

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES

COURSE CODE: M21EG01SE

Skill Enhancement Course

Postgraduate Programme

English Language and Literature

SELF LEARNING MATERIAL



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

Vision

To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.

Mission

To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

English for Academic Purposes

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Semester - III

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English for Academic
Purposes
M21EG01SE
Skill Enhancement Course
MA English
Semester - III



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

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DOCUMENTATION

Academic Committee

Prof. Dr. Lal C. A.	Dr. Sreehari A. C.
Prof. Dr. K. Balakrishnan	Dr. Manoj S.
Prof. Dr. Kishore Ram	Dr. C. S. Biju
Prof. Dr. M. Devakumar	Dr. K. J. Vargheese
Prof. Dr. B. S. Jamuna	Dr. Indhu B.

Development of the Content

Dr. Anfal M.

Review

Content	: Dr. Chandrasekharan Praveen
Format	: Dr. I. G. Shibi
Linguistics	: Swapna N.R.

Edit

Dr. Chandrasekharan Praveen

Scrutiny

Dr. Vincent B. Netto, Dr. Anfal M., Dr. Erfan K., Dr. Anupriya Patra, Dr. Sucheta Sankar, Dr. Aravind S. G.

Co-ordination

Dr. I. G. Shibi and Team SLM

Design Control

Azeem Babu T. A.

Cover Design

Jobin J.

Production

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MESSAGE FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear,

I greet all of you with deep delight and great excitement. I welcome you to the Sreenarayanaguru Open University.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University was established in September 2020 as a state initiative for fostering higher education in open and distance mode. We shaped our dreams through a pathway defined by a dictum 'access and quality define equity'. It provides all reasons to us for the celebration of quality in the process of education. I am overwhelmed to let you know that we have resolved not to become ourselves a reason or cause a reason for the dissemination of inferior education. It sets the pace as well as the destination. The name of the University centres around the aura of Sreenarayanaguru, the great Renaissance thinker of modern India.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University rests on the practical framework of the popularly known "blended format". Learner in distance mode obviously has limitations in getting exposed to the full potential of the classroom learning experience. Our pedagogical basket has three entities viz Self Learning Material, Classroom Counselling and Virtual Modes. This combination is expected to provide high voltage in learning as well as teaching experiences. Care has been taken to ensure quality endeavours across all the entities. The PG programme in English Language and Literature is benchmarked with similar programmes of other state universities in Kerala. Skill Enhancement Courses occupy the curriculum of the PG programme with a view to expose the learner to discipline-specific skills. This is an important step of the university to provide new experiences of vibrant content of the discipline. The details have been designed at par with similar courses of other premier institutions imparting skill training. We assure you that the university student support services will closely stay with you for the redressal of your grievances during your studentship.

The University is committed to provide you stimulating learning experience. The Self Learning Materials have been drawn up with a very clear prescription. It recognizes the autonomy of an adult learner and a journey through the treasures of the curriculum structured with provisions for interactive learning, interrogative reflections on the content and didactic discussion through illustrative scenarios. The University takes a strong position that the learner is to be engaged in a dialogue with the content and the materials are shaped to elicit reflections in the form of questions. The questions of the learner are considered to be the vital milestones in the pedagogy of the system of the University as well as the trajectory of the learner's progression. I would like to request you to bestow your personal attention in generating questions after having an intense dialogue with the content, as it has connection with the internal assessment.

Feel free to write to us about anything that seems relevant regarding the academic programme.

Wish you the best.



Regards,
Dr. P. M. Mubarak Pasha

01.02.2024

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Introduction to Academic Writing

BLOCK-01

Block Content

Unit 1 : Characteristics of Academic Writing in English

Unit 2 : Essential Skills for Effective Academic Writing

Unit 3 : From Pre-Writing to Paragraphs, Essays, and Reports



Unit 1

Characteristics of Academic Writing in English

Learning Outcomes

The content, discussion and assignments in this Unit are aligned with the following learning outcomes:

- ▶ understanding the main features of academic writing in English.
- ▶ learn techniques to develop strong academic writing skills.
- ▶ know the common genres and their conventions.
- ▶ gain skills in research, analysis, logic, and documentation.

Background

Academic writing is like going on a long hike through a forest, with each sentence being another step on the path. As we keep walking deeper into new, complex ideas, we follow the trail made by academics before us. Yet while we all take the same path, no two travelers' journeys are the same because we all bring different memories and experiences.

So go slowly. Be open and patient. Hard words may snag us if we hurry. It's better to walk step-by-step. Take time to take in new sights and sounds. Stop often to write down new insights. If a passage is tough, stay with it. The meaning will come through. In academic writing, it's not speed that counts. What matters is how much wonder we find along the way.

Keywords

Formality, Complexity, Precision, Objectivity, Genres, Mechanics, Skills

Discussion

1.1.1 Basic Features of Academic Writing

Academic writing in the English language adheres to a sequential structure, where a central point or theme is presented, and each component contributes to the primary argument without digressions or redundancies. The primary objective of academic writing is to convey information rather

► Concise and structured

than to entertain the reader. Furthermore, it strictly adheres to the standard written form of the language. Within the realm of academic discourse, several key attributes are frequently discussed, defining its nature as being complex, formal, objective, explicit, hedged, and responsible. Additionally, precision and accuracy in language use are important, with a strong emphasis on organisation and meticulous content planning.

► Complex and formal

1.1.1.1 Complexity

Academic writing demonstrates greater complexity in written language compared to its spoken counterpart. Written texts exhibit lexical density, with a higher proportion of lexical words relative to grammatical words. They also display brevity while incorporating longer and more intricate words and phrases. Furthermore, written language encompasses an increased usage of noun-based phrases, nominalisations, and diverse lexical variations.

► Complex grammar and diction

In terms of grammar, written language surpasses spoken language in complexity by employing more subordinate clauses, “that/to” complement clauses, extended sequences of prepositional phrases, an abundance of attributive adjectives, and a higher frequency of passive verbs. The following features frequently manifest in academic written texts: noun-based phrases, subordinate clauses with embedded information, complement clauses, extended sequences of prepositional phrases, participles, passive verbs, lexical density, lexical complexity, nominalisation, attributive adjectives, and adjectival groups utilised as complements.

1.1.1.2 Formality

In general, adhering to the principles of formal academic writing necessitates avoiding the following in essays:

- a. Colloquial words and expressions, such as “stuff,” “a lot of,” “thing,” and “sort of.”
- b. Abbreviated forms, for example, “can’t,” “doesn’t,” and “shouldn’t.”
- c. Two-word verbs, like “put off” and “bring up.”
- d. Usage of sub-headings, numbering, and bullet points within formal essays, although these may be employed in reports.
- e. The incorporation of direct questions as part of the

► Avoid informal language and structure



narrative.

Let us now rephrase the given sentences by substituting the informal abbreviated forms with their more formal equivalents.

Informal: *The radical restructuring of British politics after 1931 does't lie in the events of 13-28 August, but in the changing attitudes within the National Government.*

Formal: *The radical restructuring of British politics after 1931 **lies not** in the events of 13-28 August, but in the changing attitudes within the National Government.*

Informal: *It's gonna be a long day.*

Formal: *It is anticipated to be a lengthy day.*

Informal: *We gotta go now.*

Formal: *We have to depart immediately.*

1.1.1.3 Precision

In academic writing, precision is paramount when employing information, dates, or figures. Avoid vague phrases like “a lot of people” and opt for specific quantifications, such as “50 million people,” whenever possible. Efforts to meet a word limit may lead to the inadvertent inclusion of superfluous words, and the reader can avoid this attempt.

► Precise

- ~~A man called~~ Robert Smith discovered...
- ~~In a book called~~ *Living in Australia*...

Examine the sentence below for improvements in its composition.

I have researched many academic textbooks, and most of them say that human resource planning is not used effectively by companies.



Much of the current research suggests that human resource planning is not used effectively by companies. (In the forthcoming sentences, it would be beneficial to make explicit references to particular aspects of this research.)

1.1.1.4 Objectivity

Objectivity in academic writing pertains to prioritising the information presented and the arguments posited over personal aspects. In this context, the fundamental essence of academic study and writing is given importance. The reader's interest lies in comprehending the scholar's research, studies, and findings that culminate in their diverse conclusions. As such, the focus should be firmly rooted in lectures, readings, discussions, and research, with a clear demarcation of their sources.

- ▶ Objective stance; information-focused

Find out which is objective in the following sections:

- ▶ *At the heart of numerous contentious debates in bilingual education and second language pedagogy and testing lies the inquiry into the definition of “language proficiency” and the inherent implications across different languages. Researchers have proposed strategies to enhance second language teaching and testing through a “communicative” approach (e.g., Canale and Swain, 1980; Oller, 1979b). This perspective posits that emphasizing communication aligns more effectively with the essence of language proficiency, as opposed to prioritizing the acquisition of isolated language skills.*
- ▶ *The precise definition of language proficiency remains uncertain, but it has been a subject of prolonged discussion. Certain researchers have explored methods to enhance communicative teaching and testing, considering the functional aspect of language. It is essential to acknowledge that language primarily serves as a tool for communication rather than a mere subject of study, and this consideration should be reflected in our teaching and assessment approaches.*

1.1.1.5 Explicitness

Academic writing is explicit concerning the relationships within the text. Moreover, it is essential for the writer in English to maintain transparency, ensuring that the various components of the text are clearly interconnected. These connections can be made explicit through the adept utilisation of different signalling words.

- ▶ Explicitly convey relationships



See the use of the underlined word in the following example:

The Bristol 167 was envisioned as a significant leap forward for Britain, aiming to rival American aircraft like the Lockheed Constellation and Douglas DC-6, which lacked the non-stop transatlantic flight capability. Additionally, it was intended to become the largest aircraft ever constructed in Britain. However, as the war concluded, the design encountered substantial challenges and difficulties.

1.1.1.6 Accuracy

Academic writing adheres to precise and accurate vocabulary usage, where numerous subjects entail terminology with highly specific and precise meanings. A notable example can be found in Linguistics, where a clear distinction exists between “phonetics” and “phonemics,” a differentiation that is not typically observed in general English. By employing subject-specific terminology and jargon appropriately, scholars can convey complex ideas more concisely and distinctly. For instance, in the field of medicine, precise language is crucial when discussing medical conditions, treatments, and pharmaceuticals. Terms such as “myocardial infarction” instead of “heart attack” or “antipyretic” instead of “fever reducer” ensure that medical professionals and researchers communicate with utmost accuracy and clarity.

► Formal and explicit

1.1.1.7 Hedging

Academic writing, including scientific writing, is commonly perceived as purely factual and informative. However, it is now acknowledged that cautious language, known as “hedging” or “vague language,” plays a significant role in academic discourse. In essence, authors need to deliberate on their position regarding a subject and the strength of their claims, with various disciplines adopting distinct approaches to achieve this.

► Hedging asserts caution

The following words and phrases can be used for hedging:

Introductory verbs	e.g. indicate, suggest, look like, seem, tend, doubt, think, believe, be sure, appear to be
Certain lexical verbs	e.g. believe, suggest, assume
Certain modal verbs	e.g. could, will, would, must, might, may

► Common hedging devices

Adverbs of frequency	e.g. sometimes, often, usually
Modal adverbs	e.g. perhaps, definitely, conceivably, probably, possibly, certainly
Modal adjectives	e.g. probable, definite, clear, possible, certain
Modal nouns	e.g. possibility, probability, assumption
That clauses	e.g. It could be the case that e.g. There is every hope that e.g. It might be suggested that
To-clause + adjective	e.g. It may be possible to obtain e.g. It is important to develop e.g. It is useful to study

► Paraphrasing and summarizing

1.1.1.8 Responsibility

In the realm of academic writing, it is obligatory upon the writer to exhibit a profound comprehension of the source text. Furthermore, the writer bears the responsibility of providing substantial evidence and valid justifications for any assertions put forth. To achieve this, two fundamental techniques come into play: paraphrasing and summarising, for example. Paraphrasing involves rephrasing the original text in one's own words, offering a fresh perspective while preserving the core meaning and ideas. Summarising, on the other hand, entails concisely capturing the key points and main arguments from a more extensive piece of writing.

► Acknowledge sources

However, it is equally crucial to give due credit to the sources that have contributed to the ideas presented. This acknowledgement is achieved through a system of citation, which provides readers with the necessary information to trace back and verify the original sources. Various citation styles, such as APA, MLA, and Chicago, are employed based on the academic discipline.

1.1.1.9 Organisation

Academic writing is characterised by its effective organisation, seamlessly transitioning from one section to another in a coherent manner. A useful starting point in this process is to identify the genre of your text, as it leads to identifying the structure of the writing. Learners encounter various types of academic documents, such as essays,

- ▶ Structured and responsible

laboratory reports, case studies, book reviews, reflective diaries, posters, research proposals, and more, which are grouped into genre families or genres. These genres are delineated by their intended purpose, target audience, and structural elements. Typical structures of writing in various genres can greatly assist in achieving a well-organised piece of writing, as they will be discussed in the following sections.



Fig. 1.1.1 Features of academic writing

1.1.1.10 Planning

Academic writing follows a well-structured approach, typically occurring after thorough research and assessment, guided by a specific purpose and plan. The usual procedure for composing an extended essay or assignment involves the following steps:

- ▶ Begin by comprehending the question or brief what is required to write by considering the subject, purpose, and intended audience.
- ▶ Reflect on your existing knowledge of the subject and make written notes.
- ▶ Conduct a comprehensive search in the library or on the internet for relevant books, articles, or websites.
- ▶ Study the materials found.
- ▶ Take detailed notes from the books and articles, ensuring to record full source details.
- ▶ Organise the gathered information to structure your work coherently.
- ▶ Create your first draft, either by typing or writing it.
- ▶ Seek informal feedback by discussing your first draft with peers, classmates, and, ideally, your

- ▶ From research to final proofing

- ▶ Requires strong writing techniques

lecturer.

- ▶ Revise your draft, incorporating any valuable feedback received, and repeat the process as needed.
- ▶ Produce your second draft after making necessary revisions.
- ▶ Carefully proofread your second draft for errors or inconsistencies.
- ▶ Produce the final version, ensuring that all aspects are checked and verified for accuracy.

1.1.2 Development of Academic Writing Skills

Out of many areas of skills needed to develop academic writing, the following are nine techniques to enhance style in academic writing. A good writing style promotes clarity, concision, and engagement for the reader. Mastery of the following techniques will empower one to write more effectively.

Active Voice: Use active voice rather than passive voice. Passive voice distances the subject from the action, making writing vague. Active voice directly connects the subject to the action, creating clearer, more engaging sentences.

Example:

Passive: The stepmother's house was cleaned by Cinderella.

Active: Cinderella cleaned the stepmother's house.

Punctuation: Punctuation provides structure and emphasis. Mastering punctuation helps writing flow logically and highlights key points.

*Semicolons separate related independent clauses.
Colons introduce lists or emphasise important ideas.
Dashes set off explanatory information.*

Vary Sentence Structure: Repeating simple sentence patterns creates monotonous writing. Varying structure improves flow and engages readers. Techniques like combining sentences, writing in passive voice, or adding descriptive clauses can modify sentence structure.

Avoid Choppy Sentences: Join related short sentences to vary in length and connect ideas. Using transitional phrases like “additionally” or “consequently” makes connections clear.



Conciseness: Convey ideas precisely, without unnecessary words. Prioritise clarity over impressive vocabulary.

Formal Language: Academic writing uses formal and sophisticated language. Avoid casual phrases and slang. Expand vocabulary through reading; use new words appropriately.

- ▶ Structured, attributed, concise

Applying these principles will enhance academic writing style, enabling students to craft compelling arguments and convey complex ideas with precision and polish. Remember that consistent practice is key to mastering these techniques.

1.1.3 Key Elements of Academic Writing

Academic writing requires careful attention to several key elements in order to create a strong paper that will impress readers. When crafting an academic paper, writers must consider components such as presentation, flow, style, organisation, and audience. Neglecting any of these crucial facets can lead to a weak, disorganised paper that fails to convey key information effectively.

- ▶ Carefully crafted communication

Presentation is a critical element of academic writing. Before presenting a paper, writers must proofread thoroughly to correct all errors. Fixing grammatical mistakes, eliminating spelling errors, and removing any other unintentional problems are essential. Academic papers with frequent errors appear sloppy and hastily prepared, making readers doubt the writer's credibility and grasp of the material. Careful proofreading polish the presentation and helps writers make the best impression possible.

- ▶ Polish presentation

Creating a strong **flow** of ideas is another key consideration. Writers must connect sentences and paragraphs so that readers can follow the progression of the text easily. Using transitional words and phrases to shift smoothly from one idea to the next promotes cohesion. Discussing information in a logical order, such as moving from older research to newer conclusions, also contributes to robust flow. When an academic paper lacks clear flow, readers quickly become confused and struggle to extract meaning from the text.

- ▶ Use transitions; logical progression

Writers must also use an appropriate **style** for their audience and purpose. Academic writing calls for a formal style. Consistency in the chosen style is critical throughout the paper; shifting tones abruptly alienate readers. Writers should analyse published papers in their discipline to ensure their style mirrors the conventions of the field. Using a casual, conversational tone instead of a serious, formal voice reduces

- ▶ Formal and consistent style

academic credibility.

Carefully **organising** information is another hallmark of strong academic writing. Writers structure papers to prioritise key points and concepts, arranging them in a sequence suited for the genre and audience. Patterns like cause-effect, compare-contrast, classification, and others help organise content. The clear organisation facilitated conveying information by creating a logical structure. Papers without a solid organisational framework appear disjointed and confuse readers.

► Academic organization

Finally, writers must consider their **audience** and tailor their papers accordingly. For student writers, the primary audience is usually the instructor. Fulfilling the teacher's expectations for the assignment is essential. Despite having a professor as the main reader, academic writing should still utilise a formal tone and structure. Neglecting to adhere to academic conventions will displease instructors and result in lower grades.

► Audience consideration

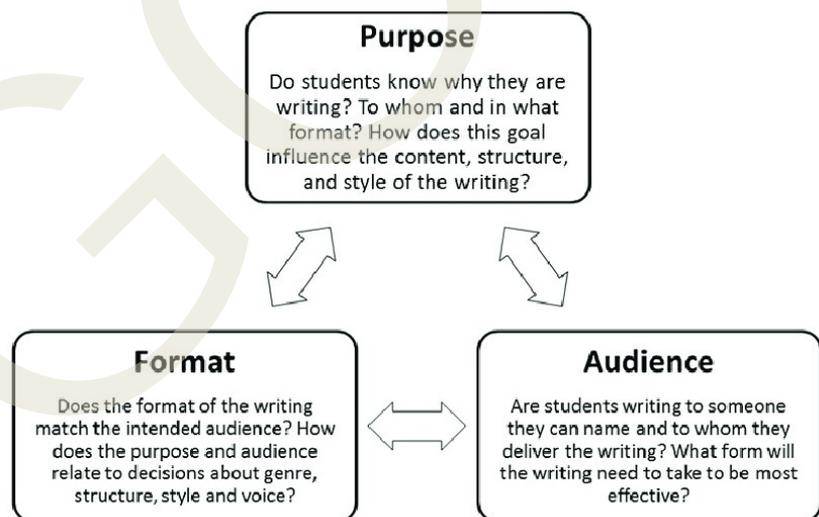


Fig. 1.1.2 The Purpose-Format-Audience triangle in academic writing

1.1.4 Mechanics of Writing

Writing mechanics refer to the technical elements of composition that ensure writing is clear, consistent, and correctly formatted. This includes areas like punctuation, spelling, grammar, sentence structure, paragraph organisation, and overall logical flow of ideas. Proper use of writing mechanics allows writers to effectively convey their intended meaning to readers.

► Writing mechanics



► Punctuation guidelines

Use **punctuation** to improve clarity and readability, maintaining consistency in your punctuation style. Apostrophes indicate contractions and possessives: employ the apostrophe alone for possessive singular nouns ending in s (e.g., *Keats' poems*), and use an apostrophe followed by another s for plural nouns ending in s (e.g., *the Joneses' house*). Colons introduce examples, explanations, or quotations. Employ commas to separate items in a series, set off parenthetical elements, and join independent clauses. Parentheses enclose parenthetical remarks. Dashes are used to set off parenthetical elements. Employ ellipses to indicate omissions in quotations. Scholarly writing should use exclamation points sparingly.

► Guidelines

Hyphens connect compound words and prefixes to capitalised words. Italics are used for titles of published works, foreign words, and words used as linguistic examples. Parentheses enclose parenthetical remarks. Periods signal the end of sentences and abbreviations. Single quotation marks are used for definitions. Semicolons separate items containing internal commas. Add accents and umlauts to foreign words as required. Square brackets are used for interpolations.

- *Period* (.)
- *Question Mark* (?)
- *EM-Dash* (-)
- *Slash* (/)
- *Ellipses* (...),
- *The comma* (,)
- *Apostrophe* (')
- *Semicolon* (;)
- *The exclamation point* (!)
- *Angle brackets* (<>)
- *Parenthesis* ()
- *Square brackets* ([])
- *The hyphen* (-)
- *Colon* (:)
- *Braces* ({})
- *Quotation marks* ("")

Fig. 1.1.3 Common punctuation marks

► Number and date formatting

Regarding **numbers**, spell out numbers one through ninety-nine and use numerals for larger numbers and technical discussions. Place commas in numbers over 999 (e.g., *1,000*). Indicate number ranges by providing the last two digits of the second number (e.g., *21-28, 1023-89*). Use words for percentages below ten percent. Dates should be written as Month Day, Year (e.g., *July 31, 2023*). Capital Roman numerals for numbered series (e.g., *Part II*).

Use **spelling** and **word division** in the correct form. Divide words based on pronunciation or word origin. Reproduce accents and umlauts. Use “ae,” “oe,” and “UE” instead of “æ,”

► Spelling and word formatting

“œ,” and “ß.” Many compounds are now written as one word (e.g., *encyclopaedia*) or two (e.g., *social security*). **Italicise** titles of published works, except for sacred writings. Use quotation marks for unpublished works and parts of larger works. Capitalise major words in English titles, and in French, capitalise only proper nouns in titles.

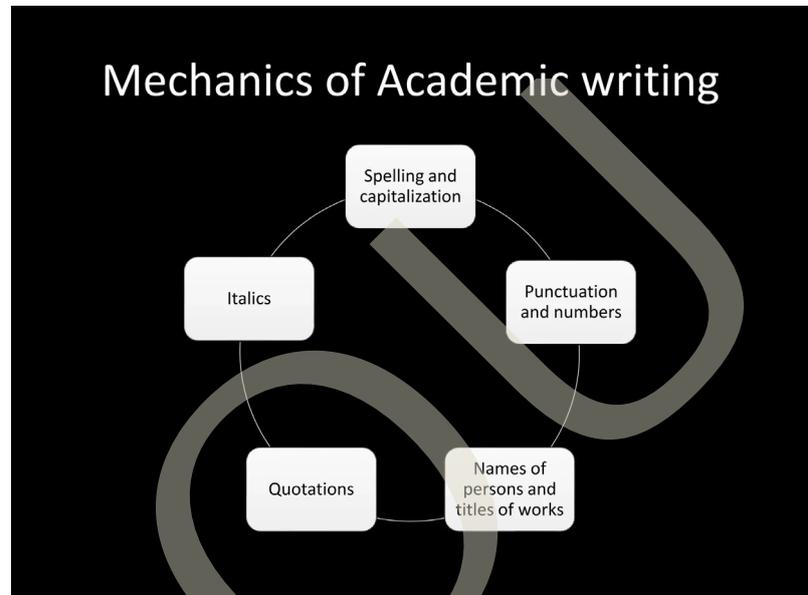


Fig. 1.1.4 Mechanics of academic writing

► Quotation formatting and capitalization

For **quotations**, reproduce them precisely, including spelling, punctuation, and capitalisation. Use slashes to separate lines of poetry and indent verse quotations over three lines. Indicate omissions with ellipses and use brackets for interpolations and changes. Place periods and commas inside quotation marks, while colons introduce quotations. Regarding **capitalisation**, capitalise the first and all main words in English titles. Avoid capitalising subject pronouns or days/months. Capitalise authors' names as they prefer, and omit titles like “Mr.” and “Dr.” unless necessary.

