



**ACADEMIC WRITING for junior researchers AUTUMN 2016**  
**SESSION 1 (selected activities)**



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- 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**
- 2. FEATURES OF ENGLISH FOR GENERAL ACADEMIC PURPOSES**
- 3. THE CHARACTER OF ACADEMIC WRITING IN ENGLISH**

**In the session the following areas will be covered:**

- major characteristics of academic English
- basic principles of academic writing in the context of research settings
- discussion of students' academic positions and their perceived needs in writing

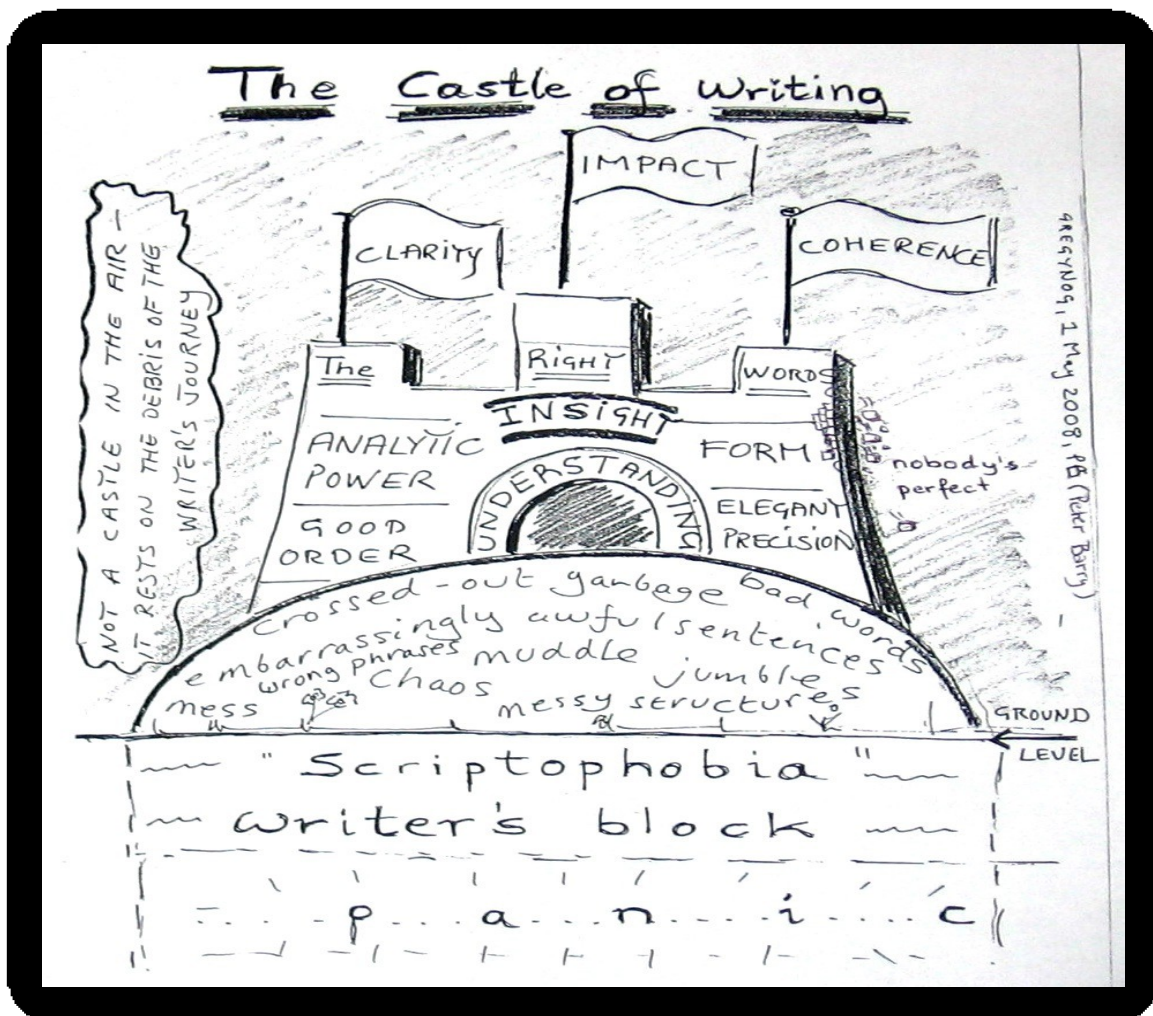
**E-learning:**

**<https://is.muni.cz/auth/el/1411/jaro2016/aVLAW061/index.gwarp>**

## I. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you prefer writing or typing?
2. What are your biggest problems when writing?
3. What writing skills do you need to be able to write well?
4. How important is it to plan what you write?
5. How is your writing in English? Is writing in your language different from writing in English?
6. What advice would you give to a student who says he/she is no good at writing?
7. What questions would you like to ask a writing expert about writing?
8. E. L. Doctorow said: "Writing is an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you go." Do you agree?

## THE PROCESS OF WRITING



## II. ACADEMIC WRITING - INTRODUCTION:

1. List and discuss the main characteristics of academic writing. Consider the following levels of writing and give examples:

MICRO LEVEL: eg. correct spelling

MEZZO LEVEL

MACRO LEVEL

### III. THE POWER WRITING PROCESS

*Put the following concepts under the appropriate main stages of the POWER writing process:*

*major points, coherence, readability, audience, minor points, style, organization, conciseness, supporting data, goal, precision*

<b>THE POWER WRITING PROCESS (Shulman 2005)</b>				
<u>PREPARE</u>	<u>OUTLINE</u>	<u>WRITE</u>	<u>EDIT</u>	<u>REWRITE</u>
purpose	thesis	content	clarity	accuracy

### IV. PUBLICATION TYPES

*Read the descriptions and identify each publication type.*

1. This is a report of some unusual disease manifestation occurring in a single patient – it includes the symptoms, signs, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up: e.g. a report of an unusual lesion of the finger in a 53-year-old man.
