

Student conference: Academic Writing November 2010

- Form yourselves into groups of five or six
- Using the bluetack, stick the squares in the envelopes on the white A3 paper – ‘construct a map of the **writing process**

- **The Writing Process**
- **Characteristics of Academic Writing**
- **Achieving Flow and Balance**

Carve out a time to write and be disciplined



Show up

- When your body shows up to the page at the same time and place every day, eventually your mind will do the same.



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Exploring the Topic

Inexperienced writers

- tend not to explore different ways of addressing the task
- decide on an approach rather quickly

Experienced writers

spend considerable time exploring and evaluating alternative ideas, organisations and approaches to developing a text

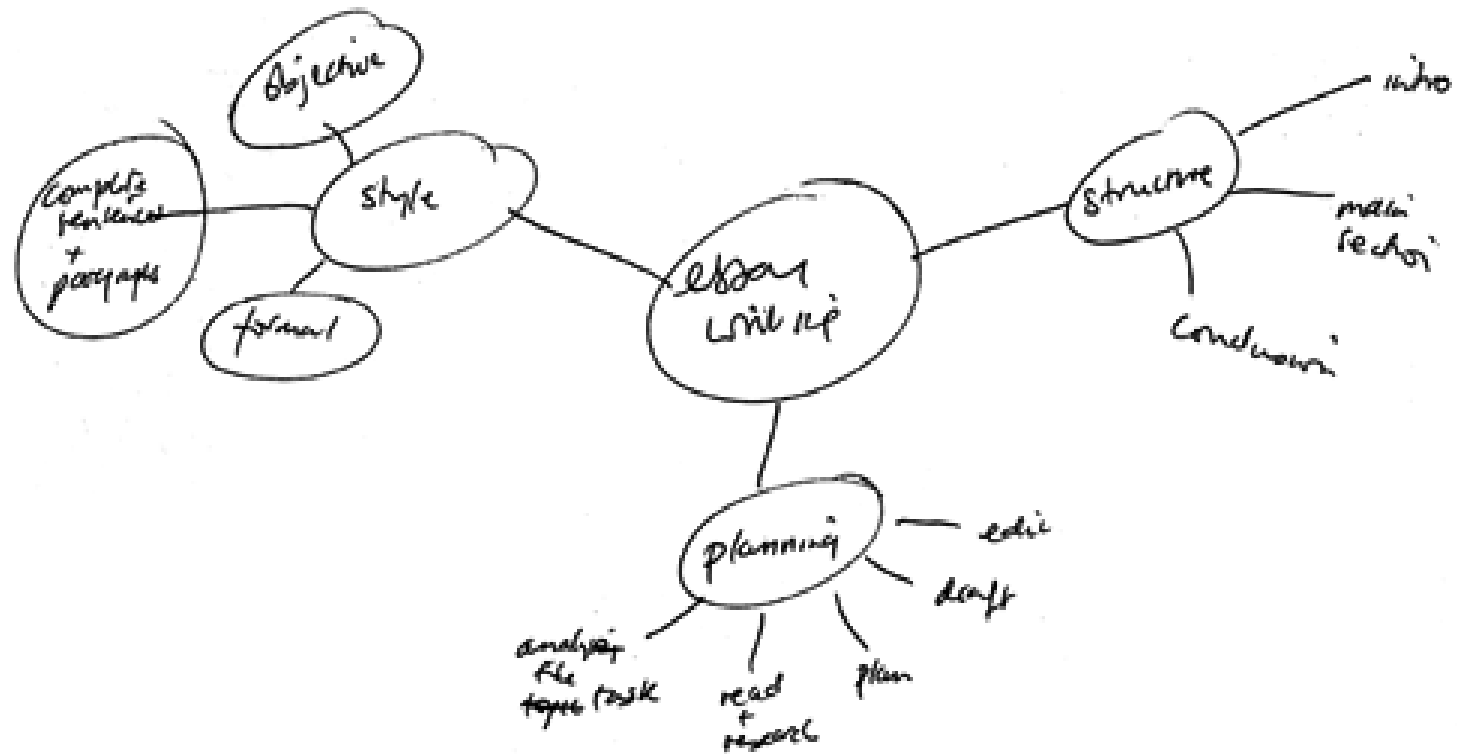
Planning

Inexperienced writers

- often make few plans before beginning to write
- prefer not to outline
- develop plans while writing

Experienced writers

- plan extensively before drafting
- plan by making notes, sketches, diagramming ideas and organisation
- revise plans while writing



Drafting

Inexperienced writers

- often struggle to produce text

Experienced writers

- use techniques to produce early drafts of text, e.g. splurge writing

Writer's block



Drafting

Inexperienced writers

- are preoccupied with grammar and mechanics in drafts

Experienced writers

- frequently stop to reread and reflect on the organisation and the content bearing in mind audience, purpose