1.1.5 Genres of Academic Writing

Academic writing includes different genres or types, of texts. Each genre has specific conventions for structure, style, content, and purpose. To write effectively in the academic field, you need to understand and follow the expected conventions of the genre you are writing in. A genre can be defined as a category of texts that share similar purposes, structures, and styles, as determined by expert writers in that field. The shared purposes and rationale of a genre shape the typical structure and style choices writers make.

► Academic writing genres



To properly grasp the different academic genres, you need to understand key facets that make each genre distinct:

1. Thematic structure - the topics and focus of the writing
2. Formal features - the appearance and organisation of the writing
3. Tone and situation of address - the formality and feel of the writing
4. Rhetorical function - the aims of the writing
5. Structure of implication - what the writing assumes or implies
6. Frame - the context and situation of the writing

► Understanding academic genres

The following are some key genres/areas that are mostly used in academic writing.

1.1.5.1 Paragraph Structure

A paragraph is like a short journey through words, transporting the reader to a new perspective. The topic sentence is the guide, introducing the destination. The supporting sentences are the path, revealing the sights and sounds along the way. The conclusion is the summary, reminding the traveller of all they have seen. Each sentence contributes its own hue to the paragraph's portrait of meaning. The topic sentence sketches the outline, while the body sentences fill in details, bringing colour and texture. The conclusion provides the finishing touches, highlighting the most important brush strokes so the reader understands the full picture.

► Paragraph as a literary journey

A paragraph can capture a moment like a camera, freezing an insight or experience within its sentences. The topic sentence focuses on the lens, while supporting sentences capture background, context, and nuance. The conclusion clicks the shutter, imprinting the image in the reader's mind. Or a paragraph can be a train of thought, with the topic sentence as the engine beginning the journey and each supporting sentence as a car adding momentum. The conclusion is the caboose, confirming we have arrived at our destination. Paragraphs transport thoughts and ideas, carrying the reader to new perspectives.

► Captured moment or train of thought

Great paragraphs start by stirring up creative ideas. Think of Darwin seeing exotic animals that lead to his theories. Or Einstein daydreaming thought experiments at his patent office before his eureka moments in physics. Like them, we

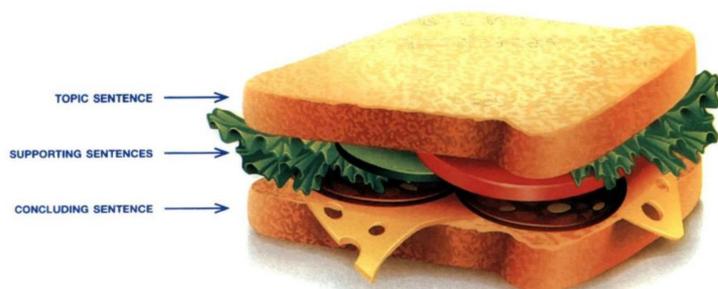
► Creative ideas for great paragraphs

need to brainstorm first, letting concepts swirl together. An outline provides structure, the framework to build our literary skyscraper on. With an outline in hand, we expand each idea into a rich analysis. A rough draft forms as we logically link each sentence to the next. We might analyse Socrates' dialectic method or Shakespeare's metaphors. But our writing is still raw, fresh with new concepts.

► Crafting paragraphs

Now the real work begins. We trim wordy clauses to sculpt crisp and high-impact sentences. The syntax is arranged for optimal flow, guiding the reader's mind on a narrative arc. We review word choices - are descriptions vivid and compelling? Do phrases pop with wit or wisdom? We refine the paragraph structure itself with smooth topic sentences and bookending insights. Finally, we spice the factual core with artistic flourishes. Dry facts come alive through analogy, irony, lyrical language. Like Plato's Allegory of the Cave, metaphors paint mental pictures clarifying abstract truths. Our paragraph now complete, we step back and admire the magnificent cathedral of thought we have architected, transformed from raw materials into a finished masterpiece.

A well-constructed paragraph is similar to a delicious sandwich. The opening sentence introduces the topic just as the top slice of bread covers the ingredients. The body sentences provide details and examples, acting as the sandwich fillings. Finally, the concluding sentence wraps up the main idea, mirroring how the bottom bread encases the sandwich. Together, the introduction, body, and conclusion work to convey a complete thought, making the paragraph satisfying and cohesive.



Now, read the following paragraph and note the topic sentence, supporting sentence and concluding sentences. What was it that scared the barefoot boy?

Barefoot Boy

When I was a young boy, I had a scary experience one summer evening. My parents were inside having dinner while I played barefoot in the yard with my toys, feeling the soft grass under my feet and smelling the sweet perfume of the flowers. I looked up at the stars, admiring their beauty, when suddenly something cold and smooth slid over my toes. I froze and saw a snake slithering right over my feet! My heart raced in fear. Once it moved on, I screamed for my parents, who came and captured the snake. I was so frightened that I never played barefoot outside again after that night. The memory of the snake gliding over my bare feet still makes my pulse quicken when I think back on it today.

► Structure and sample

The topic of the paragraph is the scary experience a young boy had one summer evening. There are six supporting sentences that narrate how the boy's frightening encounter with a snake sliding over his bare feet while playing outside ended his habit of going barefoot outdoors. The concluding sentence states that the memory of the snake sliding over his bare feet remains pulse-quicken for the boy.

1.1.5.2 Academic Essays

► Constructing ideas

Writing an academic essay is like building a house of ideas - you must carefully construct a unified frame to support your argument. Just as a house is built one brick at a time, an essay progresses linearly, laying its concepts one after another. So the writer must place each idea in an order that makes logical sense to the reader like a mason mortaring bricks in sequence to stack a wall. If the structure is sound, with each part logically connected, the reader can follow and appreciate the architecture of the essay, just as we admire a well-built home.

► Structuring a house of ideas

The focus of an essay, its main argument, determines how that house of ideas is structured. It decides what information and ideas make up the rooms and floors - the details readers need to appreciate the dwelling. It also sets the sequence in which readers should visit each room, like a home's floor plan guides movement from the foyer to the kitchen to the bedroom. So an essay's structure fits its central claim like rooms in a custom-designed house. While home styles have conventions, ultimately, each house is unique. Similarly, academic essay formats have guidelines, but no rigid formula dictates structure.

The Components of an Essay

An academic-style essay contains a mosaic of diverse ideas pieced together in specialised sections. Even in short essays, we can discern distinct rhetorical moves: the introduction lays the groundwork, the analysis builds the argument room by room, counterarguments anticipate doubts, and the conclusion seals the structure. Certain elements have set positions, like an entrance opening a house and a rooftop crowning it. But other materials can fill sections as needed - counterarguments may appear in a paragraph, standalone section, introduction, or concluding sentences. Background details (historical context, biographical tiles, summaries framing the argument, key term definitions) typically appear near the entrance, setting the foundation between the intro and first analysis or opening the door to a section requiring context. But background can mosaic anywhere deeper exploration demands its support.

- ▶ Academic essay as mosaic of ideas

We can view the essay's sections as engaging in a philosophical dialogue with the reader's mind, addressing the questions that naturally arise when considering the subject. A robust essay should anticipate and satisfy the reader's curiosity. If the essay leaves the reader intellectually unmoved, it likely reports facts rather than presents an idea worth exploring. Upon encountering the essay, readers reflexively inquire "what" - what evidence substantiates these claims? The essayist must now put forth and elucidate the findings that verify the argument, as a philosopher presents proof for her reasoning. This "what" or "demonstration" usually follows the introduction since an intellect craves evidence confirming an idea's validity. As it reports observations, this section holds the most content when the writing commences. But an essay must exemplify philosophical moderation - the "what" part should not exceed a third of your complete essay; otherwise, the piece will lack balance and read as a compendium rather than illumination.

- ▶ Philosophical dialogue

"How?" A reader will also ponder whether the essay claims apply universally. The corresponding question is "how": How does the thesis withstand counterarguments? How does introducing new material - a different perspective on the evidence or additional sources - affect the claims? An essay will typically include at least one "how" section. (Call it "complication" as it responds to the reader's complicating questions.) This usually comes after the "what", but keep in mind that an essay may complicate its argument multiple times, depending on length, with counterarguments potentially

- ▶ Addressing counter-arguments



appearing anywhere.

“Why?” Your reader will also ponder the wider implications of your claim: Why does your interpretation of a phenomenon matter to anyone besides you? This question addresses the larger context of the thesis. It enables readers to view your essay in a broader context. In answering “why”, your essay explains its own significance. Although you may allude to this question in the introduction, the fullest response properly belongs at the end. Omitting it will leave readers feeling the essay is unfinished or pointless.

- ▶ Explaining significance in essay sections

Structuring an Essay

The essay is a journey that the author and reader take together, hand in hand. As the writer, you must serve as a guide, lighting the path ahead so you may walk in shared understanding. Before setting out, you must survey the road - where does it begin, and where does it aim to arrive? Your essay statement (thesis) is the destination, shining in the distance, but the route remains obscured. To illuminate the way forward, you must illuminate the mind of your reader. What will they hope to see as you travel onward? What questions will arise, and how can you answer them? Only by following the logic of your reader can you structure an essay that convinces and enlightens. The narrative is your map and your lamp. By telling the story aloud you can shape each turn you take together. Every step of your argument will be lit by understanding. Clarity will reign over confusion. An enlightened writer lights the way for readers who seek wisdom. If you take care to address their needs, your words will glow ever brighter, guiding you all to greater comprehension.

- ▶ Journey of shared understanding

The essay-map (planning) unveils the journey ahead, foretelling twists and turns before they arise. It is the writer’s crystal ball, granting a vision of where readers will wander and falter along the way. With a map in hand, one can predict when background must illuminate the path, when counterargument may steer readers astray. The essay plan falls not on paragraphs but on grander arguments designed to guide readers to revelation. Like a captain charting the waters ahead, the enlightened writer marks the passage carefully. The map makes plain what is obscured: the route from ignorance to understanding. With it, essay and reader shall travel as one, borne swiftly toward wisdom by the currents of foresight. Try mapping like this:

- ▶ Essay-Map as foresight in planning

State your thesis in one or two sentences, then write another sentence explaining its significance. Indicate what a

- ▶ Thesis statement and significance explanation

- ▶ Developing essay plan

- ▶ Avoiding the 'Walk-Through'

reader could learn by exploring the claim with you. Here, you are anticipating your eventual answer to the “why” question in your conclusion. **Begin your next sentence like this:** “To be convinced by my claim, the first thing a reader needs to know is...” Then explain why this is the first thing a reader needs to know and name one or two pieces of evidence to support your case. This will start addressing the “what” question.

Start each subsequent sentence similar to this: “The other matter my reader should be aware of is...” Again, detail why, and point out some supporting evidence. Write on until you have developed your essay. Your plan should guide you through initial answers to the big questions - what, how and why. But stay flexible - the order isn't fixed. Essay plans change as your ideas develop.

A common mistake in students' essays is the 'walk-through' - summarising without your own structure. These essays follow their sources' path rather than developing their own. They state what happens rather than argue. Watch for paragraphs starting 'firstly', 'after' or 'then' - timewords that suggest simply recounting events. Also, beware of too many 'also' and 'additionally' - listings without analysis. Though not always bad, these hints often show an essay just chronicles its sources (first this, then that) or piles on examples, missing the deeper truth. To impress, structure your own journey through the ideas. Discuss, don't just describe.

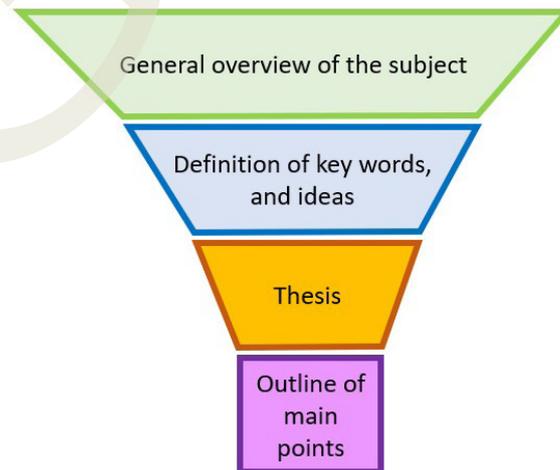


Fig. 1.1.5 Structure of academic writing

To get a more comprehensive understanding of structuring an essay with specific examples, you may click on the link provided: <https://www.port.ac.uk/student-life/help-and-advice/study-skills/written-assignments/basic-essay-structure> (Source: *Basic essay structure*, University of Portsmouth)

1.1.5.2 Report Writing

Academic reports are like explorers mapping new lands. The explorers venture into forests of data, scale mountains of concepts, and navigate oceans of ideas to make sense of complex issues. Their maps - the reports - chart what they have learned on their intellectual journeys. Through vivid descriptions, careful analyses, and clear structures, a report's pathways guide readers to new understandings. Like shining a torch in a dark cave, academic reports illuminate what we did not know before. They transform confusion into insight. Without these knowledge maps of dense jungles and wide seas, we would wander lost in ignorance. Thus, academic reports are the headlamps lighting our way forward.

- ▶ Academic reports as knowledge maps

Reports are like stories we craft to share understanding. We choose our words and shape our tale to suit those who will hear it. In college, work and seminars, reports tell facts plainly to teach and persuade. Though varied in kind, all aim to enlighten minds. So in penning any report, first know your reader's needs. Organise details for their gain, not your own fame. Express complex matters clearly, fully yet briefly. Let your writing illuminate the truth. This enlightening art takes patience and care. But done well, a report lays bare life's meanings to enrich many minds.

- ▶ Crafting good reports

The academic report is formal and structured, laying out facts and analysis. It aims to be impartial and objective. The business report is focused and practical. It provides recommendations to help make decisions and take action. The technical report gives step-by-step details and results. It describes processes, materials and outcomes thoroughly. These reports serve different needs. Academic reports share knowledge. Business reports drive profits. Technical reports explain how things work. Though diverse in style, they have a shared purpose. Academic rigour, business insight, and technical expertise - together they advance understanding. Each plays its part, contributing unique value. In clear language or formal tone, with passion or detachment, these reports spread knowledge.

- ▶ Types of reports

Structuring a Report

A report can be structured as follows: The **title** names our blank page, starting things off. The **executive summary** gives a preview of what is to come. The **introduction** provides background. Then, we build the report piece by piece. The **methods** explain our process. The **results** show what we found using tables and figures. The **discussion** looks at what

► Report structure

the findings mean. The **conclusions** highlight key points. The **recommendations** suggest future steps. The **references** list the sources we used. The **appendices** add extra information. Bit by bit, we fill the blank pages. We start with nothing but an idea. We end with a complete report, going from empty to full. The blank page becomes a finished work through step-by-step effort. Our writing journey transforms emptiness into something substantial. Thus, the report takes shape, purpose formed from void through diligent craft.

The report should be written in a formal, concise and simple style. Use active voice and avoid long and complex sentences. Headings, lists and visuals help break up text and increase readability. Try to remove any unnecessary words. Have someone proofread the report before submitting it. Before writing, identify the purpose, audience, required content and research needed. Collect adequate information to address the report brief. Organise material logically before drafting. Draft the main report body before the executive summary and introduction. Analyse findings and data before making recommendations. Proofread carefully and check for grammar, spelling, structure, and formatting consistency. Refine the report through multiple drafts if needed. Using consistent formatting and clear headings helps guide the reader through the document. A polished, professional look with visuals makes the report more engaging and supports communication. The final report should fulfil its aim and suit the needs of who it's for.

► Writing a formal and effective Report

Standard Structure of Report-

- Transmittal document (not common)
- Title page
- Table of contents
- Abstract/Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Bibliography
- Appendix



Improving Transportation Accessibility: A Report

Executive Summary

This report examines issues with transportation accessibility in our city and provides recommendations for improvement. Transportation barriers negatively impact disabled individuals and limit economic opportunities. Expanding accessibility promotes equity and growth.

Introduction

Accessible transportation enables participation in society for people with disabilities. However, many transit systems provide inadequate accessibility, including our city's buses and trains. This report explores the problems disabled residents face and potential solutions.

Methods

Information was gathered through a literature review of accessibility best practices and consultation with disability advocates. Quantitative data was collected on ridership and complaints. Qualitative input was solicited via interviews and surveys with disabled residents regarding their transportation challenges.

Results

Only 35% of buses and 50% of trains are wheelchair accessible. Last year, over 100 complaints were filed related to accessibility issues. Interviews and surveys revealed difficulties with relying on paratransit, high costs of rideshares, and other barriers.

Discussion

The results demonstrate substantial gaps in meeting accessibility needs. Compliance with ADA mandates is inconsistent and requires improvement. More stakeholder engagement and better data is needed on disabled riders' experiences. There are clear challenges but also opportunities to promote inclusion through upgrades.

Conclusions

Transportation accessibility issues are significant, negatively impacting mobility and access for the disability community. Upgrades to make transit more accessible

- ▶ Sample report structure

would enable increased ridership and economic activity.

Recommendations

Purchase only wheelchair accessible buses and trains.

Conduct annual surveys on disabled riders' needs.

Streamline paratransit reservations and expand service areas.

References

[List sources cited]

Appendices

[Include supplementary data]

1.1.5.3 Book Review

Book reviews critically analyse and assess the quality and significance of books. Reviews are typically 500-2000 words long and evaluate the book's overall perspective, argument, purpose, and contributions to the academic literature.

There are two main approaches to writing book reviews:

Descriptive Review: Descriptive review summarises the book's purpose, authority, anticipated audience, and key ideas in an objective manner. It uses direct quotes from the text to highlight important elements and provide examples.

Critical Review: Critical review offers an evaluation of the book and supports this critique with evidence from the text and comparisons to other research. Discusses the effectiveness of the author's argument and success in meeting the book's objectives and compares/contrasts with studies on the same topic. Most professors assign this type of analytical review.

When writing a critical book review, it is important to:

- ▶ Take notes while reading, focusing on identifying the central thesis or argument, assessing the evidence presented, detecting any biases, and evaluating contributions to the field.
- ▶ Develop an argument about the overall value of the work under consideration. Factors to consider include strengths, weaknesses, omissions, novel ideas raised, issues for further study, etc.
- ▶ Organise the review to include bibliographic information, a summary of contents and scope, notes on the research methods used, the critical evaluation of the text,



► Critical book review guidelines

- examination of front and back matter, and a conclusion.
- Provide a summary of the book's overarching purpose, main topics covered, conclusions reached, and assess whether the book accomplished its stated goals and objectives.
- Support your critique with specific examples, quotes, and comparisons to previous studies in the research literature.
- Use clear, concise, and unbiased language. Carefully distinguish between the author's views and your own perspective as the reviewer.
- Conclude with a final assessment of the overall quality of the work and its significance in advancing knowledge in the field. Recommend the book to potential readers if deemed appropriate.

Book reviews require very careful analysis and critique of complex scholarly ideas. It is important for reviewers to focus the evaluation on the book's treatment of the topic, rather than the topic itself. The aim is to provide a persuasive assessment regarding the merits and contributions of the work.

A Sample critical review of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is given below:

***The Great Gatsby: Fitzgerald's Masterpiece
with Blind Spots***

Author: F. Scott Fitzgerald

Novel: *The Great Gatsby*

Publisher: Scribner

Year: 1925

The *Great Gatsby* is a 1925 novel by American writer F. Scott Fitzgerald. Set in the Jazz Age on Long Island, it tells the tragic story of the mysterious Jay Gatsby and his obsession with Daisy Buchanan. The novel explores themes of idealism, social upheaval, excess, and the elusiveness of the American dream.

Fitzgerald crafts a poignant portrayal of a man searching for meaning in a time of shifting values and social dynamism. While concise, the novel evocatively conveys the energy and tension of the era. The prose is artistic yet efficient, with striking metaphors and euphonic cadence. However,

the female characters lack dimensionality, often falling into stereotypes. The narrative also neglects the perspective of the working class. Additional viewpoints could have enriched the commentary on economic disparities.

The social scientific aspects provide useful context but warrant more rigorous analysis regarding factors driving change. Greater attention to political, technological, and cultural forces could have strengthened the theoretical framing. Furthermore, the ending risks being interpreted as condoning Gatsby's obsessive attachment to Daisy, which has anti-feminist implications. Challenging this notion could have introduced valuable commentary on gender roles and toxicity.

A magnificently written portrait of longing and the American dream gone awry. However, the novel has blind spots regarding gender and class dynamics that merit examination. Its social theories beg deeper investigation, although the poetic prose compensates tremendously. A book that inspires as much critique as praise.

1.1.5.4 Textual Analysis

Have you ever read a book or watched a movie and felt like there was so much more below the surface? Textual analysis allows you to dive deeper and uncover the hidden meanings within texts. Follow these five simple steps to excel in a textual analysis.

Step 1: Get to Know the Text

Start by building a strong foundation of understanding. Read or watch the text and make a 1-2 page summary of the key events. This plot summary will help you recall important details. Next, make profiles of the main characters, including their backgrounds, personalities and roles in the story. Understanding the characters is crucial for analysis. Finally, research the context - when and where was the text created? What was happening historically at the time? This context gives insight into the author's perspective.

► Strong understanding

Step 2: Identify Central Themes

Now it's time to read between the lines. Look closely at the language, characters, plot and recurring ideas to pinpoint the central themes. Theme is the underlying meaning or main idea of a text. Common themes to look out for include love,



► Close reading

power, death, heroism and good vs evil. Themes add depth and sophistication to your analysis.

► Using examples

Step 3: Choose Your Examples

To support your analysis, you need strong examples from the text. Quotes are perfect evidence to back up your arguments. Make sure your examples relate clearly to your main themes. Also, identify the literary techniques within each example. Techniques like metaphor, imagery and symbolism help convey deeper meaning. Use a TEE (Technique, Example and Effect) table to organise your examples, techniques and analysis.

Technique	Example	Effect

Fig.1.1.6 A template of the TEE table

► Interpret meaning-fully

Step 4: Bring It All Together

Finally, it's time to put your textual analysis skills into action. In your essay or exam, use your examples and analysis of techniques to support your overall argument. Show how the author's choices prove your interpretation of the themes and purpose. Consider how the text affects the reader. With practice, you'll be able to unlock the secrets hidden within any text.

► Deep understanding

Following these simple steps will transform you into a textual analysis expert. You'll be able to discover deeper meanings within novels, films and media. Textual analysis helps you gain a richer appreciation for authors' choices and writing styles. With these new skills, you'll never read a book the same way again.

Let us take a look at an analysis of Macbeth as an example. Rather than a simple statement like this:

The play Macbeth showcases the harmful effects of unchecked ambition and guilt. This is revealed through Lady Macbeth's rhyming couplet that suggests it is "more secure to be what we demolish than to live in uncertain joy after destroying it." Additionally, the recurring motif of sleep builds on this theme. Macbeth states that they will "consume our food in fear, and sleep brings terrible dreams and tortures the mind

with lies.”

Our analysis should expand on how the examples and techniques support the thesis. This will look more like this:

In the play Macbeth, Shakespeare explores the disastrous effects of unchecked ambition and guilt. Lady Macbeth’s use of a rhyming couplet shows that she believes it is “safer to be that which we destroy/than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.” Her words reveal how ambition has twisted her morals, to the point where murder seems a better option than failure. The regular ABAB rhyme scheme gives her speech an eerie, chant-like quality, emphasizing how unnatural her thinking has become. Additionally, the motif of sleep reinforces the torment of a guilty conscience. Macbeth claims he will “eat our meal in fear, and sleep...in terrible dreams.” His inability to rest exposes how guilt haunts the murderous couple. Through these powerful examples and literary techniques, Shakespeare develops the play’s central themes of ambition and guilt.

► A sample comparison

1.1.5.5 Case Studies

Case studies provide a captivating way to directly apply what you are learning to real-world situations. Unlike textbooks, which teach abstract concepts, case studies let you analyse concrete examples that bring theory to life. When tackling a case study assignment, you will be investigating an organisation, event, or issue in-depth. The case could be based on a true story or a hypothetical scenario dreamed up by your lecturer. Your job is to act like a detective - piece together the facts, evaluate the situation, and recommend creative solutions.

► Concrete examples

There are two common types of case studies: 1) Descriptive case studies involve investigating the ins and outs of a particular scenario. You will explore the key details, events, and figures related to the case. The goal is to paint a complete picture so you can gain deeper insight. Descriptive case studies do not usually include solutions. 2) Problem-solving case studies require you to go beyond description and actually resolve issues within the case. After analysing the scenario, you will propose practical recommendations that integrate academic theory with real-world practice.

