

DXJAKD2

Academic skills course

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Lesson 1



course syllabus

- Week 1** introduction to academic English; specifics of academic style; introduction to academic presentations
- Week 2** formality of academic English; discussion over aspects of academic writing in economic disciplines; hedging
- Week 3** principles of writing paragraphs; writing conference abstracts I
- Week 4** abstracts II
- Week 5** research articles – structure and language of individual parts (IMRDC) I
- Week 6** research articles II; paraphrasing
- Week 7** summarising; other aspects of academic language
- Week 8** coherence and cohesion; other aspects of academic language
- Week 9** academic discussions; functional language
- Week 10** videoconference - feedback on abstracts with Rachel Lindner
- Week 11+12** presentations + peer review

course requirements

- active participation in seminar lessons (2 absences allowed)
- systematic preparation for lessons (this might include doing specific homework assignments)
- writing a presentation abstract for a conference of your choice (see schedule below)
- critical evaluation of abstracts of two colleagues
- incorporating your colleagues' comments in your abstract (if relevant) and submitting final version to Rachel Lindner for evaluation
- active participation in videoconference
- presentation of your research or part of research + discussion

tasks and deadlines

week 1	link to a conference shared document	deadline 28 February
week 2	title of the presentation shared document	deadline 7 March
week 4	first draft of abstract for the conference presentation peer-review application	deadline 21 March 2016
week 5	evaluation and comments on 2 abstracts of your colleagues peer-review application	deadline 4 April 2016
week 7	final abstract peer review application	deadline 11 April 2016
week 10	videoconference	
weeks 11 + 12	presentations	

Principles of academic language

- informed and informative; i.e. has a clear purpose, structure and audience
- critical and objective
- analytical
- rational (not emotional or opinion based)
- complex (in terms of grammar and vocabulary)
- responsible
- hedged (use of cautious language)
- non-repetitive
- persuasive
- formal (neutral in style, precise and accurate)

aspects of formality

- precision
- conciseness, i.e. free of redundancy
- clarity
- cautiousness

ways of achieving them

- right choice of words (~~colloquial, idiomatic, phrasal verbs~~)
- nominalisation (frequent use of nouns)
- avoiding negative forms of verbs if possible
- avoiding repetition
- scarce use of personal pronouns
- hedging (modifiers, modal verbs, absence of general statements)
- cohesion
- correct grammar

Basic rules

Americans are in debt.

- a general statement
- be more specific/precise
- **Two-thirds of Americans** are in debt.

Basic rules

A survey showed 75% of people were in favour of the plan.

- vague language
- use more specific expressions
- A survey showed 75% of **those questioned** were in favour of the plan.

Basic rules

The situation deteriorated because people didn't communicate with each other.

- negatives
- frequent use of verbs
- turn them into positive
- use nominalisation
- **Poor communication led to deterioration of the situation.**

Basic rules

The research revealed a lot of changes in behaviour of the market.

- informal words and expressions
- use more formal ones
- The research revealed **many** changes in behaviour of the market.

Basic rules

The aggregate of outstanding balances went up and down quite violently.

- phrasal verbs used in conversation
- use one-word verbs
- The aggregate of outstanding balances **fluctuated** quite violently.

Basic rules

Most of the eye tissue is transparent. Consequently, the frequency and focus of the laser beam can be adjusted.

- two or more short sentences
- use more complex sentence structures
- **As most of the eye tissue is transparent, the frequency and focus of the laser beam can be adjusted.**

Basic rules

The data confirm that there is an association between inflation and unemployment.

- structure there is / are
- eliminate it where possible
- **The data confirm an association between inflation and unemployment.**

avoid

Retirement is something most of us must face sooner or later.

- **using colloquial vocabulary**

Colloquial vocabulary includes words and expressions that are used in everyday spoken language. They do not provide the exactness needed in an academic setting (Fowler & Allen, 1992).

- Retirement is **inevitable**.

also avoid

Public transport includes vehicles for public use on the roads, airways, waterways etc.

- **using run-on expressions**
- Public transport includes vehicles for public use, **such as** buses, trains and aeroplanes.

also avoid

Industrial sites cause vast amounts of environmental pollution, so why do we still use them?

- **using rhetorical questions**
- The question surrounding the continued use of industrial sites, given their vast pollution production, **still remains.**

also avoid

It caused a really big reaction.

