



POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE

SESSION 3

1. Title

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

1.1. Which of these titles are of good quality?

Decide which titles below could be of high quality from an academic perspective and which could not. Explain your opinion. * **Discuss in pairs, 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 ^{18}F -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

1.2. Write and discuss the potential title(s) of your own work:

**** Write down or create 1 or more titles for your own PhD work / academic article.***

**** In small groups (3-4) discuss your title, offer feedback to others in the group.***

2. Sentence

Read the following sentences and decide which of them could be appropriate for an academic text.

**** Read and discuss with the class***

1. Such excellent feedback from the visiting auditor.
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. Gerald began -- but was interrupted by a piercing whistle which cost him ten percent of his hearing permanently, as it did everyone else in a ten-mile radius of the eruption, not that it mattered much because for them "permanently" meant the next ten minutes or so until buried by searing lava or suffocated by choking ash -- to pee.

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

2.1. Sentence definitions and characteristics

*** Read the comments below. Discuss them briefly with a partner, then with the class group.**

► A sentence can be defined as “the largest structural unit normally treated in grammar. The sentence is notoriously difficult to define; numerous definitions have been offered and found wanting. The classical definition, that a sentence expresses a complete thought, dates from the first treatise on grammar... This traditional notion definition, however, only solves the problem by transferring it: how does one define 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.

(Adapted from: McArthur, T.1992, p.918; Alison Brown, 2007; Williams, V.; Blake, C.D.:1992, p.353.)

3. Degree of formality

Read the sentence triplets below and think about which of the examples are suitable for an academic text from the perspective of formality.

*** Work by yourself, order the sentences into the most suitable to the least suitable for each triplet.**

*** Then discuss with the group.**

1.

- a) The president was obliged to return earlier than planned due to poor weather conditions.
- b) The inclement climatic conditions obliged the President to return earlier than scheduled.
- c) The president had to go back sooner than he'd planned because the weather was so bad.

2.

- a) Essential measures should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.
- b) You should do whatever you have to as soon as you can.
- c) One should undertake any necessary measures at the earliest opportunity.

3.

- a) Before they discovered America, Europeans didn't eat potatoes.
- b) Prior to the discovery of America, potatoes were not consumed in Europe.
- c) Before America was discovered, potatoes were not eaten in Europe.

(Adapted from: <http://website.lineone.net/~eshp/styles.htm>)

4. Degrees of certainty

Which of the sentence pairs below would be more appropriate for academic writing and why?

*** Work with a partner, discuss and comment on each sentence. Then discuss with the group.**

a) Recent research suggests that a majority of people prefer email to traditional letter-writing as a mode of communication.

b) According to the recent research people prefer email to traditional letter-writing as a mode of communication.

c) The traditional view that women need to spend more time at home and that this detracts them from their active time commitment to politics is true in CEE countries.

d) The traditional view that women need to spend more time at home and that this detracts them from their active time commitment to politics seems to be true in CEE countries.

e) The leachant dissolves the lead and tin content in exactly the same ratio as the solder, leaving the copper content of the boards intact.

f) The leachant tends to dissolve the lead and tin content in exactly the same ratio as the solder, leaving, apparently, the copper content of the boards intact.

Some tips for academic writing:

* When you **know something always happens** and you can be confident it will happen the same way in the future you should **not be tentative**.

* There is **rarely absolute proof** of an event or a direct causal relationship between phenomena. There are more often correlations and links. **Academics, therefore, are cautious in the way they present their findings.**

* This means that **tentative language** (such as tends to, appears to, indicates that, suggests that, the majority of, there is a tendency for, probable) **is often appropriate**.