► Two types of case studies

To craft persuasive solutions, put yourself in the place of key stakeholders. Consider the needs, values, and objectives of those impacted. Tailor your language and tone to resonate with the intended audience. Propel them to action by communicating your ideas clearly and directly. Case studies bring education to



► Immerse and apply

life in a way textbooks cannot replicate. By investigating real organisations and events, you will gain practical experience conducting analysis and solving problems - skills that will serve you well in your future career. Immerse yourself in the scenario, think critically, and enjoy bringing textbook concepts to life! For relevant samples of case studies, you can access the website *Examples.com* and download the relevant samples from the following link: <https://www.examples.com/business/student-case-study.html>

► Outlining a proposal

1.1.5.6 Research Proposal

A well-written research proposal outlines a compelling project and convinces readers that you are qualified to complete it. In 450 words or less, your proposal should explain what you want to study, why it matters, and how you will conduct the research. Start with an introduction that frames the topic and highlights its significance. State your research question clearly. Next, demonstrate your command of existing literature. Synthesise previous findings, noting open questions and how your work builds on earlier research. Reprise your research question, situating it in the context of current knowledge.

► Verify and justify

Then, describe your methods. Explain your overall approach and specific techniques for gathering and analysing data. Discuss how you will interpret results and what you hypothesise you might find. This section verifies that your project is methodologically sound. Follow with an articulation of your objectives. Concisely explain what you aim to discover and achieve. Your objectives establish the relevance and value of the proposed research. Close with a list of references demonstrating you have immersed yourself in the literature.

► Quality proposal

Though brief, your proposal must contain all key elements involved in the research process. It should convince readers that you have an important, viable project and the expertise to complete it successfully. Avoid jargon and clearly establish how your work builds on and advances current scholarship. A cohesive, well-written proposal demonstrates your qualification for research and motivates approval and support. Sample research proposals for a PhD in English can be accessed in the following link on the University of Cambridge's website:

https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/research_prop.htm

1.1.5.7 Research Paper

Your research paper should tell the story of your work. Start

by explaining why you did the research. Then describe what you did and what you learned. Explain how your findings add to what others know. It helps to organise your paper so it is easy to follow. Many papers use the IMRaD format:

► IMRaD format

- Introduction - Why you did the work
- Methods - What you did
- Results - What you found
- Discussion - What your results mean

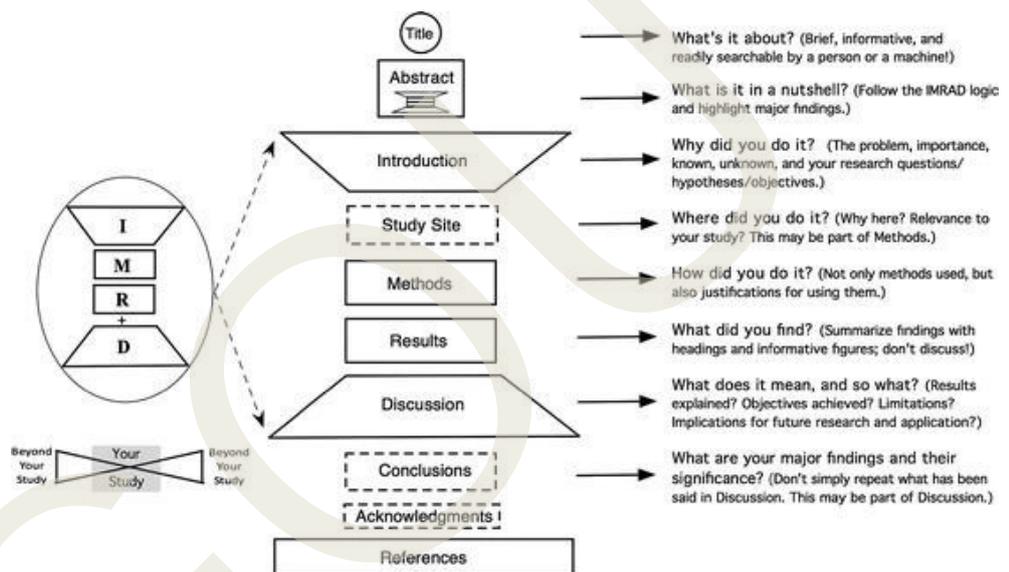


Fig. 1.1.7 IMRAD structure of research papers

You also need an abstract, keywords, acknowledgement, and a reference list. You can write the sections in any order. But put them in IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) order for the final paper. That way, your story flows logically from start to finish.

Researching resources for writing

Finding good sources is key to successful writing. Before you start, research potential sources to ensure you have credible evidence. Look in libraries and academic databases first. They contain vetted books, journals, magazines, and newspapers. For example, search databases like *JSTOR* for peer-reviewed articles on your topic from reputable publications like *Poetics* or *The English Historical Review - Oxford Academic*. These provide credible data to support your claims. Also, check newspapers and relevant magazines for up-to-date data.

► Need for potential sources

Use keywords related to your topic to find relevant sources. Prioritise scholarly books and peer-reviewed journals for the

► Credible sources

most credible information. Seek out primary sources like speeches, letters, or documents to bring a unique perspective. The internet has endless information but requires caution. Look for *.edu* or *.gov* sites from educational or government sources. Relevant professional organisations may also have useful, credible information. Avoid *Wikipedia*, blogs or personal websites. Evaluate the author's credibility and potential bias.

► Thorough research

Save bibliographic details and take detailed notes on facts, statistics, ideas and quotes to cite sources properly. This shows you have conducted thorough research and lets readers verify the information. Summarise ideas in your own words rather than copying word-for-word without citations. With focus and persistence, you can find excellent sources to give authority to your writing. Let research guide you to create an informed, compelling work.

► Analysing deeply

1.1.5.8 Critical Reading

Critical reading involves analysing texts deeply to understand meanings beyond the surface. Whether reading fiction, literature, or nonfiction, the goal is to interpret, make connections, and evaluate—not just passively read.

► Deep observation

When critically reading fiction and literature like novels, poems, or plays, start by reading closely and slowly multiple times. Pay attention to language, looking up new vocabulary. Note your responses, questions, and ideas. Underline key passages and words that seem significant. Consider how plot, characters, themes, tone, and other literary elements relate to each other and contribute to the overall work. Analyze relationships between characters and how they tie into larger themes. Examine why the author made certain creative choices. Reading aloud can help unpack meanings. An open, curious mindset allows you to discover layers of possibilities and symbolism you may have missed on a first reading.

► Scrutinize thoroughly

For nonfiction texts like textbooks, articles, or essays, begin by underlining claims, circling keywords, and taking margin notes on main points. Summarise core arguments in your own words. Trace how ideas build and flow through the piece. Evaluate the logic and types of appeals made—are there solid facts and data, or only emotional appeals? Consider counter-arguments and weigh both sides. Beware of your own biases colouring your reactions. Check that sources are credible and authoritative.

In both fiction and nonfiction, critically reflect on your own

► Reflect deeper

responses. Move past gut reactions to analyse why you feel or think certain ways. Examine the cultural lenses you bring from your background and era. Avoid knee-jerk judgments until you've spent more time understanding the full context.

Sample Excerpt from Critical Reading of *The Great Gatsby*

As I read the descriptions of lavish parties with free-flowing champagne, my initial reaction was envy. I found myself longing for the excitement and extravagance depicted on Gatsby's magnificent grounds. Dancers whirled to vibrant jazz amidst glowing lights as fireworks burst in the sky. It seemed like the epitome of thrill-seeking in the Roaring Twenties.

► Understand context

Speaking of context, learn about the author's background and original intended audience. Texts come out of particular historical and social contexts that shape them. Understanding where the author is coming from and their possible motivations can aid analysis.

Sample Excerpt from Critical Reading of *The Great Gatsby*

As I explored *The Great Gatsby* more deeply, I realized I needed to learn more about F. Scott Fitzgerald's own backstory to truly appreciate his perspective. I discovered he himself lived as a young man during the 1920s Jazz Age era he captured in the novel. Fitzgerald also briefly attended Princeton before financial and personal struggles disrupted his education - similar to Jay Gatsby's humble origins before climbing the social ranks....

I also researched the social climate at the time of the novel's 1925 publication, uncovering class divides fuelling the questioning of what constituted the American dream. Fitzgerald gave voice to growing tensions through his flawed characters' aspirations and tragedies...

Thus, critical reading actively engages with texts in a deep, analytical way. It takes you beyond surface impressions to grasp subtle meanings and complexities. The effort yields richer, more



► Deeper meaning

nuanced understandings that invite you to connect ideas and see things in new ways.

► Structured creativity

1.1.6 Creativity in Academic Writing

Academic writing demands structure and formality. Yet creativity still has an important role. Tapping into your creative side can make academic writing more enjoyable and boost your ideas. Brainstorming is key. Use colours, shapes, designs to generate topics and concepts. Keep a journal to capture fleeting thoughts. Mindmaps, diagrams, and storyboards also help organise ideas visually. This flexibility spurs creativity. Outlines feel rigid but work for some. Find planning methods that fit your thinking.

► Structured storytelling

View your article as a narrative. Consider the beginning, middle, and end. If you're a creative writer, try drafting the plot. Storytelling out loud can bring structure. Later, adjust the tone from descriptive to analytical. Scrutinize adjectives, adverbs, and metaphors. Delete unnecessary descriptive words. Replace metaphors with literal meanings. For example, "think outside the box" becomes "use non-traditional approaches." Direct language is better for analysis.

► Connect creatively

Explain how creative details relate to your academic focus. A story about a workplace conflict could support an essay on developing leadership skills. Explain how resolving the conflict contributed to your growth as a leader. The story alone does not convey the link to leadership without this analysis. Creativity generates ideas; analysis tailors them to scholarly expectations. Blend creative techniques with an academic tone and structure. Imaginative thinking fuels meaningful academic writing.

1.1.7 Logical Thinking in Academic Writing

Logical thinking is crucial for crafting persuasive arguments in academic writing. Before you begin writing, clarify your thoughts and map out your main idea, supporting points, and evidence. This helps you view your reasoning from an objective perspective and identify any gaps. Gather concrete facts and irrefutable evidence to reinforce your claims, like statistics from reputable sources. Avoid logical fallacies that undermine arguments, like drawing conclusions based solely on anecdotal evidence or confusing correlation with causation. Anticipate potential counterarguments and find ways to refute them. For example, if arguing for a new bike path, address opponents' concerns about budget constraints rather than dismissing cost as irrelevant. By preemptively rebutting the opposition, you

demonstrate the strength of your position. Applying logic requires defining thoughts, finding solid evidence, avoiding fallacies, and considering other views. With practice, you can create airtight arguments. Logical academic writing convinces readers by systematically proving a claim is valid and responding to critiques. It takes an analytical approach to remove emotion and bias. While passion fuels the desire to make an argument, reason and objectivity are necessary to do so effectively. With logical thinking, you can write academic papers capable of standing up to tough questioning.

► Reason convincingly

1.1.8 Documentation

Proper documentation is crucial in academic writing to credit sources and allow readers to verify claims. When directly quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing another's ideas, cite the source in-text and in a references list. In-text citations usually include the author's last name and publication date in parentheses. The references list at the end provides full bibliographic information alphabetized by authors' last names.

► Document thoroughly

There are various documentation styles used in different disciplines - most common are APA style for social sciences, MLA style for humanities, and Chicago style for history. Styles differ in formatting details like punctuation, order of elements, and use of italics. Adopt the style required by your course or field. If given a choice, review styles and choose one fitting your preferences.

► Diverse styles

To easily apply a style, take careful notes while researching, including all bibliographic details and page numbers for direct quotes. Put temporary in-text citations while drafting. Later, format based on your selected style guide. Proper documentation demonstrates academic integrity, enables source verification, and facilitates further research. Overall, documenting sources clearly is essential for producing credible academic writing.

► Bibliography and in-text citations

1.1.9 Drafting and Revising

Drafting and revising are crucial steps in producing effective academic writing. When drafting, set small goals and write regularly to make progress. Become familiar with the conventions of your genre and read examples. Make an outline or use other pre-writing strategies to generate ideas. Write a rough draft without expecting perfection. Leave blanks for problem areas and make notes to self for later. Use a natural writing style, not overly complex language. Write the introduction last after your ideas have fully developed.

► Strategise drafting



► Preparing for revision

Before revising, take a break from your draft. Print it double-spaced with wide margins for mark-up. Read aloud and mark unclear passages. Get others to read it and give feedback. Address higher-order concerns first - organization, paragraph structure, conciseness - before lower-order editing. Evaluate if your thesis presents the main point. Write an abstract to compare with the full text. Create a scratch outline of just the major points to check flow. Colour code claims versus support to ensure balance. Add topic sentences if needed. Check for transitions between ideas.

► Paragraph unity and coherence

To improve paragraph unity, cut unrelated details and add explanations where needed. For coherence, move from old to new information using transitions and pronouns. Revise sentences for clarity and conciseness: use parallel structures, subordination to show importance, and active voice. Eliminate wordy phrases and unnecessary repetition.

► Benefits of collaborative revision

Collaborative revision brings valuable reader perspective. Readers summarize, ask clarifying questions, identify consistent confusions, and give specific praise and criticism focused on the effect of the writing. Writers listen openly without taking feedback personally, consider all suggestions, and record consistent issues to address. Thorough drafting and thoughtful revising are essential to producing clear, organized, and engaging academic writing.

Summarised Overview

This unit covered the key attributes, skills, genres, and mechanics of academic writing in English. It outlined the formal, precise, and responsible nature of scholarly writing. The unit explained specific techniques to enhance academic style such as active voice, conciseness, and formal diction. Essential elements like presentation, flow, organization, and audience awareness were discussed. It also described the mechanics of writing including punctuation, formatting, grammar, and citations. Additionally, the various genres encountered in academia were introduced along with their typical structure and purpose. These included essays, reports, reviews, analyses, proposals, and research papers. Finally, vital skills for successful academic writing including research, critical reading, creativity, logic, documentation, drafting, and revising were reviewed. In summary, the unit provided a comprehensive overview of the standards, conventions, and abilities needed to produce high-quality academic writing in the English language.

Assignments

1. Discuss the key features that characterise academic writing in English. Provide specific examples to support your answer.
2. Explain three important techniques students can use to develop stronger academic writing skills. Justify your choices.
3. Compare and contrast the conventions and purposes of two common academic writing genres covered in the unit.
4. Choose three vital skills for academic writing success and describe specific strategies to master them. Justify your selections.
5. Select an example of either good or poor academic writing and analyze it based on the criteria outlined in the unit.
6. If you could add one more crucial skill for academic writing to the unit, what would it be and why? Discuss how students would benefit.

Suggested Reading

1. Anderson, Jonathan, B.H. Durston and M.Pcole. *Thesis and Assignment Writing*, New Delhi: Wiley Eastern, 1970.
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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

Unit 2

Essential Skills for Effective Academic Writing

Learning Outcomes

The content, discussion and assignments in this Unit are aligned with the following learning outcomes:

- ▶ Detect errors in academic writing through techniques like reading aloud and using online checkers.
- ▶ Apply rules for punctuation marks like commas, semicolons and apostrophes.
- ▶ Demonstrate proper mechanics such as spelling, abbreviations and sentence structure.
- ▶ Establish an appropriate academic tone and style by avoiding slang and limiting jargon.

Background

Academic writing is challenging. Students must write clearly and correctly to succeed at university. Even small errors can make their work look unprofessional. So they need to use techniques like proof reading aloud and getting feedback from others to spot mistakes. Following rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling is vital too. These give writing structure. With practice, students can gain skills to write well academically.

Writing in an academic style takes effort. Students should avoid conversational language and slang. Their tone needs to be formal but still clear. Using technical terms appropriately shows knowledge. But complicated sentences or jargon makes reading difficult. Short, active sentences tend to work best. Finding the right balance between formal and casual takes time. Reviewing drafts helps ensure consistency in style. With feedback and practice, students can master academic conventions.

Keywords

Proofreading, punctuation, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, tone, style



Discussion

- ▶ Writing and credibility

1.2.1 Error Detection

Flawless grammar and punctuation are crucial in academic writing. Even small errors can muddy your meaning or undermine your authority. As an academic writer, you must present logical, evidence-based arguments. Any mistakes can damage your credibility. So for academic texts, meticulous error detection is essential. We have to utilise both manual and automated methods to catch grammatical and punctuation errors.

- ▶ Read aloud to catch overlooked errors.

1.2.1.1 Reading Aloud Catches Errors

For manual checking, read your draft aloud. Reading silently allows your mind to auto-correct errors. But reading aloud forces you to pronounce each word. This highlights spelling, punctuation, and syntax mistakes. Hearing your writing also flags convoluted sentences. If a sentence is confusing to read, it likely needs rephrasing or punctuation. Seasoned writers use this simple trick to catch things they would otherwise overlook. Any errors you catch can then be easily fixed. So read your draft out loud before finalising.

- ▶ Get a knowledgeable proofreader

1.2.1.2 Enlist a Trustworthy Proofreader

Ask a friend or colleague to proofread your work. We often skip over our own errors. A fresh set of eyes helps spot flaws. But take care in choosing someone. First, pick a grammar expert you can trust with your unpublished work. Also, ensure they understand academic writing conventions. A strong proofreader will efficiently catch the mistakes you missed. After they have marked issues, correct them. Then have the person check again to confirm all errors are fixed. With a reliable and knowledgeable proofreader, this method is very effective.

- ▶ Hire an editor for expert polishing

1.2.1.3 Hire a Professional Editor

For those who can afford it, hiring an editor is ideal. The experienced editors intimately understand grammar rules and academic style. A professional editor will thoroughly polish your work. They will fix typos, mistakes, and awkward phrasing. Editors can also advise on structure, clarity, concision, and more. Of course, a good editor is expensive. But if you can budget for one, it is hugely worthwhile. Once the editor identifies problems, revise your draft accordingly. Then review

once more yourself before submission.

1.2.1.4 Leverage Online Grammar Checkers

For automated error detection, use an online grammar checker. These tools scan your text and flag potential errors. Grammar checkers catch typos, punctuation mistakes, misused words, and more. Run your full draft through a checker before finalising. Then carefully review each highlighted error. The software may catch some false positives. But it will also identify real issues you missed.

▶ Automated checkers to catch mistakes

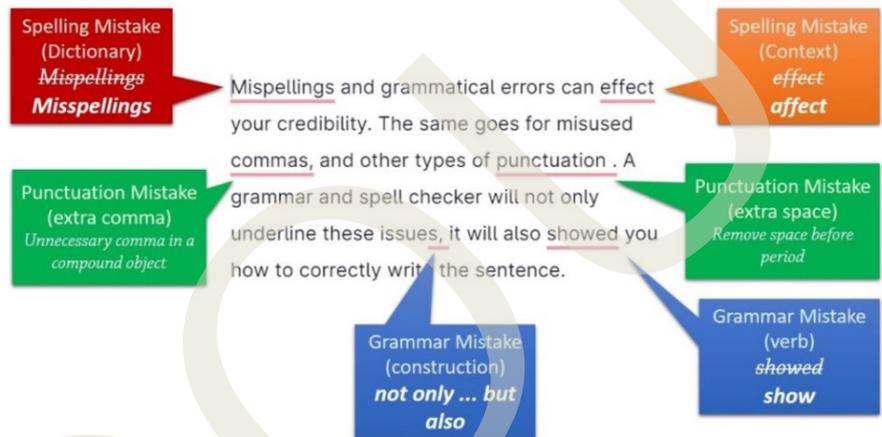


Fig. 1.2.1 A sample error-detection using an online grammar checker

Online checkers are fast, convenient, and free. Their suggestions can significantly clean up your writing. Use one as a final check before submitting work. For academics, polished grammar and style matter. Even small errors can undermine your expertise. Careful editing is essential to avoid mistakes. Combine manual and automated methods for the most thorough error detection. Thus, with diligent error-checking, you can submit clean and compelling academic writing.

▶ Check thoroughly

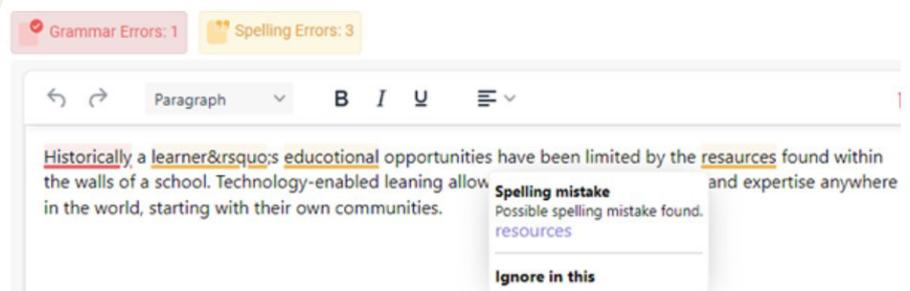


Fig. 1.2.2 A sample error-detection using a grammar checker

- ▶ Punctuation indicates flow

1.2.2 Punctuation

Proper punctuation is vital in academic writing. It guides readers through your ideas, signaling when to pause, speed up, or stop. Like road signs, punctuation contains and structures your sentences. Mastering academic punctuation builds clear, coherent writing.

1.2.2.1 Commas Create Pausing

Commas indicate where to pause, helping readers grasp ideas briefly. Think of commas as quick breath marks, separating parts of a sentence. Use commas:

- ▶ **In lists:**

He lost his house, his heritage, his hair, and his handkerchief.

The commas tell readers when one item ends and the next begins.

- ▶ **Between sentence parts:**

Firstly, vitamin C boosts immunity. Secondly, zinc treats colds.

The comma highlights how the first part links to the rest.

- ▶ **Between related ideas:**

After the French Revolution, unrest spread across Europe. Scientists believe in evolution, though some challenge Darwin.

Commas separate the two halves while showing their connection.

- ▶ **Before concluding phrases:**

Exam week is arduous, especially with frequent tests.

If I were fit, I would run a marathon.

Commas set off the final unnecessary but interesting fragment.

1.2.2.2 Semi-Colons

Semi-colons contain a comma and period as they show seamless connections before and after. They pause longer than a comma but less than a period. Use semi-colons:

- ▶ Commas to guide the reader

- ▶ Between related sentences:

The sky was deeply sapphire; Claire noticed its beauty for the first time.

A period separates too much; a comma connects too weakly. The semi-colon highlights the link.

- ▶ Between contrasting sentences:

His methods were flawed; nonetheless he collected data.

The semi-colon reveals the flip side.

- ▶ Semi-colons show connection and contrast.

- ▶ In complex lists:

Staff assisting: Dr. Benham, Animal Husbandry; Mr. Gleeson, Botany; Dr. Chalk, Soil Science.

Thus, semi-colons neatly divide the list of items.

1.2.2.3 Colons

Colons introduce or link ideas. They don't need full sentences on both sides. Use them:

- ▶ Before lists:

Indoor game results: Wessex, first; Bridges and Wantage, joint second; Sibly, last.

This way, the colon leads cleanly into the list.

- ▶ Between related sentences:

Psychology research on domestic violence often presumes the nuclear family: Davis pursued a radical new approach.

Thus, the colon connects the context to the example.

- ▶ To emphasise conclusions:

Language acquisition is difficult yet rewarding: without it, global communication is impossible.

- ▶ Colons introduce or emphasise.

Here, the colon draws out the key takeaway.

1.2.2.4 Apostrophes

Apostrophes show possession and contractions. They have two roles:

- ▶ Indicating missing letters in contractions:



I am = I'm
You will = you'll
They would = they'd

► **Showing possession:**

The girl's hat = the hat belongs to the girl
The girls' hats = the hats belong to the girls

Usually, apostrophes come before the “s” for singular subjects and after the “s” for plurals. For singular words ending in “s”, like Socrates, the apostrophe goes after the “s” if it’s not pronounced: *Socrates' wife*. Exceptions include “its” and “whose” - these already show possession, so they do not need apostrophes.

Its = belonging to it

Whose = belonging to who

And “it’s” and “who’s” do need apostrophes, as they are contractions:

It's = it is

Who's = who is

Apostrophes can indicate missing numbers in dates:

The '60s saw changing attitudes.

It also shows possession for decades:

The 1960s' culture challenged traditions.

In this way, mastering punctuation takes practice. Use punctuation marks thoughtfully to guide readers through your ideas.

Along with the above punctuation marks, some other marks are:

- Period (.),
- Question Mark (?),
- Exclamation Point (!),
- En Dash (–),
- Em Dash (—),
- Hyphen (-),

► Guide with clarity

- Parentheses (),
- Brackets [],
- Braces { },
- Quotation Marks (“ ”),
- Single Quotation Marks (‘ ’),
- Ellipsis (...)