- **Produce a minimum number of words per day; say 250 words or one paragraph.**

Try to leave something for the next day



Capture your thoughts



Drafting

Inexperienced writers

- write from their own point of view

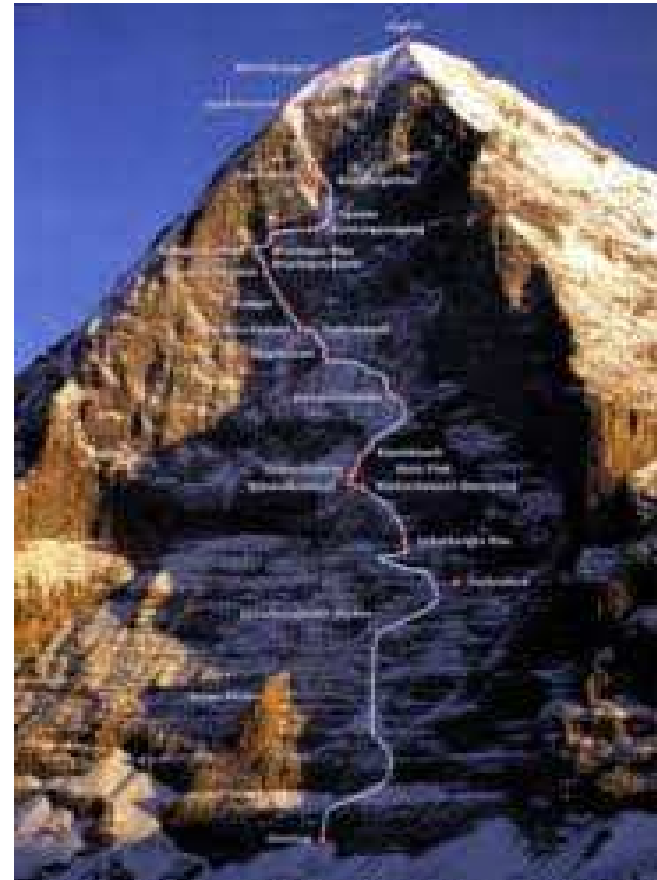
Experienced writers

- are able to draft from the point of view of the intended readers
- try to stand back from their drafts

Change roles

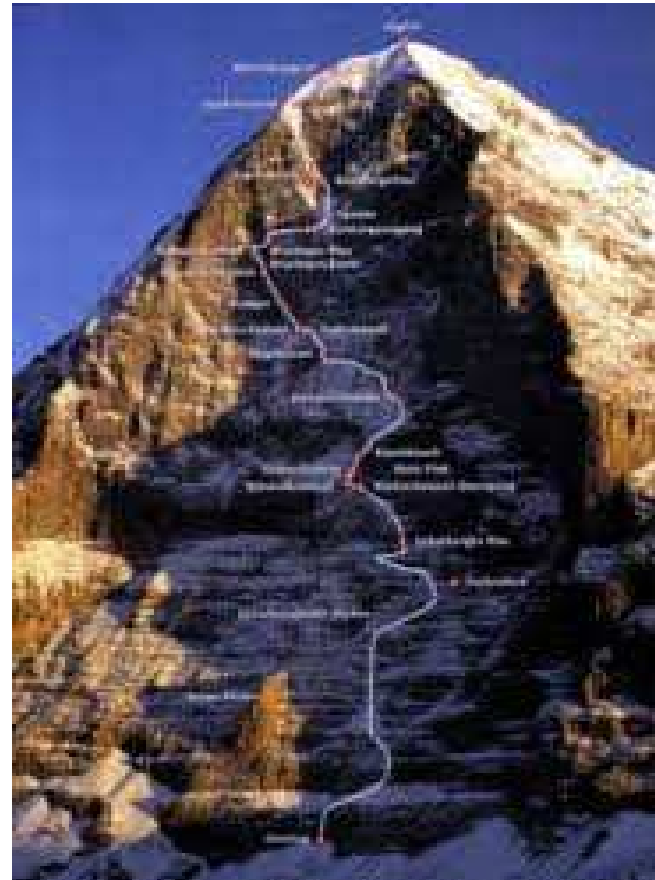


Stand back from your writing



Stand back from your writing

- Is the route to the 'top' unbroken?
- Do all the minor 'steps' move upwards?
- Can the minor 'steps' be 'carried out' more clearly?



Revising and Editing

Inexperienced writers

- view revising and proofreading as largely similar

Experienced writers

- tend to revise extensively at sentence and paragraph level
- are happy to discuss their writing and seek advice from peers

Use your voice



- “les phrases mal écrites ne résistent pas à cette épreuve”

Proofreading

- Applegate, Celia, and Pamela Potter, eds. *Music and German National Identity*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2002.
- Burrows, David. "A Dynamical Systems Perspective on Music." *Journal of Musicology* 15, no. 4 (1997).
- Carter, Tim. "The Sound of Silence: Models for an Urban Musicology." *Urban History* 29 (2002): 8-18.

