
- How should I begin my abstract?
- What style should I use: personal or impersonal?
- What tenses should I use?
- How do I write a structured abstract?

Abstracts

- How do I write an abstract for a conference?
- How do I write an abstract for a work in progress that will be presented at a conference?
- How should I select my key words? How often should I repeat them?
- Should I mention any limitations in my research?
- What should I not mention in my abstract?
- How can I ensure that my abstract has maximum impact?

Abstracts

- What are some of the typical characteristics of poor abstracts?
- Summary: How can I assess the quality of my abstract?
- Ask yourself the following questions
- Have I followed the right structure and style?
- Have I covered the relevant points from those below?
 - Background / context, research problem / aim- the gap I plan to fill, method, results, implications and/or conclusions

Chapter 13: Introduction

Introduction

- What key skills are needed when writing an introduction?
- Introduction presents the background knowledge that readers need to know
- You have to give the reader the tools for understanding the meaning and motivation of your experiments.
- Tell your readers how you plan to develop your topic. Give them a roadmap to follow – show them what your line of argument is
- You need to have a deep knowledge about everything that has been previously written on the topic and decide what is important for the readers to know.

Introduction

- How should I structure the introduction?
- How should I begin my introduction?
- How should I structure the rest of the introduction?
- I do not work in the field of a hard science. Are there any other ways of beginning an introduction?
- What typical phrases should I avoid in my introduction?
- How does an introduction differ from an abstract?

Introduction

- What tenses should I use?
- How should I outline the structure of my papers?
- **Summary:** How can I assess the quality of my introduction?
 - Is my research question clear?
 - Does my introduction act as a clear roadmap for understanding my paper
 - Is it sufficiently different from the abstract without cut and pastes

Summary

- Have I mentioned only what my readers specifically need to know and what I will subsequently refer to in the discussion?
- Have I been as concise as possible?
- Have I use tenses correctly?

Chapter 14: Review of the Literature

Review of the Literature

- Systematically elaborate the achievements and limitation of other study
- Relate your new facts and data to these studies
- How should I structure my review of the literature?
- How should I begin my literature review?
- How can I structure in ti show the progress through the years?

Review of the Literature

- What is the clearest way to refer to other authors?
- Should I focus on the authors or their ideas?
- What tenses should I use?
- How can I reduce the amount I write when reporting the literature?
- How can I talk about the limitations of previous work and the novelty of my work in a constructive and diplomatic way?
- Summary: How can I assess the quality of my literature review?

Chapter 15: Methods

Methods

- Be able to describe the materials you used in your experiments and/or methods you used to carry out your research, in a way that is sufficiently detailed to enable others in your field to easily follow your method.
- How should I structure the methods?
- How should I begin the methods?
- What tense should I use? Should I use the active or passive?
- How many action can I refer to in a single sentence?
- How can I avoid my method appearing like a series of lists?

Methods

- Can I use bullets?
- How can I reduce the word count?
- How should I designate my study parameters in a way that my readers do not have to constantly refer backwards?
- Should I describe everything in chronological order?
- What grammatical constructions I use to justify my aims and choices?
- What grammatical construction is used with allow, enable and permit?

Methods

- How can I indicate the consequences of my choice and actions?
- How should I use the definite and indefinite articles in the method?
- Should I write numbers as digits (e.g, 5,7) or as words (e.g. five, seven)
- How can I avoid ambiguity?
- What other points should I include in the Methods? How should I end the methods?
- Summary: How can I assess the quality of my method section?

Chapter 16: Results

Results

- The result is the shortest section in the paper
- How should I structure the results?
- How should I begin the results?
- How should I structure the rest of the results?
- How should I end the results?
- Should I report any negative results?
- What tenses should I use when reporting my results?

Results

- What style should I use when reporting my results?
- ~~Can I use a more personal style?~~
- How can I show my readers the value of my data, rather than just telling them?
- How should I comment on my tables and figures?
- What is the difference between reporting and interpreting?
- How can I make it clear that I am talking about my finding and not the finding of others?
- Summary: How can I assess the quality of my results section?

Chapter 17: Discussion

Discussion

- To discuss the result of the research is the most difficult part of the paper
- This chapter is designed to teach you various strategies to simplify the process of discussing your result.
- You will learn how to structure the discussion and how to ensure that what you write will satisfy the typical requirements of the readers.
- The secret is to sound both convincing and credible at the same time.
- Another skill is to interpret your results without repeating them.

Discussion

- How should I structure the discussion?

- How should I begin the discussion?
- Why should I compare my work with that of others?
- How should I compare my work with that of others?
- How should I end the discussion if I do have a conclusions section?
- How should I end the discussion if I do not have a conclusions section?
- Active or passive? What kind of writing style should I use?

Discussion

- How can I give interpretation of my data while taking into account other possible interpretations that I do not agree with?
- How can I bring a little excitement to my discussion? How can I use seems and appears to admit that I have not investigated all possible cases?
- How can I show the pitfalls of other works in the literature?
- What other ways are there to lessen the negative impact of the limitations of my study?
- Summary: How can I assess the quality of my discussion?

Chapter 18: Conclusion

Conclusion

- The key skills are in knowing what the readers expect to find in Conclusion, not repeating exactly the same phrase and information from your abstract and introduction, and providing a clear and high – impact message for readers.
- How should I structure the conclusion?
- How should I begin my conclusion?
- How can I increase the impact of my conclusions?

Conclusion

- How can I differentiate my conclusions from my abstract?
- How can I differentiate my conclusions from my introduction and from the last paragraph of my discussion?
- How can I end my conclusion?
- What tenses should I use?
- Summary: How can I assess the quality of my conclusions?

Chapter 19: Useful phrases

Useful phrases

- See index of useful Phrases
- How to use the useful phrases

Chapter 20: The final Check

The final Check

- This chapter covers the kinds of things you should look for when doing this final check.
- Ensure your paper is as it could possibly be the first time you submit it
- Print out your paper: Don't just correct it directly on your computer
- Always have the readers in mind
- Anticipate readers' comments on your English
- Judge your writing in English in the same way as you would judge it if you had written the paper in your native language

The final Check

- **Cut, cut, cut, cut and keep cutting**
- **Check your paper for readability**
- **Check for clarity in the logical order of your argumentation**
- **Do a “quality control” on your paper**
- **Be careful with cut and pastes**
- **Double check that you have followed the style guide**

The final Check

- **Make sure that everything is completely accurate**
- **Make sure everything is consistent**
- **Dealing with rejections**
- **Take editorial comment seriously**
- **Consider using a professional editing service**
- **Don't forget the Acknowledgements**

The final Check

- Write a good letter/ email to accompany your manuscript
- Final check: spelling.
- Don't underestimate the importance of spelling mistakes
- Summary

The final Check

- Don't submit a poorly written manuscript
- Get a colleague to read through your paper or use a professional editing service
- Print a hard copy of your manuscript, don't rely on reading it on screen
- Check for all types of mistakes in English: grammar, vocabulary and spelling
- Apply the same standards as if you had written your manuscript in your own mother tongue

The final Check

- Cut as much as you can
- Check your manuscript for readability and logic
- Be careful with problems cause by multiple authors e.g. cut and pastes
- Ensure you have followed the journal's style guide e.g. for citing the literature
- Check for accuracy and consistency

The final Check

- Take editorial comments seriously
- Remember to acknowledge those that helped you
- Do a spell check. Don't rely 100% on automatic spell checkers.
- Spell checkers do not know the difference between witch and ahich, or weighted and weighted

Thank you