A short description of all these punctuation marks is given in the following Fig. 1.2.3.

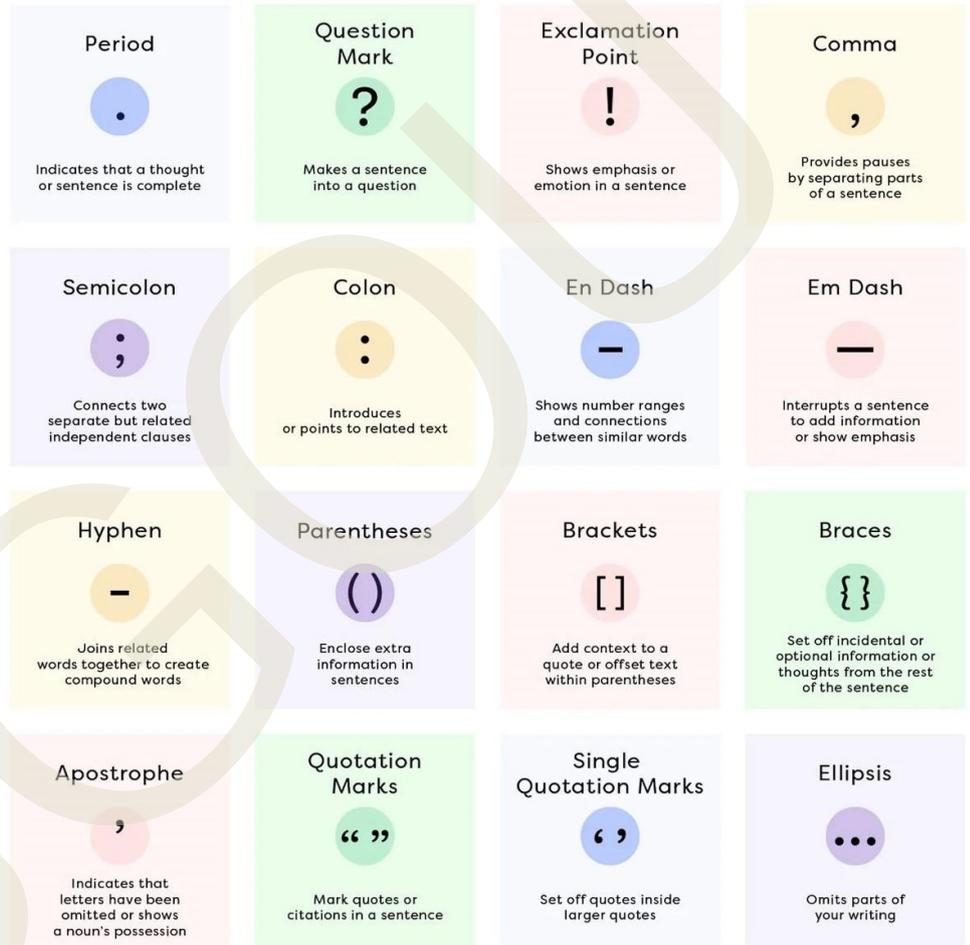


Fig. 1.2.3 Usages of Punctuation Marks

1.2.3 Writing Mechanics

Writing with proper grammar and mechanics is crucial for communicating clearly. While creative flair is important, adhering to standard conventions ensures your reader can follow your ideas easily. Apart from the punctuation marks which discussed above, here are some important writing mechanics to master.

► Clarity



1.2.3.1 Capitalisation

Capital letters highlight important words, names, places, titles, and start sentences. They draw attention to key details. Though meaning isn't usually affected by incorrect capitalisation, it looks disorganised. Get in the habit of capitalisation in the following spots:

- ▶ Capitalisation for highlighting

- ▶ The first word of a sentence
- ▶ Proper nouns - names, places, titles
- ▶ The first letter of the quotes
- ▶ Acronyms - shortened versions of titles

Unsure if a word needs capitalising? Check a dictionary. A proper understanding of capitalisation polishes your work.

1.2.3.2 Parts of Speech

The building blocks of language are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. Using them in proper ways is important in academic writing. A short description of each of the parts of speech is as follows:

- ▶ Various parts of speech

- ▶ Nouns name people, places and things.
- ▶ Verbs express action or being.
- ▶ Adjectives describe nouns.
- ▶ Adverbs describe verbs, adjectives or other adverbs.
- ▶ Pronouns replace nouns.
- ▶ Prepositions link nouns to other words describing time, place, and direction.
- ▶ Conjunctions join words, phrases or clauses.
- ▶ Interjections express emotion.

This way, mastering parts of speech creates balanced and logical sentences.

1.2.3.3 Abbreviations

Abbreviations shorten terms and titles. Use them sparingly and stick to common ones your reader knows. When introducing an abbreviation, write the full term first, followed by the short form in brackets.

The National Health Service (NHS) provides care in the United Kingdom.

- ▶ Abbreviations without confusing

After establishing the full term, use the abbreviation. Abbreviations save space but shouldn't be confused.

1.2.3.4 Spelling

Incorrect spelling suggests carelessness. Typos and spelling mistakes undermine your message and professionalism. Publishers reject work with poor spelling. Fortunately, spellcheckers catch errors. But don't rely solely on them. Make spelling a priority, and double-check your work. Building spelling skills takes practice but prevents mistakes from slipping through.

- ▶ Use spell checkers

1.2.3.5 Sentence Structure

Sentences communicate ideas clearly when different parts work together logically. While rules exist for sentence structure, flexibility creates impact. Parts like subjects, verbs, clauses and phrases can be arranged to convey your message powerfully.

Crafting solid sentences involves:

- ▶ Identifying the main subject
- ▶ Choosing a suitable verb
- ▶ Including extra descriptors, clauses or phrases carefully
- ▶ Varying length and patterns.

- ▶ Arrange sentence parts properly

In this way, a command of sentence structure leads to engaging writing.

1.2.3.6 Eliminate Repetition

Repeating the same words becomes tedious. Vary your language using synonyms and antonyms for overused terms. Avoid repeating words close together. Spread them out instead. Some repetition is unavoidable, but limit it through precise vocabulary.

- ▶ Limit repetition

1.2.3.7 Clarify Homophones and Homographs

Homophones sound identical but have different spellings and meanings like:

- They're, their and there*
- Your and you're*

Homographs look identical but have different pronunciations and meanings like:

- Lead (to go in front) and lead (heavy metal)*
- Bow (weapon) and bow (bend at waist)*



- ▶ dential sound and look

Read work aloud to catch confusing homophones. Check homographs in a dictionary to use them properly. Distinguishing mixed-up words prevents misinterpretation.

1.2.3.8 Subject-Verb Agreement

Match singular subjects with singular verbs and plural subjects with plural verbs:

She writes creatively.

The students write creatively.

- ▶ Subject-verb arrangement

Consistency creates cohesive and readable sentences. It also improves your credibility through proper grammar.

1.2.3.9. Avoid Run-on Sentences

Run-ons jam together two separate thoughts without punctuation.

I love to eat pies I would eat one every day if I got the chance.

- ▶ Say no to messy sentences

You can fix run-ons by:

- ▶ Separating them into two sentences.
- ▶ Adding punctuation like commas or semi-colons.
- ▶ Using conjunctions like and, but, and so.

In this way, understanding run-ons prevents messy and hard-to-read sentences. Along with creativity and great ideas, solid mechanics make you a skilful and polished writer.

1.2.3.10 Tips for Improving Your Writing Mechanics

Some of the tips for improving your writing mechanics are:

- ▶ Recognize their importance - Even tweets and texts need proper mechanics. Publishers reject submissions with multiple errors, so sound grammar and style matters.
- ▶ Choose words intentionally - Simple and clear language communicates best. Avoid complex words by matching terms with your audience.
- ▶ Practice regularly - Writing daily strengthens abilities. Treat it as a job and persist.
- ▶ Read widely - Exposure to various genres and styles builds vocabulary, sparks ideas and im-

proves mechanics.

- ▶ Revise thoroughly - Writing excellence requires editing and revising drafts to refine paragraphs, word choices, flow and clarity.

▶ Foundational skills

With a foundation in core writing mechanics, your prose will improve dramatically. Follow these tips to take your skills to the next level. Communicate ideas effectively by mastering the essential rules of writing.

1.2.4 Vocabulary in Academic Writing

▶ Right word and right place

Growing your vocabulary helps you write better. Using the right words shows you know the language of your field. How can you learn new words? Read a lot! Seeing words again and again in books and articles helps you understand them. Check the dictionary for a word's history and related words, too. But don't look up every new word - enjoy reading mostly. Listen to audiobooks and podcasts. Hearing new words helps you remember how to say them. Read along if you can. Practise using new words when speaking and writing. Technical words can go in your essays. Chat with friends to try simpler ones.

▶ Embrace new words

Use software to make a list of all the words. Ignore small common words. Your newest words will be at the top. This shows your vocabulary is growing. Thus, you are expected to read widely, look up some new words, listen to them, use them often, and check your progress. Growing your vocabulary takes time and practice. Be patient with yourself. Bit by bit, you'll gain the words to express your ideas clearly and precisely. Your writing will blossom with a flourishing vocabulary.

▶ Beware of common spell errors

1.2.5 Spelling in Academic Writing

Correct spelling is crucial in academic writing. Even minor errors can make you seem careless or unknowledgeable. While spell-checkers catch some mistakes, you must carefully proofread them to catch others. If you do not know how to spell a word, check a dictionary rather than guessing. Some common spelling errors stem from English's tricky phonetics. For instance, words can sound identical but be spelt differently, like "concede" and "conceed." Other times, words contain silent letters, like the "a" in "realise," or double letters, like the "mm" in "accommodate." To avoid phonetic traps, become familiar with words that have unusual spellings.

Another issue is homophones, words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings, like "bread" and "bred." To use the right homophone, check definitions in a dictionary.



- ▶ Homophones and typos

Other common homophone mix-ups include “write/right/rite/wright,” “read/reed,” and “its/it’s.” Typos can also slip by spell-checkers. Omitting or adding letters, transposing letters, and improper spacing are easy mistakes to make while typing quickly. Careful proofreading is the best defence against typos, though tedious, and double-checking spelling is vital in academic work. Use dictionaries to verify unsure words. Watch for phonetic irregularities and homophones. And proofread thoroughly to catch typos. Proper spelling lends credibility and polish to your writing.

1.2.6 Right Tone and Style

- ▶ Use ideal tone

Academic writing covers four main types - descriptive, analytical, persuasive and critical. Students often struggle to establish the appropriate tone and style. Too formal, and the writing becomes dense and inaccessible. Too casual, and it loses scholarly authority. The ideal tone for academic work balances formal and informal elements. The language should communicate complex ideas clearly and precisely. Avoid needlessly complex vocabulary that obstructs understanding. But also resist colloquial, conversational language.

- ▶ Precision and coherence

Use discipline-specific terminology suited to the subject matter. This demonstrates command of the field’s concepts and parlance. However, be judicious. Include technical terms and abbreviations only where relevant. Always expand abbreviated terms on first use. Proper grammar, punctuation and sentence structure are essential. Keep sentences reasonably short, clear and focused. Long, convoluted sentences quickly lose readers’ attention. Maintain logical connections and transitions between ideas and paragraphs. The style should facilitate smooth reading and comprehension. Avoid dramatic shifts in tone or complexity.

- ▶ Formal and objective

Steer clear of slang, idioms and colloquial phrases. Avoid contractions like can’t, shouldn’t etc. Use more formal alternatives like ‘cannot’, ‘should not’. However, the occasional ‘you’ can help engage readers. Minimise use of personal pronouns like ‘I’ and ‘we’ which undermine objectivity. Maintain a neutral, impartial authorial voice throughout. Don’t suddenly become emotional, humorous or casual. Avoid exaggerations, approximations and dramatic language. Let facts, citations and evidence - not hyperbole - stress important points. Similarly, omit claims not firmly grounded in research.

Use quotations verbatim, even if they contain grammatical/punctuation errors. You can correct mechanics in your own

- ▶ Accurate quotes and consistent style

writing, but not others' words. Finding the optimal balance of formality and readability takes practice. Review drafts carefully to ensure language and style are cohesive. Strive for consistency in tone and complexity.

Some key tips:

- ▶ Check the formality of vocabulary. Would terms make sense to a layperson?
- ▶ Vary sentence structure. Short/long, simple/complex sentences prevent monotony.
- ▶ Limit the use of passive voice. Active voice usually reads more clearly.
- ▶ Define unfamiliar terms on first use. But avoid pedantic over-explanation.
- ▶ Restrict jargon and acronyms. Use only if broadly recognised in the field.
- ▶ Curb modifiers that complicate sentences. Stick to ones that enhance meaning.
- ▶ Eliminate redundancies. Remove repetitive or unnecessary words/phrases.

- ▶ Focus on these tips

Finding the optimal balance between formal and casual language takes practice. Review drafts closely to ensure a consistent tone and understandable style tailored to the target readership. Mastering academic conventions will improve scholarly writing.

1.2.7 Effective Academic Writing

Mastering academic writing is challenging but rewarding. Apply these top tips to elevate your skills and excel in essays.

- ▶ Understand the assignment. Read instructions thoroughly, noting word counts, formatting, citation style and specific requirements. Clarify anything unclear so you comprehend the brief fully.
- ▶ Develop a concise, debatable thesis statement. This summarises your central argument and guides the essay's flow. Ensure it is specific and focused.
- ▶ Use proper structure and organisation. Introduce the topic in the introduction and provide the necessary background. Use paragraphs to build your case point-by-point logically. Conclude by recapping the main ideas.
- ▶ Master referencing. Citing sources strengthens work by integrating existing knowledge. Learn and consistently apply the recommended referencing system



► Mastering tips

- in your field.
- Edit and proofread thoroughly. Take a break then revisit your work to catch errors. Refine wording and sentence structure for clarity. Ask others to review and provide feedback.
 - Practice regularly. Writing frequently develops skills over time. Incorporate constructive criticism to continually refine technique.
 - Read widely and analytically. Study how accomplished scholars argue and cite evidence in published papers. Absorb techniques to apply.

► Clear communication

Effective academic writing requires conveying complex ideas clearly and concisely. Follow these tips to organise thoughts, analyse evidence, and construct coherent arguments. Dedicate time to improving your skills through practice, feedback and continuous learning. Soon you'll be writing like a pro, ready to excel in any assignment.

Summarised Overview

This unit covered core skills for academic writing. It stressed the importance of error detection to fix grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes. Manual techniques like reading aloud helped spot issues. Proofreaders and editors could identify problems missed. Online checkers were useful too. For punctuation, it outlined uses of commas, semi-colons, colons and apostrophes. Proper mechanics like capitalisation, spelling, abbreviations and sentence structure were explained. Tips were provided to improve writing through practice and reading. Establishing the right formal but readable tone was also discussed. Key points included avoiding slang, limiting jargon and keeping sentences concise. Checklists helped develop effective academic writing.

Assignments

1. Why is error detection important in academic writing?
2. What are some techniques for spotting errors in your work?
3. How can you improve your vocabulary for academic writing?
4. What are some common punctuation marks and their uses?
5. What mechanics should you master for academic writing?
6. What is the best tone and style for academic work?
7. How can you become an effective academic writer?

Suggested Reading

1. Anderson, Jonathan, B.H. Durston and M.Pcole. *Thesis and Assignment Writing*, New Delhi: Wiley Eastern, 1970.
2. Anderson, Marilyn. et al. *Critical Thinking, Academic Writing and Presentation Skills*. 2nd Ed. Pearson. 2010.
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SGOU

Unit 3

From Pre-Writing to Paragraphs, Essays, and Reports

Learning Outcomes

The content, discussion and assignments in this Unit are aligned with the following learning outcomes:

- ▶ Learn pre-writing strategies to organise ideas before drafting academic work.
- ▶ Understand how to construct coherent paragraphs and transition between them.
- ▶ Recognise different types of paragraphs and their uses in academic writing.
- ▶ Distinguish between inductive and deductive reasoning approaches in writing.

Background

Academic writing encompasses a wide variety of document types, each with their own purposes, conventions, and formats. From lab reports to literature reviews, case studies to essay exams, mastering scholarly writing equip us to successfully communicate within our disciplines. This unit leads to foundational principles applicable across all academic genres. We review how to thoroughly plan and outline papers using various pre-writing strategies to help ideas flow before drafting paragraphs. Understanding inductive and deductive reasoning techniques also improves arguments. An introduction to constructing different paragraph types then provides building blocks to logically structure papers from the bottom up. Sections on writing definitions, descriptions, reports, and descriptive/argumentative essays offer an overview of common assignment formats. While specific style formatting depends on citation methodology, grasping these core academic writing concepts enables us to craft polished prose across all scholarly works.

Keywords

Pre-writing, Paragraphs, Reasoning, Descriptions, Definitions, Reports, Essays



Discussion

1.3.1 Preparing Well Before You Write

► Plan and organise

Academic writing takes planning. Before you start an essay or report, using pre-writing techniques helps you get organised. These strategies let you gather ideas and find focus. With clearer thinking beforehand, your actual writing will be smoother.

► Discuss and research

What are some pre-writing methods? Many exist to suit different needs. Talking over concepts out loud can bring hidden thoughts forward. Researching the topic widely gives useful context. Jot down notes and reactions while reading to use later. Brainstorming freely gets creative juices flowing. Write whatever comes to mind, with no judgments. Lists also quickly capture related concepts. Categorise them into groups with labels to build structure.

► Visualise and free-write

Mind mapping visually links ideas using branching lines. This shows how they connect to the topic. Freewriting involves writing fast without stopping, to uncover what you know. Looping does several freewriting sessions, each focused on a detail from the last. Outlining drafts section headings in order, listing main points under each. Other useful techniques include: answering journalist questions to find details, drawing visuals for visual thinkers, categorising for comparisons, and storyboarding to sequence narratives.

► Organising and focusing

How can pre-writing help? It lets you:

- Organise content into clear categories
- Focus your topic by narrowing the aim
- Discuss all relevant information to include
- Select the best approach for the piece
- Express ideas in new ways for fresh perspective

Pre-writing brings clarity to writing. It saves time by planning beforehand. Try different methods to find what works for you. With ideas flowing smoothly, writing becomes much easier. So take time to prepare and structure thoughts - your work will benefit!

1.3.2 Crafting Strong Paragraphs

► Paragraph construction

Paragraphs are the building blocks of longer pieces of writing. Whether drafting an essay, report, story, or other document, effective paragraphs lend coherence and reinforce the central theme. Follow these key steps when constructing

paragraphs.

► Topic sentence

1. Begin with a topic sentence. This opening sentence indicates what the paragraph covers. It should relate directly to the overall purpose of the piece whilst being specific enough to discuss within a single section. For example: “The advent of online shopping has radically transformed British retail habits over the past two decades.”

How to Write a Good Topic Sentence?

Choose a topic (the subject) and controlling idea (the direction or point). For example: “Dogs make wonderful pets because they can improve your health.” Here the topic is “dogs as pets” and the controlling idea covers their health benefits.

Make sure your topic sentence is not too broad or too narrow for the paragraph. You need to summarize the paragraph's main point without getting into details. Relate topic sentences back to your essay's thesis so readers see the connection.

► Contextualise purpose

2. Provide context. After the topic sentence, consider adding a follow-on statement to establish relevance, if needed. Why does this paragraph matter? How does it fit the bigger picture? Elaborate as necessary.

► Provide evidence

3. Include supporting detail. Next, furnish evidence to bolster the central point. This can take various forms depending on discipline and document type. Some options: quotes, statistics, examples, explanatory information from reliable sources, references to related research, and more.

► Critical analysis

4. Analyse. Don't just state the evidence. Demonstrate how it builds the case. What does this data indicate? Why have you opted to highlight this particular detail? Spell it out for readers.

► Reiterate as necessary

5. Repeat as required. For complex points requiring extensive substantiation, replicate the “evidence plus examination” sequence several times, utilising transition words to indicate connections.

► Strong conclusion

6. Conclude strongly. Finally, close the paragraph by circling back to the original topic sentence. What are the essential takeaways? What has paragraph demonstrated? Wrap up with



resonance.

Throughout the process, scrutinise flow and continuity. Every sentence should logically follow from the preceding one. If tackling a new sub-topic or angle, start a fresh paragraph. Employ transitions to guide readers from concept to concept. Paragraphs need not adhere to a rigid template. Balance variety in structure with consistency of purpose. Whether delineating components of an intricate idea, narrating a sequence of historical events, relating anecdotes with shared implications, or other objectives, let unity and coherence reign. From pre-writing brainstorms through initial outlines to paragraph crafting and beyond, keep sight of how each piece fits into the overall work. Transitions between paragraphs should feel natural, furthering the advancement of the thesis. With practice and care, paragraphs are made into robust and extended writing.

► Ensure coherence

► Understand structures

► To convince readers

1.3.3 Types of Paragraphs

Grasping the basic building blocks of writing allows us to clearly convey ideas. Learning common academic paragraph types is key for properly structuring thoughts. The following section will overview seven essential formats and how to harness them skilfully.

1.3.3.1 Argument Paragraphs

When seeking to convince readers, argument paragraphs are invaluable allies. First, state the position endorsed, directly and unambiguously. Next, marshal supportive facts from reliable sources as reinforcements – statistics, expert views, factual studies or personal stories. Addressing counter-arguments also strengthens credibility. Argument paragraphs feature prominently in essays and reports. Wielded judiciously, they compel readers to reassess their beliefs.

Snorkeling in the ocean can be an exhilarating experience, until one begins to question what might be lurking down below. The fear of sharks can seriously impact an enjoyable day swimming in the sea. Recently, scientists at a company called *Shark Defense* started testing various ways to keep sharks away from humans. They've found that the smell of rotting sharks may actually keep live sharks away, so they made a chemical that smells like dead and rotting sharks. Scientists believe this chemical might be able to repel sharks. Some may believe this is a great idea since people will be able to enjoy time in the water without worrying about shark attacks. However, creating chemicals to release in the ocean is dangerous because they may harm the environment, they could be harmful to people and they can create a false sense of safety.

Fig. 1.3.1 An example of argumentative paragraph

1.3.3.2 Classification Paragraphs

For imposing order on complex concepts, classification paragraphs deliver. They categorize items according to shared characteristics. First name the classification framework. Then depict how items align with categories, enriching understanding. For instance, our animal kingdom houses vertebrates and invertebrates, with vertebrates including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. Classification paragraphs help literature reviews and scientific papers organize diffuse information coherently.

- ▶ For categorisation purposes

1.3.3.3 Compare and Contrast Paragraphs

Compare and contrast paragraphs highlight the similarities and differences between two or more subjects, reducing confusion. Introduce the topics first. Then, systematically compare them – how are they alike? Next, contrast them – how do they differ? For example, cats and dogs both make affectionate pets and have four legs, but vary in other areas like anatomy and temperament. Compare and contrast paragraphs feature widely in analytic papers because they sharpen awareness of nuances.

- ▶ Highlight similarities and differences

1.3.3.4 Definition Paragraphs

Definition paragraphs decode specialized terminology and relate it to particular contexts, ensuring correct grasp. They open by plainly stating what is being defined. Supporting sentences then expand readers' insight through description, explanation and examples contextualizing the term's applications. For instance, academic essays often include definition paragraphs focused on niche concepts central to key arguments. Reports also utilize them to elucidate technical language for intended audiences.

- ▶ Decoding terms

1.3.3.5 Descriptive Paragraphs

Descriptive methods paint vivid verbal portraits readers can visualize – invaluable for breathing life into writing. They first introduce the subject, then completely yet concisely capture its most telling qualities – its look, feel, sound and smell. Precise sensory details and sparing use of adjectives conjure engaging word pictures that immerse audiences, aiding comprehension. Descriptive paragraphs feature strongly across diverse academic genres.

- ▶ Detailing paragraph

1.3.3.6 Expository Paragraphs

Some academic writing must elucidate multifaceted processes in straightforward terms. Enter expository paragraphs. First, they outline the overall procedure. Then they fully clarify each step



- ▶ For clarity and sum up

in sequence, incorporating key details that demonstrate an intimate grasp. Finally, they summarise the process discussed. For example, laboratory reports regularly employ expository methods to comprehensively walk readers through the experimental methods that are applied.