Characteristics of Written Academic Style

Academic writing aims to be to be precise

- People tell me there's lots of racism in the health service.
- Anecdotal evidence points to high levels of racism in the National Health Service (Akinsanya, 1988; Beishon et al, 1995).

Academic writing aims to be impersonal

- People tell **me** there's lots of racism in the health service.
- Anecdotal evidence points to high levels of racism in the National Health Service (Akinsanya, 1988; Beishon et al, 1995).

Academic writing is evidence-based

- People tell me there's lots of racism in the health service.
- Anecdotal evidence points to high levels of racism in the National Health Service (Akinsanya, 1988; Beishon et al, 1995).

Academic writing avoids contractions

- People tell me **there's** lots of racism in the health service.
- Anecdotal evidence points to high levels of racism in the National Health Service (Akinsanya, 1988; Beishon et al, 1995).

Style shift : words

- worry
- story
- use
- a lot of
- not much
- look at
- give up
- find out
- trouble
- not ... any
- not enough
- concern
- account/anecdote
- deploy
- considerable
- little
- examine/analyse
- renounce
- determine
- difficulty
- no
- insufficient

Style shift

Tests **to find out** whether the cancer has spread can include a CT scan, an MRI, or a bone scan.

Tests **to determine** whether the cancer has spread can include a CT scan, an MRI, or a bone scan.

Style shift

The **trouble with** making comparisons with Neolithic and Palaeolithic samples is the result of the very different treatment of the deceased.

The **difficulty in** making comparisons with Neolithic and Palaeolithic samples is the result of the very different treatment of the deceased.

Style shift

Until the nineteenth century, **there was not much** known about the **history** and antiquities of Egypt and the Nile Valley.

Until the nineteenth century, **little** was known about the **history** and antiquities of Egypt and the Nile Valley.

Academic writing avoids over-generalisation

Muslims find the tone and claims of revisionism offensive.

Many Muslims find the tone and claims of revisionism offensive.

Academic writing avoids over-stating

- Past studies, which have been observational, have shown that poor patients have higher mortality rates after suffering a heart attack.
- Past studies, which have been observational, have shown that poor patients **tend to** have higher mortality rates after suffering a heart attack.

Academic writing expresses uncertainty

- The settlement had its origins in the Middle Bronze Age.
- The settlement **appears to** have had its origins in the Middle Bronze Age, although evidence of substantial occupation only appears in the Iron Age period.
- The site was then **probably** abandoned for some years, although **it is possible that** an, as yet undiscovered, pagan religious building **may have continued** in use into the Roman period.

Academic writing expresses uncertainty

- The Iraqi military **are** able to deploy these weapons within 45 minutes of a decision to do so;

Iraq's Weapons Of Mass Destruction The Assessment Of The British Government: September 2002

- The Iraqi military **may be** able to deploy these weapons within 45 minutes of a decision to do so;
- <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-iles/Politics/documents/003/08/27/August26AM.pdf>

Academic writing distances the author (shields)

- Children are better language learners than adults.
- It is commonly believed that children are better language learners than adults (Grass, 1991: 109).

Author distance + uncertainty + reference

- Drinking alcohol causes breast cancer in women.
- *Some studies suggest* that drinking alcohol also increases the risk of breast cancer. ¹²

Attributing to sources

- Carnoy (2006) argues that globalization tends to push governments away from these types of reforms
- According to Josephus the death of the 960 inhabitants of Masada and the destruction of the palace and the possessions were the premeditated acts of all the people acting in unison².
- The increase in testicular cancer incidence in Denmark has been levelling off for birth cohorts born after around 1963 (Jones, 2009).

Referencing: Harvard System

Wilber and Jameson (1980: 467) show how, in the past, when development was equated almost exclusively with economic growth, research into religion and development tended to consider how religion contributed to this.

REFERENCES

Wilber, CK and Jameson, K P (1980) "Religious Values and Social Limits to Development" *World Development* 8: 467-479.

Academic statements are supported by:

- argument
- example
- quotation
- statistics
- explanation
- reference to authority
- detail

Academic statements are supported

Journals have significant advantages as a means of international scholarly communication. They are relatively inexpensive. They use technologies which are available to virtually every nation and to most academic institutions, regardless of age or level of development. They define what is important, maintain standards, and also help to create an invisible college of those concerned with a topic. Through a well-established international infrastructure of library acquisition, new journals can reach concerned scholarly audiences fairly efficiently. Finally, as the traditional means of communicating knowledge internationally, journals are accepted and recognised by scholars and researchers. 

