



INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE SPRING 2013

SESSION 2

(selected activities)

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- 1. GENERAL NOTES ON ACADEMIC ENGLISH AND ACADEMIC WRITING IN ENGLISH**
- 2. ACADEMIC WRITING – SPECIFIC FEATURES**
- 3. ORAL SUMMARY/ MY RESEARCH**
- 4. STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**

Aims:

- to present basic principles of academic writing in the context of graduate/postgraduate studies**
- to engage students in discussion of issues in academic writing / to practice above mentioned**
- listen to and give feedback to a presentation**

ACADEMIC WRITING – INTRODUCTION

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

- MICRO LEVEL: correct spelling

- MEZZO LEVEL

- MACRO LEVEL

2. Discuss the following questions in connection with academic writing.

<u>Who?</u> <i>Who is writing?</i> <i>Who is the audience?</i>	<u>What?</u> <i>What is the writing about?</i> <i>What type of writing is it?</i>	<u>Why?</u> <i>Why is the writing done?</i>

3. 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

formal	informal
	childish
	wrong
inferior	
inexpensive	
	dim
insane	

amiable	
	whole
energetic	
fortunate	

	laid back
responsible	
	enough
	empty

4.

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.

5. 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: <http://website.lineone.net/~eshp/styles.htm>)

6.

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.

7.

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.

8. 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.
13. Effective vaccines prevent such hazards, but only if a social organisation makes sure that all potential mothers are vaccinated in good time.

9. DISCUSSING YOUR ACADEMIC POSITION

Work with your partners in a small group, consider the following questions:

- A. How is your PhD study programme structured at your institution?**
- B. What are your motivations for the engagement in research?**
- C. How have you been developing as a researcher in the recent years?**
- D. What is the role of your supervisor in your particular research/during your studies?**
- E. What are the pluses and minuses of publishing in your first language (Czech)?**
- F. How do you perceive any pluses and/or minuses of publishing in a second language (English)?**
- G. Do you personally perceive any pressure to publish? If so, how do you deal with it?**
- H. Are you planning on writing extensively in Czech and/or in English?**

10. SUMMARIZING – your current academic position

Task: Listening for detail. You are going to watch an excerpt from a short clip advertising PhD positions at a university. Listen closely to the student's way of describing his research and the institution and answer the following questions:

- a) What is the student's position?
- b) What is the focus of the student's research? What reasons does he give?
- c) What is the most valuable aspect of the department where the student works?

Task: Timed speaking on a given topic

SITUATION 1: You are attending an international conference. For the day the sessions are over and now you are at an ***informal*** networking dinner with the other participants, sitting at a table. Introduce yourself, your current academic position and engagement in research and your institution in ***1 minute***.

SITUATION 2: You are strongly interested in receiving funding for your current research. Explain why you should be given the funding. Please mention theoretical and conceptual framework of your research, methods used in your study and expected results (possibly including your research questions and hypotheses). Take your notes and you have ***3 minutes*** for your mini-speech.

II. OPTIONAL PRACTICE: ACADEMIC EMAIL EXCHANGE – SAMPLE ENQUIRY

Example of academic email exchange between a PhD candidate searching for a placement with a university of his/her choice and a faculty staff at the questioned university.

Task: fill in the gaps using the most appropriate expression.

_____ (1) Professor Collins,

Excuse me for approaching you and asking you for your help in the following _____ (2): I am _____ (2) a PhD. candidate at Masaryk University, School of Humanities, Department of English and American Studies. I work _____ (3) a tutor of English for Specific Purposes at the Language Center, Brno, Czech Republic. I _____ (4) to apply for a Fulbright Scholarship, which would enable me to work on my dissertation at an American university. The award of the scholarship, _____ (5), is subject to a preliminary consent of an establishment that would be willing to _____ (6) me. And this is where my request comes in. Is there any chance _____ (6) being offered a _____ (7) at the Gervitz Graduate School of Education? I would be enormously grateful if you could _____ (8) me as a candidate for _____ (9) research student under your _____ (10). The fellowship (up to 10 months) would be covered by the scholarship in question. The _____ (11) is unfortunately December 1, 2007 for the academic year beginning in the fall 2008 - I would need a written confirmation from an American scholar that they would be _____ (12) to supervise me.

In my PhD _____ (13), I am trying to analyze the structure and language of written medical case reports as a style belonging to the genre of research articles. The text analysis of such reports involves a corpus-based research, _____ (14) primarily from the stylistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic viewpoints. The corpus, which I _____ (15) currently developing, will be approached both from the synchronic and diachronic _____ (16). In the former, my focus will be on characterization of the genre as it is currently produced by the discourse community of medical professionals. In the latter, an emphasis will be placed on the comparison of differences between medical case reports written 1900 - 1906 and those produced nowadays. In the dissertation I will _____ (17) on developments of both the Slavonic (especially the Prague School - Mathesius, Vachek, Firbas, Danes; among others Tarnyikova, Bakhtin) and Anglo-American (Crystal, Davy, Leech, Fowler, Halliday, Hasan, Swales, Hoey, Bazerman) traditions in the study of language.

Please find _____ (18) my Curriculum Vitae. If you _____ (19) any additional _____ (20), I will be happy to supply them.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

_____ (21),

John Smith

personal page of the student: <http://www.john-smith.muni.cz>,

Attachment: curriculum vitae

12. TAPESCRIPT: Task: Listening for detail

My name is I am a third-year student at the University of Western Ontario. My research is concerned with answering the question of *What should we do with water?*

The main policy experts in the world are increasingly turning towards the influence of moral and philosophical values in trying to understand the conflicts that arise around limited water resources and increasing social demands whether they be industry, energy and agriculture; and _____ (1) in the context of the Canadian problem of Alberta.

The reasons I came to Western are quite a few. First, when I visited the campus I was treated very professionally, and that would _____ (2) that I needed; was also attracted to the city of London, which is small, I can live close to work, I can live close to a river, I live downtown without owning a car, and so far all of my expectations have been greatly exceeded.

I've had a number of excellent opportunities in the department for teaching, for being a teaching assistant, and also have had _____ (3) from people not necessarily involved in my project, whether it be professor dropping off /up books they think I might be interested in, or just taking interest in my research and _____ (4) that I may not necessarily have or haven't thought of. It's been an absolute pleasure.

Since arriving at Western the funding that I have been able to gain from external fellowships and scholarships has been tremendous. The scholarship committee here at the department worked closely with me on my application to the Trudeau Foundation, which is Canada's highest award for the doctoral scholarships in the humanities and social sciences and _____ (5) their support and advice ... and the internal support of the university to support my travel for interviews and also other aspects of being awarded the Foundation scholarship

I feel that Western _____ (6) in this regards, especially our department for getting researchers in the department who not only care and are _____ (7) or in their specific field areas, but who also take the time to collaborate with students and to show students how to become that type of researcher and I would say that's the most added value aspect of the department.

- A. so my research looks at these problems**
- B. at the top of their disciplines**
- C. providing perspectives**
- D. get a sort of financial support and academic support**
- E. an incredible amount of support from**
- F. I was very fortunate to have**
- G. has an excellent reputation**