- ▶ Using examples

1.3.3.7 Illustrative Paragraphs

Illustrative paragraphs employ specific examples to enlighten readers regarding broader concepts, making them more accessible. First, state the overriding idea. Then, furnish various illustrations substantiating it. Finally, connect examples back to the central premise, cementing understanding. For instance, an essay defending the merits of teamwork may use illustrative methods, profiling successful collaborative efforts in different domains to support that standpoint.

- ▶ Adhere to quality writing

The formats above constitute indispensable academic writing tools. Master them, and conveying sophisticated ideas logically becomes simpler. Know which format suits current aims, then apply its principles creatively to organise cohesive pieces readers can smoothly follow – the hallmarks of quality writing.

- ▶ Reasoning methods: Inductive

1.3.4 Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

Academic writing requires clear communication of ideas and arguments to an intended audience. Two main reasoning approaches are available to writers: inductive and deductive. Understanding the difference between these two methods can improve the effectiveness of academic writing. Inductive reasoning starts with observations or evidence and moves towards a conclusion or general statement. It lays out facts, examples, or data and then wraps up with an interpretation of what these details mean. Inductive writing keeps readers engaged as they follow along collecting all the pieces of information before arriving at the writer's main point. It creates a feeling of discovering ideas along with the writer.

- ▶ An example of inductive

For example, a paper might describe a study of 100 dogs that exhibited chasing behaviours towards small animals. It would detail the breeds, ages, genders, and other characteristics of the dogs, as well as qualitative descriptions of their chasing behaviours. Finally, it would be concluded that, based on the evidence, chasing behaviours are most common in high-energy breeds under the age of three. The reader gets to observe all the evidence before reading the writer's final interpretation.

Inductive reasoning works well for creative writing and

► Benefits and limitations

► Deductive method

persuasive essays where the goal is to bring the audience along on a thought process or story. It hooks the reader's interest and allows the organic discovery of conclusions. However, the approach can frustrate readers looking for the key points quickly, as the main ideas do not appear until the end.

In contrast, deductive reasoning starts with a central thesis statement or main argument that is then supported by facts, examples, and evidence. It states the writer's position upfront before "proving" it through the detail that follows. Readers can efficiently find the paper's main point in the first paragraph or sentence without having to read everything to get there.

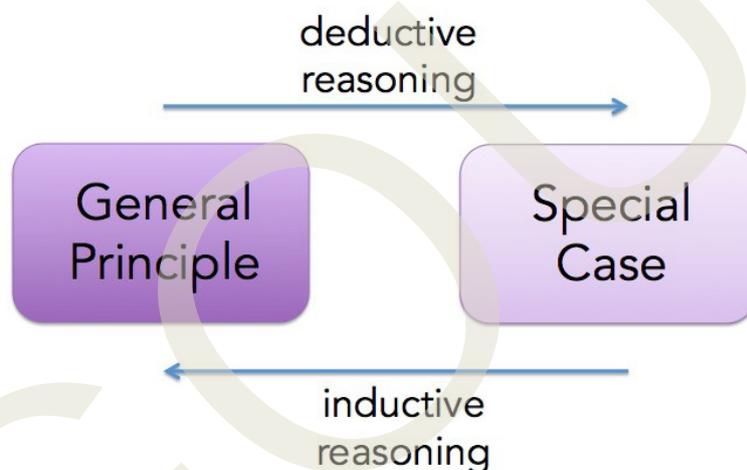


Fig. 1.3.2 Deductive and Inductive approaches

For example, a deductive paper may begin with the statement "High-energy breeds under the age of three exhibit more chasing behaviours towards small animals than other demographics". It would then cite the study of 100 dogs, providing all the details of breeds, ages, behaviours etc. that back up this opening thesis statement. The reader absorbs the main point immediately before observing the supporting details.

► An example of deductive

► Structured and efficient

Deductive reasoning aligns well with scientific writing where stated hypotheses precede evidence. It also aids readers who are skimming work to find relevant pieces related to their interests or goals. However, it lacks some of the lively engagement and discovery-based appeal of inductive writing.

1.3.5 Writing Definitions

► Definition strengthens argument

Defining key terms and concepts clearly is an important part of academic writing. When authors take the time to craft careful definitions, they avoid misunderstandings with their audience and strengthen the quality of their arguments. There are three

essential parts of a well-structured definition:

The term itself: This is the word or phrase being defined. For example, "Astronomy is..."

The class or category: This places the term within a general class or type of thing. For example, "Astronomy is a field of study..."

The differentiating details: This explains what makes the term unique from other things in its class. For example, "Astronomy is a field of study primarily concerned with celestial bodies..."

Writers should incorporate formal definitions when:

- ▶ A key term may be unfamiliar to the audience: *"Stellar wobble is a measurable variation of speed wherein a star's velocity is shifted by the gravitational pull of a foreign body."*
- ▶ A common word has special meaning in the context: *"Throughout this essay, the term classic gaming refers specifically to playing video games produced for the Atari and Nintendo Entertainment System between 1972-1992."*
- ▶ The origin of a word expands an argument: *"Pagan traces back to Roman military slang for an incompetent soldier. In this sense, Christians who consider themselves soldiers of Christ are using the term not only to suggest secular status but also a lack of dedication."*

▶ Use formal definitions

In each case, clearly bounding terminology through careful definition supports precision and clarity.

1.3.6 Writing Descriptions

Good descriptions make academic writing come alive. They show the reader details instead of just telling them. Descriptions invite the reader into a scene to understand it better.

When writing descriptions,

- ▶ Use strong words that make the reader imagine clearly. Don't just say a chemical reaction was "fast." Say, "the solution erupted into a fierce boil, with bubbles streaming up."
- ▶ Use details of sights, sounds, tastes, etc. This helps the reader picture and experience the scene.

► Vivid descriptions

- Use descriptions sparingly. Long sections lose the reader's focus. Sprinkle in short vivid details. For example, in a critique of a painting, briefly note "a ray of light piercing the darkness."
- Study how master writers use description. Works like *The Great Gatsby* have vivid imagery woven through the storytelling. Nonfiction like *In Cold Blood* also describes true events colourfully. Seeing excellent description models helps develop the skill.

The diagram shows a sample paragraph titled "My Backpack" with three highlighted sections: "Opening statement", "Features of the bag", and "Closing statement".

My Backpack

My backpack is one of the most dependable companions in my life. Big and vast like the universe, it holds the world for me- my laptop, phone, books, stationery, eatables, and what not. My backpack is to me what an army knife is to a soldier. It is my headrest, backrest, and cover from sunlight and downpour. Occasionally, it has been my 'weapon' in a friendly fight. We have been together through college, work, treks, rides, and the ups and downs of life. It has now become a source of inspiration for me. A bit worn out and tattered but ready for action at all times, my backpack hangs on to me just as I hang on to it.

A sample paragraph for descriptive writing

1.3.7 Writing Academic Reports

An academic report presents the results of research, like an experiment or survey. Reports follow a specific layout so readers can easily find information.

Introduction: The introduction explains why you did the research/study. Give the research question and a brief overview of what you did and found. End with a short summary of how the rest of the report is organised. Keep it short - no more than 10% of the whole report. **Previous Research:** Summarise what other researchers have found on your topic. Focus on studies related to your work. Don't go into too much detail - just enough so readers understand how your work relates. **Methods:** Explain what you did in your research step-by-step and in detail. For an experiment, describe the methodology. For a survey, explain how you selected participants. Use past tense since you have already completed the research. **Results:** Present the data from your research in this section. Use tables or figures to summarise the results and highlight important findings. Don't repeat all the data from tables/figures in the text - just key points. **Discussion:** Discuss what your findings mean and how they relate to previous research. Explain how your work answers or doesn't answer

► Structured academic reports

► Detailing

► Guidelines

your research question. List any limits like small sample sizes and how to address them in future studies. **Conclusion:** Briefly summarise your key findings and what they mean. Do not introduce anything new here. Offer suggestions for future research based on your study's limits. **Formatting:** Follow your university's or discipline's style guide, like MLA, APA or Chicago, for formatting details like font, margins, and citations.

1.3.8 Writing Descriptive Essays

A descriptive essay describes a person, place, thing, emotion, or experience in vivid detail. The goal is to paint a clear picture in the reader's mind using carefully chosen words that appeal to the five senses - sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.

Guidelines for Writing Descriptive Essays:

- **Brainstorm first.** Write down words and short phrases related to your topic before you begin writing. For example, make note of sights, textures, smells, tastes, and feelings.
- **Use clear, concise language.** Choose words carefully for their ability to create strong impressions. Avoid unnecessary words.
- **Select vivid language.** Use words that create robust images like "stallion" instead of simply "horse". Choose words with nuanced meanings like "miserly" instead of "cheap".
- **Engage the senses.** Explain how your topic looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and feels. Help the reader imagine the sensations.
- **Share emotions and feelings.** Connect with readers by conveying the emotions you experienced regarding the topic. This evokes familiarity and appreciation.
- **Leave a clear impression.** Your descriptive details should create a distinct and lasting picture in the reader's imagination. Make them crave a home-cooked meal you described or feel calmed by a quiet and natural setting.
- **Stay organised.** It's easy to become unfocused when writing descriptions. Maintain logical organisation so the reader finishes your essay with a clear impression.

Besides, when writing descriptive essays, focus on the most emotive and vivid details rather than try to describe everything you experienced. For example, describe the sights, textures,

or smells that left the biggest impression. Use transition words like “Meanwhile” and “In contrast” when moving between different elements of the description - don’t just jump randomly from one sensation to another. Vary your sentence structure by incorporating short, punchy sentences, longer, more elegant sentences, statements, questions, and even exclamations. This creates interest and impact. Finally, read your descriptive essay out loud when editing to check if your words form clear and lasting impressions in the reader’s mind. Tweaking descriptions that sound disjointed or vague when read aloud can go a long way in transporting the reader into the scene, memory, or emotion you have recreated.

▶ Refining descriptive essays

1.3.9 Writing Argumentative Essays

An argumentative essay is a common academic writing assignment that requires you to objectively investigate a topic, take a clear position, and persuade your audience that your viewpoint is valid. Its purpose is to intelligently present and defend an informed argument, using logic, evidence, and credible sources to convince readers of a specific perspective. Rather than just conveying information like other essay types, the argumentative essay advances an intellectually compelling and thought-provoking case.

▶ Persuasive essays

1.3.9.1 Structure of Argumentative Essay

- ▶ **Attention-grabbing Introduction:** The introduction grabs interest while setting context around why the topic matters, often highlighting some current problem or controversy. It culminates with a clear, defensible thesis statement that asserts your central argument or position.
- ▶ **Multiple Supporting Body Paragraphs:** At least three body paragraphs systematically build your reasoned case through factual evidence, statistics, real-world examples and expert opinions. Each body section further defends your position using logic and analysis derived from extensive academic research. One or two paragraphs also fairly summarise and address major opposing arguments using professional language.
- ▶ **Impactful Conclusion:** An effective conclusion begins by reasserting your original thesis, avoiding introducing new arguments. Then, summarise key supporting evidence and compelling reasons that affirm your overall case. Finally, end with force - an insightful recommendation, warning or call-to-action

▶ Compelling introductions

▶ Structured body paragraphs

▶ Powerful conclusions



arising specifically from your argument helps seal conviction in your viewpoint.

1.3.9.2 Key Features of Argumentative Essay

The following are some of the features of an argumentative essay:

▶ Smooth flow

Logical Flow and Cohesion: Ideas should systematically build from one to the next using transitions that guide readers through your analytical thought process. Group related arguments purposefully in paragraphs while referring back continually to your central position for consistency.

▶ Balanced assertiveness

Balanced Perspective with Strong Position: Incorporate multiple viewpoints through research before taking your own stance. Demonstrate in-depth exploration of the issue. However, assert a precise argument confidently, reinforced consistently by the weight of sound evidence you present.

▶ Precise and professional language

Careful Use of Language: Maintain a professional tone and academic style suited to a scholarly debate, avoiding inflammatory language. Let solid data and reasoning, not confrontational attacks, boldly support your viewpoint. Concede valid points among opposing perspectives using non-judgmental terminology.

▶ Thorough academic research

Extensive Credible Research: Carry out exhaustive research from reputable academic sources across prevailing scientific theories, social/political ideologies, expert analyses, historical accounts etc. Extract relevant research data/statistics to ground your arguments objectively, leveraging facts over opinion or hearsay whenever possible.

▶ Evidence-based

Convincing Evidence-based Support: Vigorously back positions with specific evidentiary support like factual findings from controlled studies or field research, measurable data/statistics, historical patterns and trends, illustrative real-world events and concrete examples; not just personal views or debatable points. Qualified expert testimony also lends credibility.

Summarised Overview

This unit surveyed basic approaches for planning and organizing academic writing assignments like descriptions, arguments, and reports. We learned pre-writing strategies to structure ideas before drafting along with inductive and deductive reasoning techniques for logically building arguments. Several paragraph types were introduced to encapsulate concepts, compare items, illustrate points, and more. Sections on writing definitions, descriptions, reports, and common essay formats provided models to follow for typical university assignments. While individual citation styles dictate formatting, mastering these academic writing foundations transfers across all scholarly works.

Assignments

1. Why is pre-writing an important first step for academic work? Describe three pre-writing strategies.
2. What are the key parts of a well-structured definition? Give examples.
3. Compare and contrast inductive and deductive reasoning approaches. When is each more appropriate?
4. Describe the basic structure to follow when writing an academic report.
5. What are the main features of an argumentative essay?
6. Briefly describe four different types of paragraphs along with their purposes.
7. Provide three tips for writing effective descriptions in academic work.

Suggested Reading

1. Anderson, Jonathan, B.H. Durston and M.Pcole. *Thesis and Assignment Writing*, New Delhi: Wiley Eastern, 1970.
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3. Bailey, Stephen. *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*. 2nd Ed. Routledge. 2003.
4. DiYanni, Robert., Pat C. Hoy II. *The Scribner Handbook for Writers*. Allyn and Bacon. USA. 1995.



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2. *Purdue OWL® - Purdue OWL® - Purdue University*. <https://owl.purdue.edu/index.html>. Accessed 7 Dec. 2023.
3. Oshima, Alice, and Hogue, Ann. *Introduction to Academic Writing*. South Korea, Pearson/Longman, 2007.
4. *Writing Tasks: Narrative Essays, Informative Essays, Descriptive Essays, Argumentative Essays*. N.p., Liverpool Community College.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Research Writing

BLOCK-02

Block Content

Unit 1 : Fundamentals of Research Writing

Unit 2 : Research Writing: From Questions to Concepts

Unit 1

Fundamentals of Research Writing

Learning Outcomes

The content, discussion and assignments in this Unit are aligned with the following learning outcomes:

- ▶ Identify appropriate research problems and subjects for analysis in English language and literature
- ▶ Apply proper source documentation formats like MLA and APA when writing research papers
- ▶ Recognise different types of plagiarism and consequences in research writing
- ▶ Avoid plagiarism and conduct ethical research writing practices

Background

Research writing sits at the core of the vocation we have chosen as scholars in the humanities. Our quest is to search for deeper meanings in the written word, trace the fascinating journeys texts often embark upon across time and space, decode multi-layered expressions of creative imagination, and analyse intriguing linguistic patterns that lend voice to human thought and feeling in diverse contexts. Research writing fuels these intellectual pursuits - it lays bare profound mysteries, unravels complex sociocultural dynamics, and reveals hidden connections waiting to be discovered through systematic evidence-based investigation. Mastery of this specialized compositional skill crucially shapes the trajectory of knowledge we can generate in niche areas that intrigue us. It is the vehicle transporting pioneering ideas from the depths of inquisitive minds to wider public awareness.

However, with great power comes great responsibility. As researchers investigating topics in realms like literature, linguistics and language studies, we shoulder ethical obligations to credit the works of others which inform our writing through proper citation practices. Documentation formats like MLA and APA represent standardized roadmaps in this regard. They provide clear procedural guidelines and constructive frameworks for seamlessly incorporating source materials into our own arguments. Adopting these citation styles paired with original analysis helps produce manuscripts of greater academic merit.



Keywords

Research writing, documentation styles, citation practices, plagiarism, academic integrity, knowledge advancement, ethical research

Discussion

2.1.1 Identification of a Research Problem

Choosing an appropriate research problem is the most crucial step for students undertaking a research project. It lays the foundation on which the entire research endeavour will be built. For English language and literature students specifically, identifying apt research problems can be challenging due to the nuanced, subjective and continuously evolving nature of language and literary studies as academic disciplines. However, formulating clear, focused, and purposeful research problems is key to conducting meaningful investigations in these areas. A research problem refers to a conceptual issue, gap in explanations, or unresolved question that exists around a particular aspect of language or a literary phenomenon. It constitutes the central researchable problem that the study seeks to address through systematic analysis and interpretation.

► Foundational step

What constitutes a good research problem in the English language and literature? Firstly, it must cogently highlight and address a recognisable lacuna or limitation in existing knowledge related to theories or concepts within linguistics, literature or cultural studies. Secondly, it needs to be situated within larger scholarly conversations and debates ongoing in the field. Next, a strong justification is required for investigating this chosen topic above other viable alternatives. The research questions flowing from the main problem should also be clear, specific, interconnected and aimed at extending disciplinary knowledge in some meaningful manner.

► Gaps, conversations, advancement

Additionally, feasibility within practical constraints of time, analytical skills, data availability and supervisor guidance is important. Finally, the conceptual problem must align with empirical methods and analytical procedures that can appropriately investigate it. Keeping these key markers in mind can greatly aid English students in systematically developing and crafting research problems.

► Feasibility and methodology alignment

2.1.2 Sources for Research Problems

For formulating research problems, English language and literature students can draw inspiration from a variety of conceptual and real-world sources. These include:

- ▶ Theories seed research problems

Theories of language and literature: Seminal theories developed by notable thinkers like Ferdinand De Saussure, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler and others open up new concepts for careful questioning, testing and potential reconfiguration. For instance, research could analyse how Saussure's ideas on linguistic signs and structures may apply differently in digitally mediated contexts of communication.

- ▶ Gaps reveal problems

Gaps in understanding: A review of existing literature often reveals noticeable gaps in explanations around the workings of certain linguistic features, interpretative ambiguity around specific textual passages, missing perspectives in the analysis of particular themes or genres and several other open questions. Identifying these gaps by critically evaluating prior scholarship, and investigating them can constitute meaningful research problems. For example, few stylistic studies exist currently that attempt to analyse the lexical characteristics and rhythmic quality of urban street slang as employed in contemporary fiction.

- ▶ Observations of real-world phenomena

Real-world observations: Students' personal experiences, social observations and exposure to diverse cultural/sub-cultural contexts allow identification of potentially intriguing areas for further research. If existing scholarship does not sufficiently address a noticeable real-world linguistic or literary phenomenon that intersects with matters of disciplinary relevance, it signals a research problem. For instance, the mixing of English and local native languages in multilingual Indian street signs and public place name boards is now commonly observable in urban spaces but has perhaps not received due analytical attention.

- ▶ Application research problems

Practical applications: There is wide scope for formulating research problems aimed at applied outcomes like designing descriptive frameworks, annotation standards, digital tools, language teaching materials and other pedagogical resources grounded in theoretical concepts from linguistics. For instance, developing coherent annotation principles and standards for indexing and analysing large textual datasets in the area of corpus linguistics. Such application-oriented problems seek to bridge conceptual knowledge with contexts of use.

Interdisciplinary extensions: Selectively exporting analytical concepts, theories and methodologies across disciplinary



► Interdisciplinary synthesis

boundaries leads to fresh research impetuses. For example, using Ethnography of Communication frameworks to study the complex written and unwritten cultural norms influencing communication practices within online fanfiction writing communities. Here, the problem may relate to understanding linguistic-cultural dynamics.

Thus, as the above sources illustrate, potential research problems could arise from a wide array of contexts for English language and literature students, such as:

- Application of linguistic theories to understudied contexts
- Comparative analysis of language use across historical periods
- Probing hidden power structures or ideological assumptions underlying a canonical literary work
- Tracing the role of dominant cultural narratives in shaping language attitudes
- Understanding emergent interaction patterns and meaning-making practices in virtual environments
- Developing enhanced descriptions for new-age literary styles, genres and consumer cultures
- Creating digitally enabled multi-modal anthologies exploring marginalised voices
- Framing task-based activities for language learners using corpus tools
- Evaluating information design principles for on-line academic writing

► Research problem diversity

The above list is illustrative rather than exhaustive but gives a glimpse into the immense possibilities. Students must choose areas aligned with their research interests.

2.1.3 Characteristics of Good Research Problems

While identifying prospective problems from the above broad sources, English language and literature students should filter and ensure the final selected topics exhibit certain key traits:

Relevance: The research problem must address some noticeable gap in disciplinary knowledge, limitations in practice, or open questions in contemporary language and literary studies. It should have a clear conceptual anchor.

Significance: The problem should potentially contribute to enriching theoretical concepts and models on how verbal art and communication function through language. Application-

oriented problems should inform and improve real-world practices and policies in some manner. There must be an articulated case for its value.

Clarity: The framing and scope of the problem need to be narrow, lucid and transparent in terms of its situated context, objectives and research questions that connect to the problem. Ambiguous, vague or overly broad problem areas are unsuited for in-depth analysis.

Feasibility: Practical constraints regarding time investments, required guidance from advisors, accessibility of subjects/ participants, analytical skills mastery, data availability and other key resources must be duly considered while conceptualizing problems. Problems should lead to inquiries that can be completed within stipulated periods.

Novelty: The research problem should attempt to extend, build upon and forward existing scholarship in some useful way. It must go beyond reiterating what past studies have already revealed about the phenomenon. The problems must be scholarship-informed but offer promising new directions.

Ethicality: Formulating and investigating the research problem should not directly or indirectly cause foreseeable harm to the researchers themselves or human participants who may be the subject of observation or analysis. All studies involving living beings must adhere to strict codes and norms of research ethics outlined by academic institutions/government bodies.

► Filtering research topics

► Persuasive problem framing

Thus, in framing specific problems for investigation, English language and literature students must make persuasive logical connections between observable or conceivable linguistic/ literary phenomena and outcomes related to goals of knowledge advancement within disciplinary subfields along with contexts of applied use for the wider society. The problems must be situated within prior academic debates but also aspirational for the future.

2.1.3.1 Choosing Appropriate Subjects and Materials for Research

Along with identifying research problems, the selection of appropriate primary topics/subjects for analysis is an equally crucial early step for language and literary researchers. This entails strategically electing texts, examples, human participants, communicative events, material artefacts etc. which can enable the capture of rich insights into your problem area. Students must consciously align subjects and objects of analysis to the conceptual



► Strategic subject selection

scope, methodological approach, analytical objectives and practical resources connected to their project. These integral elements must structurally cohere around the research problem underpinning the inquiry.

For linguistics research, common routes to systematically gather representative language data for analysis include:

- Compiling mini-collections of specialized text corpora based on well-defined criteria like register, genre, variety or medium
- Selecting literary excerpts like poems and passages representing particular styles, themes or lexical complexities
- Choosing social media content or discussion forum threads with relevant communicative and linguistic characteristics
- Studying multimodal texts like advertisements, posters and films which provide insights into textual-visual interplay
- Observing and documenting communication in selected physical spaces or virtual environments through ethnographic methods
- Interviewing people belonging to specific sociocultural groups, communities of practice or networks

► Linguistics data collection

Literature students have an even wider array of options to selectively source impactful materials for textual and discursive analysis or interpretation aligned to their problems:

- Relevant literary texts in a genre of choice – for instance, a collection of satirical poems or Victorian novels or Chinese science fiction – either belonging to a particular period, language tradition, thematic area or style
- Representative works of one or more writers associated with canonical, avant-garde or marginalized literary movements
- Strategically identified textual excerpts like paragraphs, stanzas or dialogue snippets for very close stylistic analysis
- Philosophical essays reflecting historically important cultural debates on language, art and society
- Recorded speeches or personal correspondences (like letters and postcards) of public figures containing rich rhetorical devices
- Select artworks or films firmly anchored within

► Literature material collection

particular literary traditions



Fig. 2.1.1 Illustration of various methods to select research topic

Besides analysing primary materials like the above, reviewing scholarly commentary around them enables thoughtful positioning of one's interpretative arguments within multifaceted conceptual debates ongoing in respective areas. Overall, students must put in methodical efforts to align and pair their choice of primary subjects and texts with the goals, scope and constraints of their project right from the early stages.