2. This is a collection of reports (at least two) involving several patients with an uncommon disease, such as an increased incidence of leukemia in a single neighborhood.
3. This type of publication is generally short – it relies on the author’s experience and intuition and thus doesn’t require a major research effort. It allows authors to express their opinions.
4. This is a brief summary of a larger document. It is often used to help readers quickly find out what the document is about and its purpose.
5. This is a publication that presents a study reporting innovative advances that further knowledge about a topic of importance to the field of medicine.
6. This publication summarizes the current state of understanding on a topic. It re-presents previously published material, rather than reporting new facts or analysis. An important part of this genre is the author’s expert assessment of the literature.

Example from the British Medical Journal:

<http://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/article-types>

V. EXERCISES – LANGUAGE FOCUS MICRO LEVEL

1. Complete the following tables.

formal	informal
	seem
	climb
	help
cease	
commence	
	use
decrease	
demonstrate	
depart	
	want

formal	informal
enquire	
	end
	tell
obtain	
preserve	
reject	
	free
	mend
require	
	live

formal	informal
	understanding
deficiency	
opportunity	
perspiration	
	house
	sight
amiable	
	whole
energetic	
fortunate	

formal	informal
	childish
	wrong
inferior	
inexpensive	
	dim
insane	
	laid back
responsible	
	enough
	empty

2. Use more formal alternatives to the words in bold. Make any necessary grammatical changes.

- 1 The book is **mainly** concerned with the problem of policing the internet.
- 2 **Almost** every school in the county had reported problems with the new system.
- 3 The work of the Institute is not **only** devoted to cancer research.
- 4 **Basically**, we believe we have demonstrated a significant link between the two events.
- 5 We **tried** to find a new way of understanding the data.
- 6 The study is a **really good** example of the way sociologists collect their data.
- 7 The reaction is **typical** of the way large corporations keep control of their markets.
- 8 **There's no way** London can be compared to Sydney as a place to live and work.