Academic statements are supported

The early feminist movement was greatly influenced by works like "On the Vindication of the Rights of Women" (1792) by Mary Wollstonecraft. She proposed a feminist agenda whose aims were to expose the exclusion of women from traditionally "male" spheres like politics, economics, education and religion, to take apart these structures, which denied women their deserved rights, and to attempt to achieve these rights for them in the male dominated spheres. These aims became a main focus for religious women in particular, at the time, in the United States.

Achieving cohesion (flow):
Known information precedes new information

Familiar/known
information → New information

Achieving cohesion (flow):
Known information precedes new information

Of all the wars in American history, none has exceeded the Civil War in the huge number of wounded and dead.

The memory of **this terrible carnage**



is one of the reasons for the animosity between North and South today.

Sentence patterning with a linked theme

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- In the above discussion several advantages of the X have been considered. It is important however to also examine Y
- Having examined the role of X in Y, it is now necessary to consider the
- In the second section, we will now move on to look at the politics of two novels which also incorporate the 1842 strikes into their narratives

Academic writing displays coherence

- A coherent paragraph will have a single sentence which articulates the main point.
- A coherent paragraph will have several consistent topic strings.

Academic writing displays parallel structure

Her degree, her work experience, and being able to complete complicated projects qualify her for the job.....

Her degree, her work experience, and her ability to complete complicated projects qualify her for the job.

Academic writing displays parallel structure

The grant proposal appears to have been written intelligently, carefully and with the full cooperation of all the agencies whose interest this project involves.

..... written with intelligence, (with) care and with the full cooperation of all the agencies ...

Academic writing balanced coordination

Neither the vacuous emotion of day time soap opera nor the mindless eroticism of night time sitcoms reflects the best that British artists are able to create or that British audiences are willing to support.

Adapted from: Williams (1990) *Style: Towards Clarity and Grace*, The University of Chicago Press, London.

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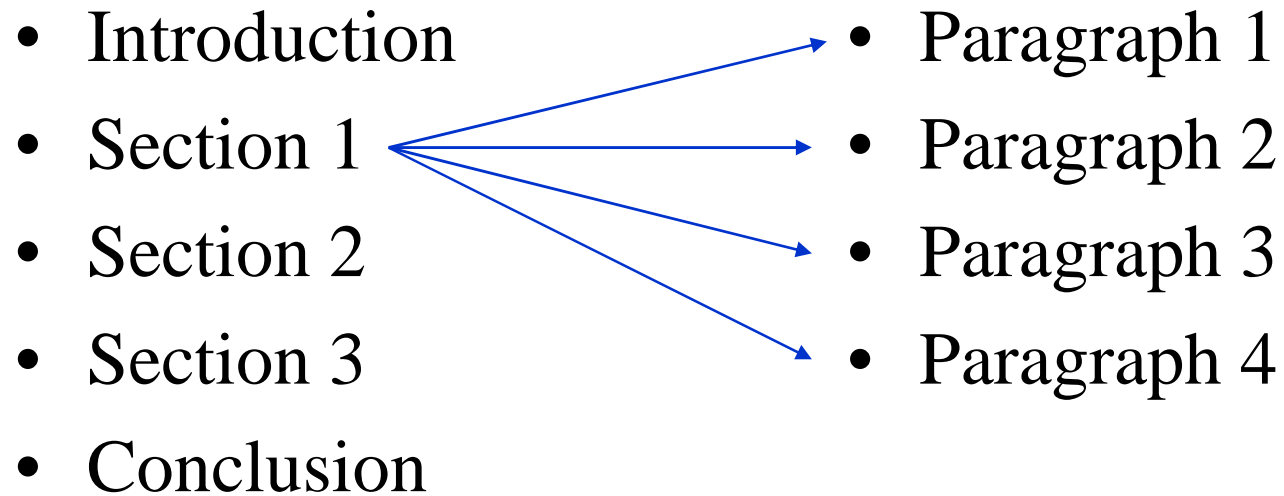
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or

that British audiences are willing to support.

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Balanced organisation



Common abbreviations

- *et al.*
- *abr.*
- *Ibid.*
- *cf.*
- *i.e.*
- *pass.*
- *viz.*
- *et alii* (and others)
- abridged
- *ibidem* (in the same place)
- *confer* (compare)
- *id est* (that is)
- *passim* (throughout)
- *videlicet* (namely)

Systematic treatment of numbers

- Numbers that cannot be written as two words are written in Arabic numerals (256)
- Compound numerals are usually hyphenated (twenty-one)
- Numbers which begin a sentence are usually written out

For more information, visit:

Academic Phrasebank at www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk

or

Academic Writing Tutorial Service at

<http://www.ulc.manchester.ac.uk/english/academicsupport/tutorial-service/>