► Holistic analysis approach

2.1.4 Documentation in Research Writing

Proper documentation is a critical component of research writing, especially in fields like literature and linguistics. When writing about language or literary analysis, researchers rely heavily on outside sources to provide supporting evidence for their arguments and interpretations. From direct quotes to statistics and theories, most claims require attribution through documentation. Writers not only need to credit sources but also allow readers to access those sources. Overall, documentation serves ethical, practical, and evidentiary functions in research.

► Documentation as a crucial element

There are two main forms of source attribution in research



► MLA and APA

writing—parenthetical citations (Modern Language Association- MLA and American Psychological Association- APA styles being the most common) or footnotes/endnotes. MLA is the standard format used in Humanities and Language Disciplines, while APA is commonly used as a standard format in Social Sciences. However, the APA style is being also followed as a style in language or linguistics-related research writings. Besides both, there are also other documentation formats being followed in the academic world, such as Chicago style, Turabian Citation, Harvard Style and IEEE Style.

► MLA preferable for literary research

Parenthetical documentation is integrated into the text itself while numerical markers connect to citations at the bottom of pages or ends of documents. Details like author, title, publication date and specifics of the content references are provided in bibliographies and references pages attached to pieces of writing. Researchers in literary studies most often adopt styles outlined by the Modern Language Association (MLA).

► Documentation styles overview

The MLA promotes the smooth incorporation of borrowed material through lead-in phrases introducing quotes or paraphrases. Surnames of authors and page numbers guide readers to more detailed entries in “Works Cited” pages. On the other hand, APA references place publication dates closer to authors’ names and apply strict rules about formatting titles and source names. While diverse in execution, these documentation formats establish pathways to the foundation of arguments and analyses in research writing. Since literary or linguistic researchers are most often in need of understanding the documenting style of MLA and APA formats, the following sections cover detailed formatting methods of both styles in diverse scenarios.

2.1.4.1 MLA Style

► MLA style overview

The MLA (Modern Language Association) style is one of several styles of referencing or bibliographic citation that is used widely for academic writing, particularly in the humanities. MLA uses an author-page system of in-text citation, e.g. (Mullan 24), and a Works Cited list at the end of the document. In the MLA style, the reference list is called Works Cited, however other titles may also be acceptable. The ‘Works Cited list’ includes details of the sources cited in your paper. It starts on a separate page at the end of your assignment paper. Each item in the Works Cited list must have been cited in your paper. The MLA Handbook is currently in its 9th edition, published in 2021.

► MLA in-text citation

While referencing sources within the text of the paper, the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the information is taken should be included in parentheses. For example: (Smith 25). If the author's name is already mentioned in the text, only the page numbers need to be included in parentheses. Example: "According to Smith, this idea is supported (25)."

► MLA works cited page

On the "Works Cited" page, all the sources cited in the paper should be listed alphabetically by the author's last names (or by the title if there is no author). Each entry should provide the necessary information to locate the source, including the author's name, the title of the work, publication information (such as the publisher and publication date for books, or the journal name, volume, and page numbers for articles), and the medium of publication (e.g., print or web).

Bibliography

Let us look into the guidelines and examples of the different In-text and Works Cited bibliography formats used in MLA Style.

BOOKS

A. Single Author

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	<p>Author's Last Name, First Name. <i>Title of Book</i>. Publisher, Publication Year.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Andreasen, Nancy C. <i>Brave New Brain: Conquering Mental Illness in the Era of the Genome</i>. Oxford UP, 2001.</p>
In-text citation	<p>Author's Last Name page number</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Andreasen stated that...(56).</p> <p>Or</p> <p>It is suggested that... (Andreasen 56).</p>



B. Two Authors

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	<p>Author's Last Name, First Name, and Author's First Name Last Name. <i>Title of Book</i>. Publisher, Publication Date.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Copstead, Lee Ellen, and Jacqueline L. Banasik. <i>Pathophysiology</i>. 5th ed., Elsevier, 2013.</p>
In-text citation	<p>Author's Last Name 1 and Author's Last Name 2 Page number.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Copstead and Banasik explain... (26).</p> <p>or</p> <p>...and therefore... (Copstead and Banasik 26).</p>

C. Three or More Authors

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	<p>Title: Exploring the Universe</p> <p>Authors: Brown, Michael, Sarah Johnson, and Emily White.</p> <p>Publisher: Harper Collins</p> <p>Publication Year: 2018</p> <p>Author Last Name 1, Author Last Name 2, et al. <i>Title</i>. Publisher, Publication Year</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>Brown, Michael, et al. <i>Exploring the Universe</i>. Harper Collins, 2018.</p>
In-text citation	<p>Author's Last Name et al. page number</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Brown et al.. showed that ... (72).</p> <p>or</p> <p>...is demonstrated (Brown et al. 72).</p>

D. Edited Book

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Craven, Ian, editor. <i>Australian Cinema in the 1990s</i> . Frank Cass, 2001.
In-text citation	Craven discussed the successful... (6). or The film starred actors... (Craven 6).

E. E-Book

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Mullan, John. <i>How Novels Work</i> . Oxford UP, 2006. Proquest Ebook Central, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwsau/detail.action?docID=834760.
In-text citation	Mullan stated that... (40). ...Gunaratne presents a critical...50. or Narration is... (Mullan 40). ...handbooks that analyse... (Gunaratne 50).

F. No Author (Incl. Dictionary or Encyclopaedia)

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Title. Edition, <i>Guide to Agricultural Meteorological Practices</i> . 2nd ed., Secretariat of the World Meteorological Organization, 1981.
In-text citation	<i>The Guide to Agricultural Meteorological Practices</i> provides... (17). or This can be shown by... (Guide 17).

G. Journal Article (Print Version)

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Younger, P[aula]. "Using the Internet to Conduct a Literature Search." <i>Nursing Standard</i> , vol. 19, no.6, 2004, pp. 45-51.
In-text citation	Younger stated that the... (46). or The Internet can be used to conduct a literature search (Younger 46).



H. Journal Article (Full-Text from Electronic Database)

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Jackson, Debra, et al. "Personal Resilience as a Strategy for Surviving and Thriving in the Face of Workplace Adversity: A Literature Review." <i>Journal of Advanced Nursing</i> , vol. 60, no. 1, 2007, pp. 1-9. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOHost, doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04412.x.
In-text citation	Jackson et al. found that... (7). Or ...a useful strategy (Jackson et al. 7).

I. Newspaper Article (Available in Print)

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Berkovic, Nicola. "Handouts May Not Be Sent: Tax Office Seeks Quick Resolution of High Court Challenge." <i>The Australian</i> , 31 Mar. 2009, p. 5.
In-text citation	Berkovic explained that handouts... (5). Or It was suggested that handouts may not be sent (Berkovic 5)

J. Newspaper Article (From Electronic Database)

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Wentworth, W. C. "Why We Need a Permanent Base on the Moon." <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , 24 Jan. 1984, p. 11. Sydney Morning Herald Archives, ezproxy.uws.edu.au/login?url=http://archives.smh.com.au/fnc_login_a.php
In-text citation	Wentworth stated that... (11). orand this demonstrates the need for a permanent base (Wentworth 11).



K. Article (From the Internet)

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Cooper, Dani. "Native Ant May Stop Toad in its Tracks." <i>ABC Science</i> , 31 Mar. 2009, www.abc.net.au/science/articles//2009/03/31/2530686.htm?site=science&topic=latest .
In-text citation	In a recent ABC Science article, Cooper stated that a ferocious ant... or ...the ants may be able to help control toad numbers (Cooper).

L. Non-English Journal Article Translated into English

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Von Der Luhe, Irmela. "I Without Guarantees: Ingeborg Bachmann's Frankfurt Lectures on Poetics.", translated by M. T. Kraus, <i>New German Critique</i> , vol. 8, no. 27, 1982, pp. 31-56.
In-text citation	Von Der Luhe concludes that... (35). or ...examines the poetics... (Von Der Luhe 35).

M. Proceedings of Meetings and Symposiums

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Chang, Steve S., et al., editors. <i>Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society</i> , February 12-15, 1999: General Session and Para session on Loan Word Phenomena. Berkeley Linguistics Society, 2000.
In-text citation	At the conference on loan word phenomena, Chang et al. stated that... (23). or It has been found that... (Chang et al. 23).



N. Conference Proceedings (From Electronic Database)

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Bukowski, Ronald M. "Prognostic Factors for Survival in Metastatic Renal Cell Carcinoma: Update 2008. Innovations and Challenges in Renal Cancer: Proceedings of the Third Cambridge Conference." <i>Cancer</i> , vol. 115, no. 10, 2009, pp. 2273-2281. Academic OneFile, doi: 10.1002/cncr.24226.
In-text citation	Bukowski stated that...(2274). or It has been found that...(Bukowski 2274)

O. Thesis / Dissertation (Online)

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	Fayadh, Khaled H. <i>The Legal Regulation of Assisted Reproductive Technology in Iraq: Lessons from the Australian Approach</i> . Western Sydney U, 2015, handle.uws.edu.au:8081/1959.7/uws:32383 . PhD thesis.
In-text citation	Fayadh showed that...(11-12). or It was found...(Fayadh 11-12).

P. Brochure

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	<i>Transport Access Guide: Penrith Campus</i> . Western Sydney U, 2009.
In-text citation	Buses run on a schedule...(Transport Access Guide) or The Western Sydney University Transport Access Guide for the Penrith campus shows that...

Q. Video Recording, Television Program or Audio Recording

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	“Rules of the Game.” I’ll Fly Away New York Broadcasting Company, 1991. Television episode.
In-text citation	The 1991 episode “Rules of the game” showed the ... or The episode could be described as... (“Rules”).

R. Web Page / Document on The Internet

Material Type	Bibliography Style
Works Cited list	<p>Document on the Internet:</p> <p>Este, Jonathan, et al. <i>Life in the Clickstream: The Future of Journalism. Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance</i>, 2008, www.alliance.org.au/documents/foj_report_final.pdf.</p> <p>Document on the Internet, no author, no date:</p> <p>Developing an Argument. Princeton Writing Center, web.princeton.edu/sites/Writing/Writing_Center/WCWritingResources.htm. Accessed 13 April 2017.</p>
In-text citation	In <i>Life in the Clickstream</i> , Este et al. suggest that... or ...it is necessary to develop an argument (Developing).



- 12 Point Font (Times New Roman)
- One Inch Margins: Top, Bottom, Left, Right
- Double-spaced Entries

➔

Last Name & Page
Number in Header

Smith 1

Works Cited

➔

Entries in
Alphabetical
Order

Boyer, Holly, and Aimee Graham. "Hip Hop in the United States." *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 3, Spring 2016, pp. 215-218. *Academic Search Complete*, hccproxy.lib.hawaii.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=114060504&site=ehost-live. Accessed 23 June 2016.

Code, Larena. "Finding My Voice: A Hip Hop Music Curriculum for Students of Diverse Backgrounds." *Illinois Music Educator*, vol. 76, no. 2, Winter 2015, pp. 41-42. *Academic Search Complete*, hccproxy.lib.hawaii.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=110928918&site=ehost-live. Accessed 23 June 2016.

Eminem, artist, and Rihanna, featured artist. "Love the Way You Lie." *Recovery, Aftermath Records*, 2010, www.eminem.com/lyrics/recovery/love-way-you-lie-feat-rihanna. Accessed 23 June 2016.

➔

Hanging
Indent

Fig. 2.1.2 Example of work cited page in MLA style

(Source: <https://libguides.msubillings.edu/c.php?g=619978&p=4317460>)

2.1.4.2 APA Style

APA (American Psychological Association) style employs the author-date method of citation, where the author's last name and the publication year are included within the text of the paper. It is the preferred citation style endorsed by the American Psychological Association and widely adopted in the social sciences. The American Psychological Association (APA) style is a widely used citation and formatting style in the social sciences, including psychology, education, sociology, and other related disciplines. It provides guidelines for formatting academic papers, citing sources, and creating references.

▶ Author-date citation

APA style is regularly updated to reflect changes in academic publishing and electronic sources. It is essential for academic integrity, as it ensures proper attribution of ideas and sources, helps readers locate the original material, and maintains consistency and clarity in scholarly writing. Students,

► Standardised social science formatting

researchers, and professionals in the social sciences and related fields often use the APA style to present their research findings and communicate effectively within the academic community.

APA Citations for Different Types of Sources

APA provides specific formats for citing various sources, including books, journal articles, websites, reports, and more.

A. In-text Citation

1. If the author's name occurs in the text, follow it with the year of publication in parentheses

Example: Piaget (1970) compared reaction times...

2. If the author's name is not in the text, insert last name, comma, year in parenthesis.

Example: In a recent study of reaction times (Piaget, 1978)...

3. If the author's name and the date of publication have been mentioned in the text of your paper, they should not be repeated within parentheses.

Example: In 1978, Piaget compared reaction times...

4. Because material within a book or on a web page is often difficult to locate, authors should, whenever possible, give page numbers for books or paragraph numbers for web pages in the body to assist readers. Page numbers (preceded by p. or pp.) or paragraph numbers (preceded by ¶ or para.) follow the year of publication, and are separated from it by a comma. For websites with neither page numbers nor paragraph numbers, cite the heading and the number of the paragraph following it.

Examples: Hunt (1974, pp. 25-69) confirms the hypothesis...

(Myers, 2000 ¶ P5)

(Beutler, 2000, Conclusion section, para. 1)



5. If a work has two authors, always cite both names every time the reference occurs in the text. Connect both names by using the word “and.”

Examples: Piaget and Smith (1972) recognize...

Finberg and Skipp (1973, pp. 37-52) discuss...

6. If a work has two authors and they are not included in the text, insert within parentheses, the last names of the authors joined by an ampersand (&), and the year separated from the authors by a comma.

Examples: ...to organize accumulated knowledge and order sequence of operations (Piaget & Smith, 1973)

...to organize accumulated knowledge and order sequences of operations (Piaget & Smith, 1973, p. 410)

7. If a work has more than two authors (but fewer than six), cite all authors the first time the reference occurs; include the last name followed by “et al.” and the year in subsequent citations of the same reference.

Example: First occurrence:

Williams, French and Joseph (1962) found...

Subsequent citations:

Williams et al. (1962) recommended...

8. Quotations: Cite the source of direct quotations by enclosing it in parentheses. Include author, year, and page number. Punctuation differs according to where the

quotation falls.

- a. If the quoted passage is in the middle of a sentence, end the passage with quotation marks, cite the source in parentheses immediately, and continue the sentence.

Example: Many inexperienced writers are unsure about "the actual boundaries of the grammatical abstraction called a sentence" (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 24) or about which form of punctuation they should use.

- b. If the quotation falls at the end of a sentence, close the quotation with quotation marks, and cite the source in parentheses after the quotation marks. End with the period outside the parentheses.

Example: Fifty percent "of spontaneous speech is estimated to be non-speech."

(Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 24).

- c. If the quotation is longer than forty words, it is set off without quotation marks in an indented block (double-spaced). The source is cited in parentheses after the final period.

Example: This is further explained by Shaughnessy's (1977) following statements:

In speech, pauses mark rates of respiration, set off certain words for rhetorical emphasis, facilitate phonological manoeuvres, regulate the rhythms of thought and articulation and suggest grammatical structure. Modern punctuation, however, does not provide a score for such a complex orchestration.
(p. 24)



- d. If you are citing a work discussed in a secondary source, name the original work and give a citation for the secondary source. The reference list should contain the secondary source, not the unread primary source.

▶ APA in-text citation guidelines

Example: Seidenberg and McClelland's study (as cited in Coltheart, Curtis, Atkins, & Haller, 1993)

B. Citation in Reference List/Bibliography List

The reference list should include only those sources that have been explicitly cited within the text of the paper. On the other hand, a bibliography is more comprehensive and includes all the literature that was consulted during the research process, regardless of whether it was directly cited in the paper or not. When creating a reference list, one needs to pay particular attention to the following: 1) sequence; 2) punctuation and spacing; 3) capitalisation; and 4) underlining. By adhering to these guidelines, researchers can maintain a clear and organised system for citing sources in their academic papers, ensuring proper credit is given to the works that have influenced their research while also providing readers with a reliable means of accessing the referenced material.

▶ Reference list vs. bibliography

There are differences in citing books, journal articles, magazine articles and other media. Let us explore it in detail.

1. Books

One author:	Castle, E. B. (1970). <i>The teacher</i> . London: Oxford University Press.
Two authors:	McCandless, B. R., & Evans, E. D. (1973). <i>Children and youth: Psychosocial development</i> . Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press.

Three or more authors: (list each author)	Smith, V., Barr, R., & Burke, D. (1976). Alternatives in education: Freedom to choose. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa, Educational Foundation.
Society, association, or institution as author and publisher:	American Psychiatric Association. (1980). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (3rd ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author.
Editor or compiler as author	Rich, J. M. (Ed.). (1972). Readings in the philosophy of education (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
Chapter, essay, or article by one author in a book or encyclopaedia edited by another	Medley, D. M. (1983). Teacher effectiveness. In H. E. Mitzel (Ed.), Encyclopaedia of educational research (Vol. 4, pp. 1894-1903). New York: The Free Press.

2. Journal Articles

One Author	Herrington, A. J. (1985). Classrooms as forums for reasoning and writing. <i>College Composition and Communication</i> , 36(4), 404-413.
Two authors	Horowitz, L. M., & Post, D. L. (1981). The prototype is a construct in abnormal psychology. <i>Journal of Abnormal Psychology</i> , 90(6), 575-585.
Society, association, or institution as author	Institute on Rehabilitation Issues. (1975). Critical issues in rehabilitating the severely handicapped. <i>Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin</i> , 18(4), 205-213.



3. Newspaper Articles:

No author:	More jobs waiting for college grads. (1986, June 17). Detroit Free Press, pp. 1A, 3A.
------------	---

4. Magazines:

One author:	Powledge, T. M. (1983, July). The importance of being twins. Psychology Today, 19, 20-27.
No author:	CBS invades Cuba, returns with Irakere: Havana jam. (1979, May 3). Down Beat, 10.

5. Audiovisual Media and Special Instructional Materials

This category includes the following types of non-book materials:

- a. Audio record chart
- b. Flashcard Game
- c. Motion picture
- d. Video Recording Transparency
- e. Slide Realia
- f. Kit Filmstrip

► Citation formats for various sources

A bibliographic/reference format for these non-print materials is as follows:

Author's name (Author's function, i.e., Producer, Director, Speaker, etc. in parentheses. Year of publication in parentheses. Title. Medium in brackets after the title, [Filmstrip]. Place of publication: Publisher.

If it is necessary to use a number after a medium for identification or retrieval purposes, use parentheses instead of brackets, e.g., (Audio record No. 4321).

Example:

Maas, J. B. (Producer), & Gluck, D. H. (Director). (1979). Deeper in hypnosis [Motion Picture]. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

6. Electronic Media

Materials available via the Internet include journals, newspapers, research papers, government reports, web pages, etc. While citing an Internet source, one should:

1. Provide as much information as possible that will help readers relocate the information. Also, try to reference specific documents rather than web pages when possible.
2. Give accurate, working addresses (URLs) or Digital Object Identifiers.

References to Internet sources should include at least the following four items: A title or description; A date (either date of publication or date of retrieval); An address (URL) or Digital Object Identifier; An author's name, if available

In an effort to solve the problem of changed addresses and broken links, publishers have begun to assign Digital Object Identifiers (DOI) to documents, particularly to scholarly journal articles. DOIs should be used in reference lists when they are available. A DOI may be pasted into the DOI Resolver at <http://www.crossref.org/> to confirm a citation. For journal articles, if no DOI is available, a database name or URL may be added for particularly difficult to find publications. Since journal articles, unlike many web pages, are unlikely to change, a retrieval date is not necessary. Electronic book citations only need source information when the book is difficult to find or only available electronically.

Internet article based on a print source (exact duplicate) with DOI assigned:	Stultz, J. (2006). Integrating exposure therapy and analytic therapy in trauma treatment. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i> , 76(4), 482-488. doi:10.1037/0002-9432.76.4.482
Article in an Internet only journal with no DOI assigned:	Sillick, T. J., & Schutte, N. S. (2006). Emotional intelligence and self-esteem mediate between perceived early parental love and adult happiness. <i>E-Journal of Applied Psychology</i> , 2(2), 38-48. Retrieved from http://ojs.lib.swin.edu.au/index.php/ejap/article/view/71/100



► Citation formats for various sources

Daily newspaper article, electronic version available by search:	Botha, T. (1999, February 21). The Statue of Liberty, Central Park and me. The New York Times. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com
Webpage:	Raymon H. Mulford Library, The University of Toledo Health Science Campus. (2008). Instructions to authors in the health sciences. Retrieved June 17, 2008, from http://mulford.mco.edu/instr/
Annual Report:	Pearson PLC. (2005). Reading allowed: Annual review and summary financial statements 2004. Retrieved from http://www.pearson.com/investor/ar2004/pdfs/summary_report_2004.pdf

COMPARISON OF STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING

References

Avery, R. J., Bryant, W. K., Mathios, A., Kang, H., & Bell, D. (2006). Electronic course evaluations: Does an online delivery system influence student evaluations? *The Journal of Economic Education*, 37(1), 21–37. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JECE.37.1.21-37>

Berk, R. A. (2012). Top 20 strategies to increase the online response rates of student rating scales. *International Journal of Technology in Teaching and Learning*, 8(2), 98–107.

Berk, R. A. (2013). *Top 10 flashpoints in student ratings and the evaluation of teaching*. Stylus.

Boysen, G. A. (2015a). Preventing the overinterpretation of small mean differences in student evaluations of teaching: An evaluation of warning effectiveness. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, 1(4), 269–282. <https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000042>

Boysen, G. A. (2015b). Significant interpretation of small mean differences in student evaluations of teaching despite explicit warning to avoid overinterpretation. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, 1(2), 150–162. <https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000017>

Chapter 9; section labels, 2.28

journal article reference, 10.1

journal article reference without a DOI, 10.1

book reference, 10.2

letters used after the year for multiple works with the same author and year, 9.47

Fig.2.1.3 Example of a bibliography page using APA Style (Source: <https://libguides.msubillings.edu/c.php?g=1058222&p=7690633>)

2.1.5 Plagiarism

It is important for researchers to conduct thorough review of all existing sources on their research topic. While doing so it is very likely to get inspired and influenced by published works of others. Sometimes it may reflect in their writing knowingly or accidentally and it amounts to the falsehood that they present as their own. Such an act becomes a sin when they have not acknowledged the original authors from whom

- ▶ Replicating without acknowledgement

the idea or text is borrowed. The term to refer to such practice is called plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of using or presenting someone else's work as your own, even when done accidentally. The word 'plagiarism' comes from the Latin word 'plagarius,' which means kidnapper. Plagiarism is regarded as literary theft, which is the act of copying someone else's work (or ideas) and presenting it as something you created yourself.

- ▶ Copying unpublished work

Potentially, the most prevalent type of research misconduct is plagiarism. Students are often encouraged by many institutions to collaborate, to discuss one another's work, and to provide 'peer feedback.' Similarly, students will present unpublished work to peers at conferences and submit articles to scholarly journals for (anonymous) peer review. We must address the fact that it enables plagiarism. Someone else may use an unpublished manuscript or grant proposal that you submit for review. If not by plagiarism, then most definitely through stealing priceless ideas. Researchers must be aware that the information they are reading cannot be used for their own purposes because it cannot be cited until the work is published or publicly available while reviewing privileged information, such as when assessing grant applications or journal article manuscripts for peer review.

2.1.5.1 Types of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is when someone uses someone else's work, ideas, or words without giving them proper credit. It is like copying and pasting from others without permission. Here are different types of plagiarism in simple language:

- a. Copy-Paste Plagiarism:** This is when someone copies entire sentences, paragraphs, or even whole articles from a source and presents it as his/her work. For instance, consider the following quote from '*The Ivory Throne: Chronicles of the House of Travancore*' written by Manu S. Pillai.

"In the 1940s, the ruler of Jaipur imported a minister from Mysore and sought to replicate its successes in his desert principality, starting schools, abolishing purdah, and so on."

The plagiarised version of this quote will be like;

In the 1940s, the ruler of Jaipur imported a minister from Mysore and sought to replicate its successes in his desert principality, starting schools, abolishing purdah, and so on (Pillai, 2016).



In this case, the text is completely copied from the original author. Even though it is cited properly, this accounts for plagiarism because the text is not written in quotation marks. It appears to be the words of the writer when it is expressed by another person in another published work. Adding quotation marks would reduce the chance of plagiarism but still, it is not ethically correct.