3. In the following examples, the same message is expressed in six different styles, from an extremely formal written style, to the very informal spoken one. Match the sentences with the adequate styles.

- a) Jargon, very formal.
- b) Written, formal, clear.
- c) Written style for the general public (scripted radio or TV news style).
- d) Formal spoken style (seminar, talk).



- e) Informal spoken style (discussion).
- f) Very informal spoken style (chat).

I. 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.

II. 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.

III. 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.

IV. As Sterling went up in value, the government had to put up taxes to stop consumers splashing out on too many cheap imports.

V. 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.

VI. 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.

(Adapted from Handout source: course materials by Alena Hradilová+Libor Štěpánek for Academic Writing for Post-graduate students, a Masaryk University course; <http://website.lineone.net/~eshp/styles.htm>)

#### 4.

Each word in the box can be used in two ways, one an everyday way, the other a typically academic way. Complete each pair of sentences using the same word for both sentences and making any necessary grammatical changes.

generate   turn   solid   confirm   identify   underline   character   pose   nature   focus

- 1 A She loves to ..... for photographs in front of her fabulous house.  
B The events ..... a threat to stability in the region.
- 2 A It was difficult to ..... the camera on the flower as it was so small.  
B We should ..... our attention on the most important issues.
- 3 A I called the airline and ..... my reservation.  
B The data ..... my hypothesis that animal-lovers enjoy better health.
- 4 A The power plant ..... electricity for the whole region.  
B This issue always ..... a great deal of debate among academics.
- 5 A The murderer was ..... from fingerprints discovered at the scene.  
B In this theory of history, progress is closely ..... with technology.
- 6 A She became interested in ..... conservation.  
B The first lecture in the series was on the ..... of human communication.
- 7 A Jim's a very interesting ..... . I hope you meet him.  
B The book attempts to explain the fundamental ..... of social life.
- 8 A I saw her ..... to her husband and whisper something in his ear.  
B Let us now ..... to the subject of town planning.
- 9 A He always ..... every new word when he's reading.  
B The study ..... the fact that very little research exists.
- 10 A The liquid became ..... as the temperature was lowered.  
B The study lacks ..... evidence and therefore its conclusions are doubtful.

**5. Here is a paragraph that should be written in a more academic tone. Read it through and underline the parts that need to be rewritten and suggest possible improvements.**

Given the general knowledge of the health risks of smoking, it's no wonder that heaps of smokers have tried at some time in their lives to quit. However, in most cases, their attempts are unsuccessful. People begin smoking, often when they're adolescents, for lots of reasons, including the example of parents and pressure from peers. If others in one's group of friends are starting to smoke, it can be hard to resist going along with the crowd. Once people start smoking, they're likely to get hooked. The addiction to smoking is partly physiological; smokers become used to the effects of nicotine and experience painful withdrawal symptoms when they give it up. In addition, people become psychologically dependent on smoking as a way of reducing anxiety and coping with particular situations.

Handout source: [www.rmit.edu.au/learningandstudycentre/](http://www.rmit.edu.au/learningandstudycentre/)

***Improvements:***

**6. Identify the informal expressions in the following sentences. Rewrite the following sentences, replacing the informal expressions with a more formal equivalent.**

1. With women especially, there is a lot of social pressure to conform to a certain physical shape.
2. Significantly, even at this late date, Lautrec was considered a bit conservative by his peers.
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.
4. Later Florey got together with Paul Fildes in an experimental study of the use of curare to relieve the intractable muscular spasms which occur in fully developed infection with tetanus or lockjaw.

5. When a patient is admitted to a psychiatric inpatient unit, the clinical team should avoid the temptation to start specific treatments immediately.
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.
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.
8. Simply making the effort to reclaim this wasted stuff for fertilizer would have a positive effect on greenhouse releases.
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.
10. Unfortunately, since there are so many possible explanations, the correct one is most difficult to find out.
11. These exercises can easily be incorporated into an exercise routine, with each exercise done again a number of times.
12. Fleming did well in isolating a streptococcus from the cerebrospinal fluid of the patient.