Examples of academic language:

▶▶▶ *tend/s to, appear/s to/that, indicate/s that, suggest/s that, the majority of, there is a tendency for, probable, seem/s that, the evidence suggests that, it is widely accepted, apparently, seemingly, presumably, etc.*

(Adapted from Alison Brown, 2007; Mahlab 1994; Soós, G., Zentai, V.:2005:p92; <http://www.azom.com/details.asp?ArticleID=1767>)

5. Degrees of personality

** Which of the sentences below could be appropriate for academic writing and why?*

*** Read and discuss with the class group**

a) Always begin negatively, a former teacher once instructed me. Tell your readers what you are not going to do; it will relieve their minds, and they will be more inclined to accept what seems a modest project. So I will begin this plea for tolerance with a couple of negative distinctions.

b) One should always begin negatively, some teachers used to instruct students. Readers should be informed about what the author is not going to do; it will relieve their minds, and they will be more inclined to accept what seems a modest project. So this plea for tolerance will begin with a couple of negative distinctions.

c) Based on the most recent progress in nanophotonics, controlling light by way of photonic crystals, plasmonics, and left-handed (meta-) materials is no more just an exciting theoretical approach, but real practice. It is expected that optical metamaterials, when combined appropriately with light emitters, will make optics in a non-distant future compatible with an integrated system technology, supporting the long-sought development of fully integrated optical circuits comparable to the development of micro- and nanoelectronics.

d) We found that the most recent progress in nanophotonics, controlling light by way of photonic crystals, plasmonics, and left-handed (meta-) materials is no more just an exciting theoretical approach, but real practice. I expect that optical metamaterials, when combined appropriately with light emitters, will make optics in a non-distant future compatible with an integrated system technology, supporting the long-sought development of fully integrated optical circuits comparable to the development of micro- and nanoelectronics.

More tips for academic writing:

- ▶ *The third person voice (it, they, he, she, the authors, researchers) distances the self from the work and appears more objective than the first person I, we or second person you.*
- ▶ *Overuse of "I/ we" in papers can seem overly subjective & trying to avoid offering proofs.*
- ▶ *Expected modesty.*
- ▶ *Whatever is included in a piece of academic writing that is not attributed to someone else, is assumed to be the author's.*

(Adapted from Alison Brown, 2007; Waltzer, M.:1997,p.8; <http://www.iop.org/EJ/abstract/1367-2630/8/9/E04>)

6. Hedging

Look at the following table and discuss with a partner.

- * **Work with a partner, read about Hedging and why it's used.**
- * **Answer the questions on the next page from the table and your discussion.**
- * **Then share your ideas with the group.**

Classification of Hedges

Hedge Class	Function
Shields Devices that take responsibility for the claim made away from the author. They function as a tool protecting the author from any criticism. The writer aims at not being on record with regard to the propositions expressed in the text.	Responsibility shifting Devices which suggest that in case there is another interpretation of the propositions made, the criticism should be aimed at somebody else. The person or people accountable for the claim are known or can be found. e.g. ...([1], [2], [3],)..., ...it is shown in [3]..., Romanowska found..., ...we refer reader to [3, 4]..., ...see [10]...
	Speaking facts The author indicates lack of other interpretation. The writer shields his claims through stating "the commonly accepted" view. e.g. Definition 1..., A map is..., ...is defined to be..., ...space is said to be...
Mitigators The author admits his/her responsibility for the claims made. The writer takes stance while using mitigators, but decides to weaken	Approximation Referring vaguely to the quality or quantity of something. e.g. ...some..., ...more..., Several, ...similar...
	Possibility Referring to things that may happen or be the case. e.g. ...may..., ...can..., ...possible...

his propositions for various reasons.	<p>Understatement</p> <p>Devices used in order to downgrade the claims and express modesty which is generally expected from authors of scientific articles. By using these devices, they lessen the importance and the validity of their claims. e.g. ...<i>notions</i>..., ...<i>concept</i>...</p>
	<p>Admitting incompleteness</p> <p>The author expresses that some facts might have been omitted or that there might be other possibilities that have not been covered by the research article scope. e.g. ...<i>briefly</i>..., ...<i>however</i>,...</p>

* **What is Hedging?**

* **What are the different types of hedging used by academic authors?**

* **3 examples of hedging are:**

Homework tasks:

Complete the above task (6) on hedging if not completed in class.

Look at 1-2 research articles that you have. Try to locate some examples of:

- use of 3rd person voice
- hedging
- write a few examples of each of these down to share next seminar.

* **Rewrite the following lines using more formal language:**

1. Some people believe the information that the professor was arguing for had come from a previous study that covered everything relevant.

2. People generally believe that he thought up his theory when he was a young student.

3. We found that our study went against the information found in a previous study. This was different to what we expected, as we thought it would be similar and agree with the other study.