The text should be written as;

► Exact words as original

The prince of Jaipur recruited a minister to his kingdom in the 1940s and tried to imitate achievements of Mysore, by establishing schools and getting rid of the purdah (Pillai, 2016).

b. Paraphrasing Plagiarism: When a person takes someone else's ideas or content, changes a few words here and there, but keeps the same structure and meaning without giving credit. The following illustration will make it clear.

“Dewan had even negotiated an agreement with Jinnah ‘for the supply of foodstuffs from Pakistan’ and ‘it had already been agreed to exchange representatives between Travancore and Pakistan’.”

This is another quote taken from *‘The Ivory Throne: Chronicles of the House of Travancore.’*

A plagiarised way of using this quote will be like this;

Dewan had made an agreement with Jinnah for the exchange of food supplies and representatives between Travancore and Pakistan.

Without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks, the content in this example has been plagiarised by randomly shifting, deleting, and reconstructing some words.

► Modified content without citation

The correct usage will be;

“Dewan and Jinnah had agreed to an exchange of representatives and food supplies between Travancore and Pakistan.” (Pillai, 2016)

c. Self-Plagiarism: This happens when someone submits their previous work or parts of it for a new assignment

► Copy own content

► Mixing multiple sources

► Unintentional copying

without permission or proper citation. It is like reusing your own words or ideas from one work in another without telling anyone. It is important to create fresh content for each new work.

d. Patchwork/ Mosaic Plagiarism: Mixing bits and pieces from various sources without proper acknowledgement is patchwork plagiarism. It is like stitching together different ideas and presenting them as one's original work. It is like taking different publications' portions and putting them into a new one without referencing the sources. It is important to correctly credit our sources and disclose them.

e. Accidental Plagiarism: This is another common type of plagiarism. Sometimes, people may unintentionally use someone else's work without realising it. This can happen if they forget to cite the source or misunderstand the rules of proper referencing. To avoid unintentional plagiarism, researchers should get familiar with standard citation practices, and make careful notes about their resources, to make sure their work is original.

2.1.5.2 How Can You Avoid Plagiarism?

Originality is undetected plagiarism.

William Ralph Inge

► Cite sources and manage time

You can avoid plagiarism by saying where you got the information from in your writing. Having enough time to do your work properly also helps stop plagiarism. If an author has a tight deadline to finish an article, they might copy parts from other places without meaning to. Good writing takes practice. Working with experienced writers can teach young researchers how to properly collect information from other sources and write original work in their own words. It is a good idea to set aside specific times - one for reading background stuff, another for writing your own ideas. That makes it less likely you will accidentally copy bits. A top quality research paper is like fine old whiskey - it takes time to mature, few fully appreciate it, but it leaves a lasting impression.



2.1.5.3 Consequences of Plagiarism in Research

Plagiarism can tamper a researcher in many ways and many aspects. A few of them are highlighted below.

- i. Plagiarism can adversely impact your reputation and it may lead to the failure of the researcher.
- ii. The credibility of research for the individual or institution or even the field itself can be damaged.
- iii. Plagiarism can cause rejection of published materials.
- iv. Any degree acquired using the plagiarised material can be lost.
- v. Plagiarism on a serious level involving copyright infringement can invite potential legal repercussions.
- vi. Any fund granted for conducting research which proved to involve plagiarism can be lost and even be asked to repay in certain cases.
- vii. Plagiarism can cause losing professionalism and hinder any job opportunities and career advancement.
- viii. Plagiarists can lose all types of professional contacts and collaborations.
- ix. Plagiarism is against all ethical standards and can cause moral setbacks to the researcher.
- x. The human effort, time and any other resource spent on creating plagiarised material is wasted ultimately.

As plagiarism has severe effects on research, it is important to discuss what can be done by researchers to identify and avoid this before publicising the manuscripts.

Summarised Overview

This unit offered crucial starting guidance to novice researchers in the English language and literature fields regarding foundational aspects of research writing. It began by highlighting practical strategies for identifying timely, focused research problems which address genuine explanatory limitations and gaps in existing disciplinary knowledge. The lessons stressed on the need to strategically select subjects and primary source materials like textual evidence for analysis based on methodological relevance to these research problems. Additionally, the unit provided extensive information on accurate

formatting methods for assigning credit to borrowed ideas or passages integrated within research arguments through citation styles like MLA and APA as well as conventions for listing bibliographical references. Proper documentation enables transparency regarding the lineage of conceptual thought while fortifying the evidentiary basis of claims made in academic writing.

The unit also enumerated common intentional and unintentional types of plagiarism such as patchwriting, copy-pasting and absence of citations which can seriously undermine research integrity. Students must strive to present original analysis in their own words and style while creatively building upon or challenging established positions and debates. Examples highlighted grave consequences arising from plagiarized manuscripts including reputational damage, career setbacks, loss of professional opportunities and ethical failures. The lessons emphasized how standardized documentation coupled with responsible research writing practices can raise quality of disciplinary knowledge in the long run.

Assignments

1. What qualities make some research problems more impactful to study compared to others in English language and literature?
2. How would you strategically source relevant materials and data to analyze cultural assumptions behind character dialogues in a short story?
3. Review the citation style, documentation format and bibliographic conventions used in a linguistics journal article. Assess its conformity to formal standards like MLA or APA.
4. If your literature review draft lacks proper citations, what steps would you take before next submission to avoid plagiarism charges?
5. Discuss three ethical dilemmas researchers face today while writing and publishing academic manuscripts in the digital age.
6. Evaluate policies and mechanisms used by universities to detect plagiarized student work and uphold research integrity. How successful are they?

Suggested Reading

1. Walliman, Nicholas. *Your Research Project: Designing and Planning Your Work*. United Kingdom, SAGE, 2011.
2. Clines, Raymond H., and Cobb, Elizabeth R.. *Research Writing Simplified: A*



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1. Lancaster, Thomas. *Avoid Plagiarism*. United Kingdom, SAGE, 2019.
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3. Librarian, U. L. S. *Guides: Citation Styles: APA, MLA, Chicago, Turabian, IEEE: Chicago 17th/Turabian 9th*. <https://pitt.libguides.com/citationhelp/chicago>.
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5. *General Format - Purdue OWL® - Purdue University*. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html
6. *Foundational Skills for Research and Writing, Self Learning Material*, Sreenarayana-guru Open University. 2023.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Unit 2

Research Writing: From Questions to Concepts

Learning Outcomes

The content, discussion and assignments in this Unit are aligned with the following learning outcomes:

- ▶ learn techniques for developing research questions.
- ▶ understand methods for conceptualizing and structuring ideas.
- ▶ practice critiquing assumptions and perspectives.
- ▶ gain skills for coherent academic writing.

Background

Research writing requires strong critical thinking and communication skills. We must learn to develop our own ideas and structure them effectively to produce compelling arguments backed by evidence. This unit will focus on building core skills for conceptualising, questioning, and communicating ideas in research writing.

Formulating insightful research questions is the foundation of high-impact writing. Students will learn techniques like asking open-ended questions that prompt deeper analysis rather than yes/no responses; posing questions from different theoretical lenses to encourage out-of-the-box thinking; identifying knowledge gaps where new research is needed; and evaluating existing assumptions by asking “what if” questions about other possible interpretations. By mastering strategic questioning, researchers will derive ideas that merit in-depth analysis.

Now, the next step is learning to conceptualise response ideas by outlining potential arguments, exploring different stances around debatable issues, gathering background context, breaking down complex questions into sub-areas for examination, and considering hypothetical implications of various responses. Such conceptualisations guide researchers toward logical and evidence-based idea development.

Keywords

Research questions, conceptualisation, assumptions, perspectives, academic writing, arguments, evidence

Discussion

2.2.1 Finding Topics by Asking Questions

Asking probing questions is the launch pad for identifying compelling research topics. Taking time to carefully find holes, unclear areas, and interesting issues in existing research will create a strong base for your own investigation before rushing to gather sources or information.

An insightful first move is questioning your own scholarly interests – reflect introspectively on themes, texts, perspectives or issues that spark your curiosity. For instance, as a passionate reader of Victorian poetry, you may ask yourself questions like: Whose voices remain excluded from or marginalised in the Victorian poetry canon and why? How might overlooked non-male, working-class or culturally diverse Victorian poets have expressed distinct worldviews? Such questioning of personal interests can point toward fruitful overlooked areas or new critical angles to bring into focus.

- ▶ Questions in re-search topic identification

Equally, querying blind spots, unsupported claims, or inherent biases within existing academic literature can reveal prime topics to address. Pay attention to whose perspectives are dominant and whose are missing from critical discourse in your domain - ask what key questions have not been substantively posed or answered. Scan for disagreements or inconsistencies in analysis, methodology or conclusions made by prior researchers that suggest an opening for fresh examination. For example, perhaps applying ethical critique to the field of machine learning approaches in computational literary analysis exposes under-addressed risks, demanding new interrogation.

- ▶ Blind spots and unexamined assumptions

Furthermore, connecting wider real-world discussions and events with your academic expertise through targeted questioning can inspire resonance research ideas. Contemporary issues around gender politics, diaspora cultures, digital communities, environmental crisis and more have salient literary dimensions - formulate research questions drawing insightful links between societal phenomena and texts/language. For instance, you might ask how emerging ‘eco-anxiety’ in youth worldwide is (or isn’t) reflected in 21st-century children’s literature.

- ▶ Academic expertise and real-world discussions

Continually questioning your own perspective, the existing research landscape and the society around you will fuel an evolving list of prospective postgraduate topics. Evaluating aligned research questions for originality, significance and



▶ Continuous inquiry

feasibility will help identify the most promising direction for your work to progress knowledge.

▶ Brainstorming

2.2.2. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an essential pre-writing technique that helps generate ideas and activate prior knowledge before beginning a writing task. It allows students to clarify their thoughts, identify information gaps, and share knowledge with peers to strengthen ideas. Effective brainstorming in research writing should go beyond individual note-taking to incorporate structured collaboration.

▶ Strategic brainstorming

2.2.2.1 Why Brainstorm?

Brainstorming unlocks ideas about a topic that may seem intuitively obvious to the writer but need to be made explicit. It builds associations between existing knowledge and new areas of inquiry, laying a foundation of concepts and vocabulary to utilise in writing. Brainstorming reveals areas requiring more information to support key points. It is especially valuable for research tasks by mapping out promising directions and sources to investigate.

▶ Brainstorming benefits

2.2.2.2 Tools for Effective Brainstorming

While individual brainstorming has merit for reflection, a collaborative approach leverages the knowledge of all students. Interacting in pairs or small groups exposes more concepts, facts, and questions to inform the eventual writing. This communication practice develops ideas further by articulating, debating, and recording them for later use. Structured graphical organisers channel these conversations into relationships between concepts that bring clarity to complex topics.

▶ Different ideas of mapping

2.2.2.3 Four Useful Graphic Organizers

Idea Map: A central bubble with the main topic/concept, surrounded by connected bubbles showing associated ideas, vocabulary, sources, etc. Additional levels of bubbles can link sub-concepts.

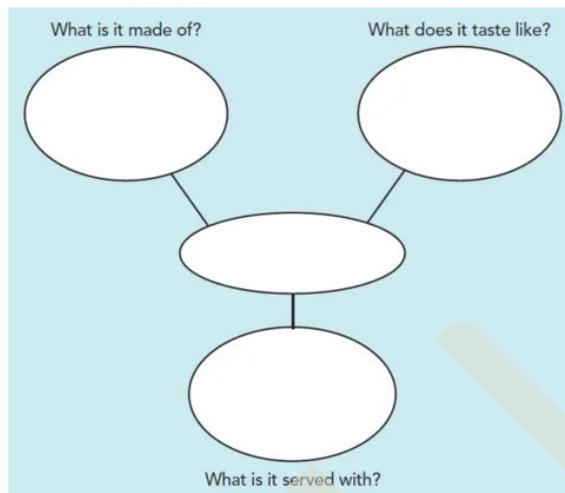


Fig. 2.2.1 A sample idea map to describe your favourite dish

► For supporting and opposing points

T-Chart: The left column in a T-chart, as shown in the following figure, holds points supporting a position; the right column contains opposing points and counters. Comparing contrasting perspectives sharpens an argument.

positive (+)	negative (-)

Fig. 2.2.2 A sample T-chart to illustrate contrasting perspectives

Table: Categories become columns containing specific traits, data points, examples, etc., related to the items listed in rows for side-by-side comparison.

	Online	Face-to-face	Both
1 Develops a strong teacher-student relationship			
2 Relies heavily on technology			
3 Takes place in real time			
4 Can be an effective way of teaching			
5 Requires a high level of motivation			
6 Not limited by geography			
7 Can suit many types of students			

Fig. 2.2.3 A sample table to compare the traits in the topic “online learning vs face-to-face”

Venn Diagram: Overlapping circles highlight shared and

distinct attributes, evidence, or qualities between two things. The intersection reveals surprising commonalities.

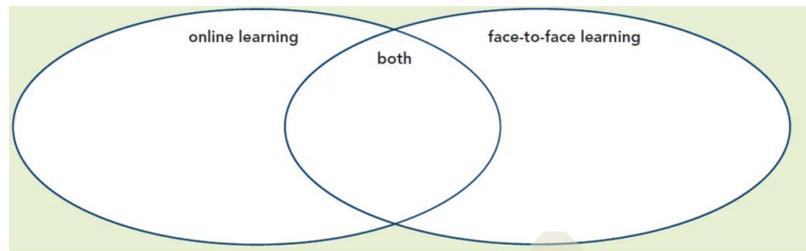


Fig. 2.2.4 A sample Venn diagram developed on the topic “online learning vs face-to-face”

► Table and Venn Diagram

Thus, implementing the above flexible visual frameworks pushes learners to scrutinise a topic from multiple angles.

2.2.3 Planning of Research Writing

Before beginning a research writing project, it is essential to develop a comprehensive plan to guide the process. Thoughtful planning lays the groundwork for efficient composition and effective communication of ideas to readers. At the core of any research endeavour are the key inquiries driving new investigations. Carefully delineate the central research questions that the writing will address. These serve as anchors, preventing tangential drift once the writing begins. Framing trenchant research questions requires reviewing previous work to identify critical knowledge gaps within a field.

► Comprehensive research plan

With research questions defined, map a thesis statement expressing the perspective the writing will argue for. Identify 3-5 major supporting arguments for the central thesis. Outlining critical supporting points provides intellectual pillars to structurally reinforce claims made.

► Thesis development

A literature review surveys publications relevant to the research questions, summarising current understanding and debates related to the thesis argument. Gaps in existing knowledge should interrelate with the research questions originally outlined. The literature review anchors a research project in the continuity of scientific discourse rather than an isolated tangent.

► Literature review purpose

Delineate the specific methods to be employed in investigating the research questions - materials, models, simulations, subjects, etc. Detail how anticipated results will be measured and analysed for each phase of research. Blueprinting methodology prioritizes efficiency during experimentation and analysis.

► Methodology blueprinting

► Writing phases and scheduling

Pace writing in phases using backwards planning from project deadlines. Allocate word counts and interim draft deadlines for each section. Build in extra time for multiple revisions and editor/peer review. Scheduling keeps the writing process on track when motivation fluctuates.

► Adaptable planning

Rigorous planning provides critical structure, yet research writing rarely unfolds precisely according to originally conceived strategies. Insights uncovered may shift the thesis and argumentation. Writing plans should evolve with new findings, keeping the central research questions at the core. An adaptable blueprint sustains progress while permitting organic idea development. Thus, by comprising the above aspects, the following table shows the different stages in planning a research writing project:

How to Plan Research Writing?	
1	Determine Central Research Questions
2	Outline Thesis and Major Arguments
3	Perform Literature Review
4	Develop Methodological Blueprint

2.2.4 Developing and Conceptualising Questions and Structuring Ideas

► Core skills

Research writing requires strong critical thinking and communication skills. We must learn to develop our own ideas and structure them effectively to produce compelling arguments backed by evidence. This section will focus on building core skills for conceptualising, questioning, and communicating ideas in research writing.

Formulating good research questions is the foundation of impactful writing. Students will learn techniques to deeply question topics, perspectives, and assumptions to spark ideas. Some of them are:

- Asking open-ended questions like “How does Hamlet’s indecision lead to his demise?” that prompt deeper analysis rather than yes/no responses
- Posing questions from different lenses like a psycho-analytical critique of Frankenstein rather than just literary analysis to encourage out-of-the-box thinking
- Identifying knowledge gaps in areas like the lack of research on immigrant dialects and posing research



▶ Research question techniques

questions that require anthropological linguistic study

- ▶ Evaluating existing assumptions like the claim that modal verbs display certainty by asking “what if” questions about other possible connotations
- ▶ Prioritizing inquiry by determining which language or literature research lines are most meaningful to pursue.

By mastering such purposeful and strategic questioning, a researcher will derive ideas that merit in-depth analysis.

Now, the next step is learning to conceptualise response ideas by outlining potential arguments. They are like:

- ▶ Mapping out pro/con stances around debatable English literature questions like “Is the portrayal of violence against women in graphic novels promoting harm?”
- ▶ Exploring different theoretical orientations on complex linguistics issues like the relationship between language dominance and conceptual fluency
- ▶ Gathering background info to contextualise questions about the English canon or how language shapes thought
- ▶ Logistically breaking down questions like “How should classic novels depicting racial bias be taught today?” into sub-areas for analysis
- ▶ Considering hypothetical implications of various responses to controversial issues in the field

▶ Conceptualising response ideas

Such conceptualisations will guide researchers toward logical and evidence-based idea development.

Finally, researchers need to organise their ideas coherently to write substantive research papers. They should focus on ideas like:

- ▶ Constructing a focused thesis statement responding to the research question guiding the literary analysis.
- ▶ Grouping related ideas into paragraphs—e.g. historical context versus contemporary readings of a text
- ▶ Outlining paper flow from introducing the research question, through analysis, to concluding interpretations

- ▶ For substantive re-search papers

- ▶ Choosing logical ways to present competing linguistics theories
- ▶ Crafting transitions between sections of a dialectic study to highlight interconnections

Learning to structure ideas similar to the above will lead researchers to produce polished research writing.

A Sample Writing: Critically Analysing Gender Bias in Victorian Morality Through Literary Theory

Developing Ideas Through Questioning

When looking at Victorian novels as a sample, good questions could be asked: Does narration of women mainly in the home support old-fashioned ideas about males and females? This type of question pushes more critical thinking rather than just asking what happens. We could also ask the question from different viewpoints – for example, looking at Dickens' women characters from a feminist viewpoint compared to a Marxist one focused on inequality and money. Finding gaps around postcolonial hybridity in 19th-century coming-of-age stories shows where new research is needed. Asking thoughtful questions in this way sets up a strong analysis.

Conceptualising Responses

After deciding to examine gender double standards around morality in Victorian novels, one must outline possible arguments drawing on theories. Useful ideas may involve applying Honneth's ideas about social esteem to explore why books condemn immoral women like Tess more than men like Sykes. Comparing reactions shows gender bias about virtue and vice. Foucault's theories on power also shed light on ideals controlling feminine behaviour. Outlining the essay to evaluate novels through these theories enables robust debate.

Structuring Ideas

With a strong theory-grounded understanding, literary analysis takes shape. An introduction highlighting the question of unequal justice for erring female and male characters will emphasise the issue's significance. Analysing representations of downfall through recognition frameworks and Foucault's power dynamics makes a compelling contrast. Finally, the conclusion can reflect on what this means for modern interpretations of redemption. Signposting between sections supports scholarly flow between theories and textual examples. This method effectively employs questioning and concepts to construct convincing academic arguments.



2.2.5 Non-sequiturs in Research Writing

Non-sequiturs refer to statements that do not logically follow previous statements or questions. In research writing, non-sequiturs should typically be avoided, as they can confuse readers and undermine the analysis. However, when used deliberately, non sequiturs can serve important rhetorical functions.

- ▶ Avoid non-sequiturs

For instance, in literary analysis essays, non-sequiturs may characterise certain protagonists. Dialogue featuring abrupt topic changes or scatterbrained responses can reveal key personality traits. Take Shakespeare’s Hamlet – his disjointed soliloquies mirror an unsettled mind grappling with grief, doubt, and indecision. Non-sequiturs in character speech illustrate mental disarray. Alternatively, non-sequiturs could demonstrate deception, like Iago feigning ignorance when questioned in Othello. Strategic non-sequiturs in research papers illuminate such literary devices.

- ▶ Non-sequiturs in literary analysis

In linguistics studies, non-sequiturs may demonstrate language processing difficulties. For example, research could analyse dialogues from patients with schizophrenia, who often respond unpredictably by associating loosely related concepts, with minimal regard for context. Comparing the frequency of non-sequiturs against control groups indicates disorders hampering communication coherence. Here non sequiturs provide quantifiable linguistic markers of conditions affecting conceptual connections.

- ▶ Non-sequiturs in linguistics

Ultimately non sequiturs rarely belong in the researcher’s own analysis; they undermine rational flow. But when analysing subjects’ speech and writing, non-sequiturs may supply revealing qualitative and quantitative insights. As long as the researcher contextualizes the significance, selective non-sequiturs can strengthen literary appreciation and linguistics discoveries alike through research writing.

- ▶ Researcher and non-sequiturs

2.2.6 Jargons in Research Writing

Academic writing utilizes specialized terminology, known as “jargon,” to allow experts to efficiently communicate complex ideas. However, overuse of technical language can exclude less specialized readers. Learning to balance expert precision against accessibility is an essential academic writing skill. Academic jargon includes terms related to integrity, assessment, online learning platforms, neurodiversity, and research skills. This specialized vocabulary enables academics to concisely convey details that would require long explanations



► Balancing jargon

in everyday language. Jargon operates as a linguistic shortcut between experts.

► Comprehension risk

However, papers saturated with unfamiliar insider terms risk limiting comprehension to readers already familiar with the concepts and vocabulary. Reliance on jargon often correlates with dense, opaque writing rather than clear communication. Academics must gauge their audiences and strategically employ technical language. Writing accessibly for both specialist and general audiences requires defining unfamiliar terms, explaining underlying concepts without insider vocabulary, and consciously limiting use of expert terminology where plain language conveys the meaning equally well. Unlike speaking, writers cannot gauge readers' comprehension and adjust terminology accordingly.

► Balancing precision and accessibility

Specialist vocabulary has value for precision, but plain language promotes wider understanding. Rather than entirely avoiding academic jargon, using such terms sparingly and purposefully, supported by clear explanatory context, often strikes an appropriate balance. Elucidating concepts in accessible language, defining unfamiliar terms and limiting jargon requires writers to actively choose reader inclusion over showcasing specialist knowledge.

The following are some jargon terms commonly used in academic writing:

- Academic integrity
- Academic misconduct
- Argument
- Asynchronous
- Critical
- Evaluate
- Formative assessment
- Learning outcomes
- Peer-review
- Plagiarism
- Reference
- Rubric
- Synthesise
- Text
- Thesis

2.2.7 Arguments in Research Writing

Making good arguments in research writing means carefully choosing evidence and organising it to convince readers of the main claims. In literature analysis, for example, arguments need supporting evidence from the texts to show thoughtful



- ▶ Constructing persuasive arguments

interpretations, not just guesses. Writing about Shakespeare's famous play *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, a paper arguing the young lovers are reckless and impulsive unlike their practical families would need to use key scenes to show this. Quoting Romeo's lovesick vows when he first sees Juliet and quickly insisting on marriage even though they just met shows potential rashness. In contrast, Lord Capulet telling Juliet to wait until she is older before marrying reflects judgment missing in his daughter and her boyfriend. The paper uses text moments that match the idea of a divide between sense and sensibility that ends in tragedy.

- ▶ Building a coherent argument

Linking these small examples together carefully leads readers through the logic so they accept the paper's conclusions. On themes of fate versus personal choice in *Romeo and Juliet*, references to bad dreams, missed letters or the families' long feud might stress destiny's cruel hand. But this gets balanced with the individual choices each character makes to ignore chances to stop disaster. So the researcher selects strategically from many potential points, knowing the impact lies not in listing loosely related examples but tracking closely exactly how a few apt selections build up the argument.

- ▶ Argument precision

Whereas the current levels of argument demand even tighter links between claims and condensed evidence in papers to show depth of exploration concisely. Literature essays must focus on elements that directly support the stated perspectives over straying asides. Research writing in general applies this principle of carefully featuring avenues that reflect stated arguments and cutting excess materials that do not drive purpose. With so many resources accessible today, precise passages showing rather than loosely suggesting remain vital. A paper's success rests ultimately on building connected small examples into strong overall reasoning. Researchers construct compelling papers by grasping which textual details accumulate - like pointillist paintings merging vivid dots into luminous images through thoughtful placement - to translate into persuasive publications.