- using adverbs *really, very, just*
- It caused a **significant** reaction.
considerable, dramatic, explosive...

also avoid

Then the solution can be discarded.

- **placing the adverb in the initial or final position**
- The solution can **then** be discarded.

also avoid

I am convinced by Carroll's (1996) conclusion that Australian architecture requires innovation, yet I dislike the way he has ignored residential design in order to reach this conclusion.

- **using judgemental words**
- Carroll (1996) **concludes / argues**

also avoid

The conditions are appalling and account, to a large extent, for the terrible morbidity and mortality statistics of this community.

- **using words that are emotive**
- The conditions, to a large extent, account for the morbidity and mortality statistics of this community.

Key:

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. **(written style for the general public discourse, scripted radio or TV news style)**

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. **(relaxed, simplified chat, very informal spoken style – the addition of repetition and fillers)**

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. **(jargon, very formal, this is the style of language used in official reports, technical studies; it is exclusively a style of written English, full of verbal nouns, technical words and passives)**

4.

As Sterling went up in value, the government had to put up taxes to stop consumers splashing out on too many cheap imports. **(relaxed, informal spoken style: discussion, there is plenty of prepositional verbs, all actions are expressed through verbs, not verbal nouns)**

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. **(formal, spoken style – radio, seminar, talk)**

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. **(written, formal, clear English, as found in the press or in documents aimed at ordinary educated readers)**

1. With women especially, there is a lot of social pressure to conform to a certain physical shape. **(a great deal)**
2. Significantly, even at this late date, Lautrec was considered a bit conservative by his peers. **(somewhat)**
3. It focused on a subject that a lot of the bourgeois and upper-class exhibition-going public regarded as anti-social and anti-establishment. **(much)**
4. Later Smith got together with Paul Fildes in an experimental study of the use of viral marketing among young, middle-aged and old people.
(collaborated, specific groups of people/individuals)
5. We'll tell you how you got on in the test in a couple of weeks. **(We will inform you about the result of your test in the near future.)**
6. Therefore after six months the dieter is behaving according to all twenty-six goals and she has achieved a big reduction in sugar intake. **(considerable)**
7. Modern houses have so many labour-saving things that it is difficult for the person at home to have adequate exercise by doing chores, cooking, and looking after a family. **(devices)**
8. Making the effort to reclaim this wasted stuff for fertilizer would have a positive effect on greenhouse releases. **(material)**
9. It is difficult to imagine exactly what is meant by saying that such a classification is natural as any collection of things could be classified in this way. **(objects)**
10. Unfortunately, since there are so many possible explanations, the correct one is most difficult to find out. **(ascertain/establish)**
11. These exercises can easily be incorporated into an exercise routine, with each exercise done again a number of times. **(repeated)**
12. Fleming did well in isolating a streptococcus from the cerebrospinal fluid of the patient. **(succeeded)**
13. Effective planning prevents such hazards, but only if a social organisation makes sure that all potential target individuals are acquainted with the procedure.
(ensures)

formal	informal
appear	seem
ascend	climb
assist/aid	help
cease	stop
commence	begin
consume	use
decrease	shorten/reduce
demonstrate	show
depart	go
desire	want

formal	informal
enquire	ask
finish	end
inform	tell
obtain	get
preserve	keep
reject	say no
release	free
repair	mend
require	need
reside	live

formal	informal
comprehension	understanding
deficiency	lack
opportunity	chance
perspiration	sweat
residence	house
vision	sight
amiable	friendly
complete	whole
energetic	lively
fortunate	lucky

formal	informal
immature	childish
incorrect	wrong
inferior	worse
inexpensive	cheap
indistinct	dim
insane	mad/crazy
relaxed	laid back
responsible	in charge
sufficient	enough
vacant	empty

Task 6

1. primarily, principally, essentially, predominantly
2. virtually, practically, essentially
3. solely, exclusively, entirely, totally
4. in sum/to sum up/in summary, essentially, fundamentally
5. attempted, strived for, strived to do
6. prime, chief, primary, principal, fundamental
7. characteristic, representative
8. In no way/respect can London be...

Task 7

We would like to inform you that your paper has been rejected by our publishing company as it was not up to the required standard.

In case you would like us to reconsider the decision, we would suggest that you revise it and make some necessary changes.