- ▶ Effective responses

2.2.8 Short Answers and Essay Responses

Answering questions effectively is central to research writing success, whether writing short response answers or full essay compositions. Careful analysis and systematic approaches help craft focused, insightful replies using subject knowledge to address specific directives.

With short answers on topics like analysing literature,

► Crafting short answers

keywords in questions guide response precision. Take a question asking: “How does the poem ‘If’ by Rudyard Kipling employ metaphor to convey perseverance as a virtue?” Firstly, the directive terms “how” and “employ” require examining Kipling’s techniques for using metaphors to achieve specific communication effects. Second highlights the framing context as depicting “perseverance as a virtue” to evaluate metaphors within. An organised short answer would then discuss examples like the opening lines likening self-control amid trouble to keeping composure “If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs...”. Connecting this concrete imagery to the abstract concept being described indicates meaningful analogy building by Kipling promotes resilience against adversity.

► Crafting essay responses

The next step - responding to essay questions on subjects like English literature – builds on attentive decoding techniques used previously for concentrated short answers. Essay prompts likewise contain directive keywords that require noting, only now the analytical presentation expands into an essay arc with introduction, body paragraph themes and conclusion.

► *Hamlet*

Consider an essay assignment to assess Shakespeare’s tragedy *Hamlet* from a psychological standpoint in regards to the central character. The core keywords asking for a psychological assessment through a character-focused lens already signals analysis scoping. This guides planning body paragraphs exploring facets like Hamlet’s assumed “antic disposition” mental instability, his inner turmoil from encountering his father’s ghost with disturbing revelations, confusing romantic feelings for Ophelia and eventual fatalistic mental collapse amid bloody confrontation. Examples cited from multiple acts chronologically track shifts in his complex, mercurial disposition leading to self-destruction. Careful decoding enables an organically arising game plan.

► Precision, relevance and insight

For both cases – short answers or fuller essays – responsive writing shines through, pinpointing exactly what clues or thought provocation hides within detailed questions or prompts. Building this reflex of spurring ideas only from what is specifically asked focuses writing. It elevates relevance, depth and insight. Students transform into skilled researchers and communicators through practising the self-discipline of letting direction flow purely from lines of questioning, while trusting one’s knowledge base to fulfil expectations. Internalising this process leads to fluently answering different prompt varieties while upholding standards for rigour and concision in research writing fields.



2.2.8.1 Structuring Arguments in Essay Answers: A Sample using Shakespeare's *Othello*

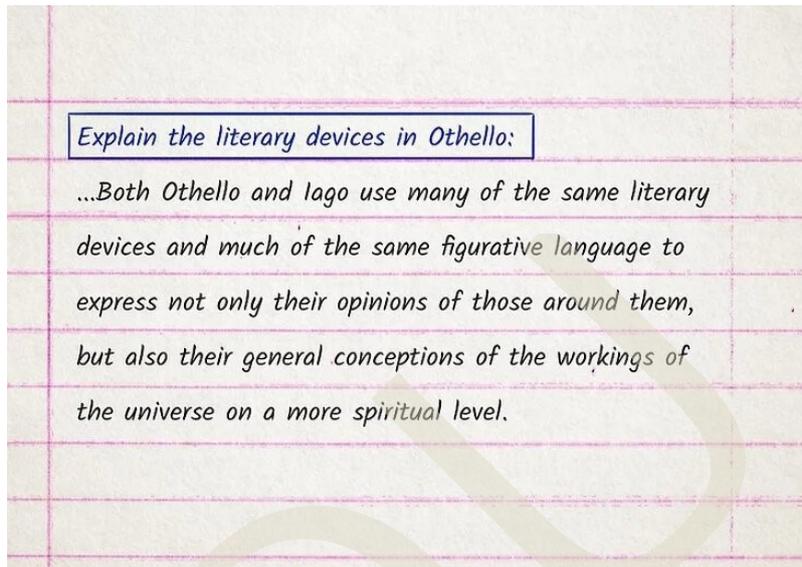


Fig.2.2.5 Sample essay part to invite the reader into the argument in the introduction of the answer

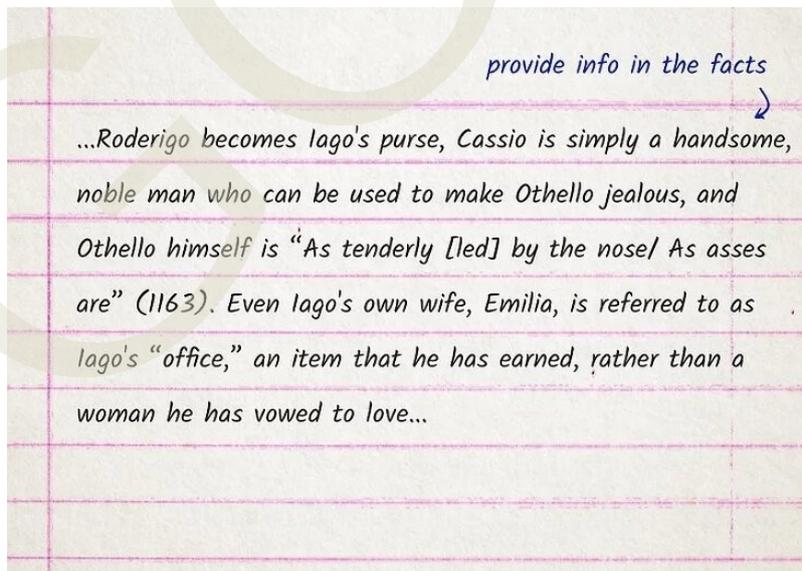


Fig.2.2.6 Sample essay part to provide background information in the statement of facts.

show the evidence for your claim

Othello's soliloquy in Act V, before he kills Desdemona, bears many parallels to the speeches made by Iago throughout the play. Othello, like Iago, objectifies Desdemona several times, first refusing to spill her blood, for fear of ruining her "smooth as monumental alabaster" skin...

Fig.2.2.7 Sample essay part to show evidence for your claim

synthesize your argument in the conclusion

While Othello uses much of Iago's own figurative language by the end of the play, he does so to achieve different results. Iago degrades every other character by comparing them to objects that can easily be manipulated, while Othello, when he dehumanizes people, somehow makes them out to be more than human...

Fig.2.2.8 Sample concluding paragraph of your essay
(Source: <https://www.wikihow.com/Answer-Essay-Type-Questions-in-Literature-Examinations>)

2.2.9 Writing with Focus

Finding focus is key to effective research writing. Without focus, writing can meander aimlessly without making clear points. As a writer, you need to identify and refine a clear, controlling idea to guide readers through your reasoning.

Start by asking yourself key questions:

► Develop a clear focus

- What's most compelling in my argument?
- What, specifically, is my assignment asking me to do?
- What background information will my readers need?
- How well does my structure and organisation serve my purpose?

► Crystallize focus

Thinking through these questions can help crystallise your focus. If you're struggling to narrow down broad ideas, try listing out all your thoughts surrounding your topic. See if any patterns emerge that suggest a more defined focus. Outlining can also assist with mapping out a clear progression of ideas before drafting.

► Draft analysis

As you write your first draft, identify the main topic or claim in each paragraph. Do they align with and support the central thesis and focus outlined in your introduction? If certain points seem extraneous, consider streamlining to better spotlight your main thread. Sometimes, it's easier to find focus during the revision process. Create a draft map by labelling each paragraph's main idea and tracing which ideas link back to the claims in your introduction. Tally the links to see if certain ideas get more emphasis. If paragraphs don't connect, you may need to cut or better integrate these points.

► Streamline content

Refining your focus requires making choices about what's most important for the reader to understand. As you write, continuously revisit whether your content and organization serve your intended focus. Remind readers of your guiding focus by summarizing the main takeaways. Harvest supporting details that enrich rather than divert from your main points. With practice, you can cultivate the judgment to determine what to spotlight in your writing and what to leave out to keep readers engaged on the main journey you want to take them on.

► Be precise and vivid

2.2.10 Writing to the Point

Writing to the point means using precise, vivid details and descriptions in your writing, rather than vague generalities. This helps create a sharper, more vivid picture for readers. Consider the difference between "A woman walked into a room" and "The Rani strode into her harem." Though both sentences have the same number of words, the second packs in far more specific detail about who the woman is, how she moves, and where she is.

To harness the power of specificity:

► Journalistic details

Ask the journalist's questions - who, what, when, where, why and how. Drill down to uncover precise specifics about your topic. For example, instead of "a man," define specifics - is he a shepherd? When and how is he tending his sheep - feeding, lambing, counting them into shelter? Details like a shepherd flipping a sheep to check its feet can make a generic man spring to life.

► Selective specifics elevate writing

You can detail in your writing, but not every detail. Specificity doesn't mean overwhelming with trivial facts. Instead, choose telling sensory or contextual details that serve your purpose - revealing character, setting mood, foreshadowing events. If flush toilets are absent in your historical setting, rather than a textbook explanation, show someone emptying a stinking night bucket, unaware the house owner exits below. This vividly conveys the lack of modern plumbing.

► Use vivid language

Make words work hard through precise verbs and sensory details. Instead of "walk", use marched, shuffled, limped. Dip into the five senses - the glow of a welcoming fire, the patter of rain on thatched roofs, the savoury smell of dinner cooking. Choosing one apt, sensory detail can immerse readers, sparking imagination better than a lengthy description.

► Precise and depth

The key is uncovering resonant specifics tied to your story purpose. Precise people, places, objects and events - rendered through judicious, vivid details - help transport readers right alongside your characters into palpable moments of your historical setting. With practice, you'll develop an eye for the telling specifics in people, places and moments that singularly capture mood and revelation.

2.2.11 Blueprint/Design for Research Article

► Structure for clarity

A strong research paper is built on a clear structure that logically connects the different elements - the introduction, methods, results and discussion sections. Understanding the purpose and organisation of each section, through a blueprint or research design, helps craft a coherent flow.

► Clarify purpose, context, gap and hypothesis

Introduction: The introduction introduces readers to the research question and hypothesis being investigated. Start by clearly stating the study's purpose - what question or issue it tackles and why it matters. Provide background context from existing literature about what is already known on this topic. Then carve out what specific aspect remains unknown or unresolved - this gap shapes your research question. Finally, present your hypothesis - your prediction of expected outcomes.



- ▶ Methods as a key section

Methods: The methods section details the experiment design and materials used to test your hypothesis. The goal is to provide enough specifics so the study can be replicated by others. First describe your study participants - key traits like number, age, and gender. Next overview the step-by-step procedure used in the experiment. Finally list all materials utilized - surveys, software, and equipment configurations. If using multi-item questionnaires, describe the scoring approach.

- ▶ Present result clearly

Results: The results section presents analysed statistical data from your study, interpreting the meaning as it relates to the hypothesis. Use text to explain what the numbers and figures indicate. Charts or graphs can supplement to showcase trends. Stick to just the results here - save broader meaning for the next section.

- ▶ Discuss implications

Discussion: The discussion section first declares whether or not the results supported the original hypothesis and examines why. Integrate links back to previous literature and theories. Assess strengths like reliability and limitations like small sample sizes to aid contextualisation. Wrap up with implications of these findings and suggestions for future research to build understanding.

- ▶ Establish good structure

Additional elements like references, figures and tables pepper throughout to substantiate and enrich. But maintaining the logical flow between this hypothesis-driven introduction, methods, results and discussion forms the research paper's core infrastructure - the foundation that reinforces the science within. Use this blueprint, tailored to your specific investigation, to construct a sound scholarly edifice.

- ▶ Convincing argument

2.2.12 Argument Sentences

An effective research paper makes an argument - it takes a stand and supports it to influence the reader's perspective. Crafting a convincing argument involves multiple interconnected parts.

- ▶ Central claim essentials

The claim is the central viewpoint being argued, setting the paper's direction. It should directly address a key issue in a focused way. For example, "Parents should receive guaranteed paid leave when a new child arrives." Strong claims use words like "often" or "most" rather than definitives like "always."

- ▶ Reasons support claim

Reasons explain why the claim has validity, underpinned by evidence. They appeal logically, ethically or experientially. For example, paid parental leave gives more time to adjust to major life changes, benefiting work performance.

- ▶ Evidence reinforces reasons

Evidence directly backs the reasons. Facts, data, and analysis substantiate the claim. Evidence should resonate with the target audience by reflecting their priorities. Properly cite authoritative, credible sources. Our example notes a medical study linking paid leave to lower turnover.

- ▶ Warrants connect evidence

Warrants connect evidence to reasons through shared assumptions and beliefs. They provide the logic that evidence necessarily leads to the reason given. Even seemingly obvious warrants must still be evidenced. If the warrant states ill-fitting clothes necessitate replacement, the evidence must still demonstrate poor fit.

- ▶ Address opposing views

Opposing views should be acknowledged and addressed to build reader trust and find common ground. Fairly represent counterarguments, validate reasonable critiques, and then respond with counterevidence. Perhaps some believe clothes should just be altered not replaced - different warrant. Evidence showing alteration won't work could change perspectives.

When making an argument:

- ▶ Develop a compelling argument

- ▶ Research comprehensively to fully grasp nuances
- ▶ Introduce the specific claim and overarching issue
- ▶ Provide context on the issue and opposing takes
- ▶ Establish personal credibility through citations and qualifications
- ▶ Craft emotional and logical appeals showing why readers should care
- ▶ Use evidence, examples and imagery that resonates with target readers
- ▶ Represent alternative viewpoints accurately and respond evidentially

An argument with well-supported reasons, credible evidence, logical warrants and acknowledgement of opposition can compellingly convince readers.

2.2.12.1 Examples of Argument Sentences

1. Example of an effective claim: "Parents should be given guaranteed paid parental leave upon the birth or introduction of a new child."
2. Example of logical reason: "By giving parents leave, they have more time to acclimate to new responsibilities and lifestyle, positively impacting work performance."
3. Example of authoritative evidence: "A 2016 medical



► Building Effective Arguments

study found companies offering paid parental leave had lower turnover rates.”

2.2.13 Titles

Titles are the first impressions of research papers, hence being precisely informative is key. An effective title conveys the central topic and how it will be approached to provide necessary context upfront.

For example, “The Representation of Women in Magazine Advertisements” is quite vague - it could reference any period or genre, and the content approach is unclear. Without reading the full paper, the scope and assertions remain a mystery. Compare that to the title, “The Image of the 90s Woman as Presented in Magazine Advertisements which Promote Cosmetic Industries.” This immediately establishes useful parameters - a 1990s timeframe, focus on female depictions specifically, centred around cosmetic industry ads. This quickly sets clear expectations even for those unfamiliar with the subject. Additionally, the second title hints at critical analysis by framing imagery as a “presentation” manufactured by cosmetic advertisements rather than an objective reality. This implication of underlying persuasive messaging invites scrutiny of accuracy in portrayals of 1990s women.

► Effective research titles

Thus, strong titles exhibit three key traits:

- i. Clearly state the specific topic and parameters being addressed instead of broad generalisations. The 1990s cosmetics ads title precisely focuses the scope while “Magazine Advertisements” alone is free-ranging.
- ii. Demonstrate knowledgeable thinking around the research area through informed framing of issues. Titles should reflect depth of analysis, not just subject themes.
- iii. Set the stage for the paper structure to follow by defining not just the topic but also the lens applied in the examination. Our second title establishes both the subject and critical viewpoint that the analysis will adopt in the forthcoming discussion.

► Precision, Depth and Structure

Carefully crafted titles signal organised ideas and analytical rigour before readers see the first word. Lead with accurately

informative titles that give unambiguous insight into paper perspectives, positioning persuasive arguments ahead.

2.2.14 Writing, Drafting, Editing, Chiselling and Proofreading

► Drafting

Developing a great research paper requires methodical drafting to transform initial ideas into polished arguments. This journey typically involves multiple versions, with each draft evolution moving closer to perfection.

2.2.14.1 First Draft

The first draft aims not for flawless sentences but rather for excavating concepts and connections. Resist heavy editing, focusing instead on expanding analysis, unpacking significance, and elucidating purpose. Treat this initial thinking space as fluid – insert temporary placeholders for sources, arguments requiring more support, or sections needing development. Priority rests not on structure but on unearthing relevance, with broader themes organically emerging across drafts.

► Conceptual excavation and fluid development

For example, an English literature paper examining the use of nature imagery across Romantic and Victorian eras could utilise the first draft to unpack assumptions, grapple with shifting artistic intentions, and trace societal influence on creative works.

2.2.14.2 Second Draft

With raw concepts down, the second draft structures content into logical sequences meeting assignment aims. Assess if sections logically build upon one another to support the central thesis. Reposition or remove pieces that stray from coherent flow or significance. Check introductions and conclusions properly frame the discussion, with smooth transitions guiding readers between ideas. Treat this version as scaffolding that systematically constructs the scholarly skeleton.

► Logical sequencing and scholarly skeleton

The paper could now organise sources on major authors, notable works, and artistic movements into discrete points that assemble an argument. The second draft creates a natural idea progression tied to the initial aims.

2.2.14.3 Third Draft

The third draft turns to fortifying areas needing additional research support or deeper analysis. Weave in quotes and examples to illustrate key points. Probe biases, address limitations, and consider counter-evidence to demonstrate thoughtful investigation. Eliminate lingering weakly supported



sections straying from the crux. Shift focus solely to enriching academic rigour through evidenced systematic analysis upholding the research hypotheses.

► Fortify, integrate and enrich

The paper might integrate more symbolic imagery from seminal Romantic poems, or add context on how Victorian artwork reflected socio-political upheaval. Extra care ensures assertions align with established analysis from quoted literary authorities.

2.2.14.4 Fourth Draft – Refining Language

With fortified infrastructure standing, the fourth draft polishes prose for accessibility, coherence and style. Scrutinize word choice and phrasing – is language universally clear and concise while retaining academic credibility? Break up dense chunks into more digestible units where possible, and vary sentence styles for better flow. Ensure formatting adheres to all style guidelines. Review the piece from a reader’s perspective evaluating accessible logic and engaging tone suitable for serious scholarship.

► Polish, clarity and accessibility

2.2.14.5 Editing

Copy-editing scrutinizes content and style, pruning unnecessary words and clumsy constructions for clearer communication. Proofreading targets grammar, spelling, and punctuation – any elements that may hinder comprehension or undermine scholarly perception.

Upside-down back-to-front review techniques can also help spot issues: the minute we recognize words, we focus on meaning rather than technical precision. Flipping pages or reading passages in reverse order pushes us to see language anew.

► Techniques

The screenshot shows a document with tracked changes. The text is mostly redacted with grey boxes. On the right side, there are several comment boxes with arrows pointing to specific changes in the document. The comments are:

- Comment [Editor2]: The term "leader of cancer" was ambiguous. Does my edit convey your meaning or should this part appear as "has the highest mortality rate"?
- Comment [Editor3]: Since the paper samples a group of tobacco users, I have introduced this sentence to highlight the paper's focus on tobacco users.
- Comment [Editor4]: I have moved these sentences for better flow. They serve as general statements that establish the context of the paragraph. In addition, I have started a new paragraph from here: The first paragraph states the general problem, while this paragraph focuses on the underlying mechanism.
- Comment [Editor5]: Consider citing some studies to corroborate this statement.

On the left side, there are five light blue boxes with white text, each connected to a comment box by a red arrow:

- We check your manuscript for language, grammar, logic, and flow.
- We highlight revisions for you to check.
- We check your manuscript for language, grammar, logic, and flow.
- We introduce structural changes, if required, to enhance clarity and flow.
- If any content needs to be added or deleted, we bring this to your attention.

Fig.2.2.9 A sample editing using the “track changes” feature of MS Word

- ▶ Final edits and formatting precision

For the paper, now honed through successive drafts, final edits would tighten arguments, assess if terminology use is necessary, confirm adherence to humanities formatting guidelines, and polish the prose to articulate insights in a precise yet relatable manner befitting serious scholarship.

2.2.14.6 Numbered Submission Drafts

- ▶ Progress tracking and meticulous editing

Maintaining numbered versions with dates enables tracking progress across drafts, supports supervisor annotations, and allows rolling back undesirable changes. While no work is ever perfect, diligent drafting and meticulous editing promote significant transformations – an enrichment of understanding carved through language. This process yields research writing deserving of authoritative publication more so than initial attempts alone could produce.

2.2.14.7 Chiselling – Shaping Fine Details

In the final refinement stage, chiselling scrutinizes phrasing, word choices, and sentence structures – fine-tuning language to further heighten clarity and eloquence. Tighten verbose areas that meander. Transition choppy segments into smoother flows. Find opportunities to convey ideas more precisely and concisely while retaining necessary nuance. Assess which descriptive words or examples enrich without distracting. Polish the prosody of assembled clauses and cadences. Chiselling moulds the last essential touches that transform technically sound research writing into genuinely compelling scholarship.

- ▶ Chiselling precision and eloquent refinement

For example, in analysing Victorian artwork, chiselling might transform “Paintings from that era often portray the stark realities of a changing world” into “Victorian canvases frequently captured the jarring vicissitudes of newly industrialized Britain.”

2.2.14.8 Proofreading – Catching Final Errors

- ▶ Meticulous proofreading

Proofreading entails meticulously combing through the document to catch any last lurking issues before final submission: typos, formatting inconsistencies, grammar glitches, punctuation mistakes, and wayward spacing. It’s easy for errors to hide in plain sight if you’ve been staring at the text for too long. Bring in fresh eyes and ruthlessly hunt down imperfections.



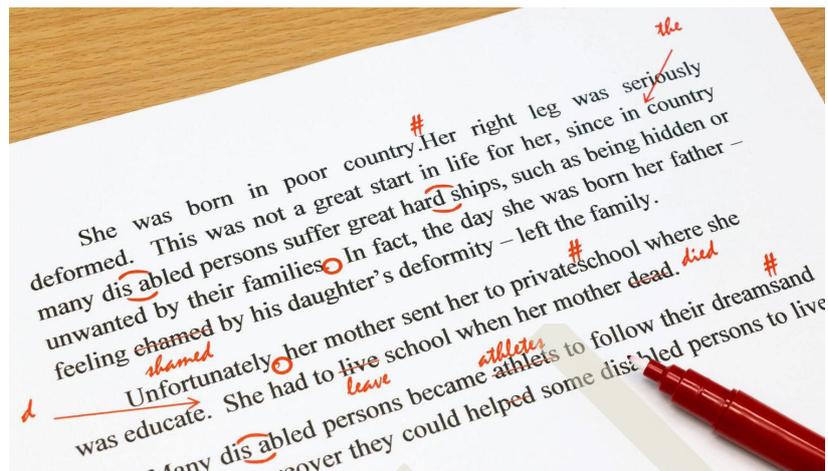


Fig. 2.2.10 A sample proofread-content

Read slowly and out loud – we often unconsciously autocorrect errors when reading silently. Scrutinize letter-by-letter. Double check areas you tend to make recurring errors in - its/it's, their/they're/there. Query anything that gives pause. Leverage tools like spelling/grammar checkers but recognize technology still misses plenty. Strive for technical precision ensuring no sloppy errors undermine presentation. Such meticulous honing at all levels ultimately shapes polished academic expression.

► Slow and aloud

► Tracing history

► Ancient essays and oral histories

2.2.15 Evolution of Academic Essays

The art of essay writing has transformed substantially since its inception, evolving alongside advancements in technology, education, and scholarship. Tracing the developmental arc illustrates how stylistic and structural changes reflect wider cultural shifts in values, ideologies, and academic norms.

2.2.15.1 Ancient Times: Pictographs and Oral Traditions

The origins of essayistic prose link to ancient oral histories, inscribed records, illuminated manuscripts, and philosophical musings engraved in stone tablets or handwritten on fragile papyrus. These early efforts conveyed observations of the natural world, recounted parables and fables, and tackled ethical debates. Content took precedence over form. Structure and style remained secondary to memorializing stories and chronicling insights.

2.2.15.2 The Birth of Formal Essays

Classical antiquity initiated pivots toward deliberate rhetorical techniques for persuasion. Philosopher luminaries

- ▶ Rhetorical evolution and persuasive techniques

like Plato, Aristotle and Cicero honed the art of argumentation, emphasizing logical reasoning scaffolded through tactics of ethos, pathos and logos. Their formal treatises on governance, virtue and morality employed rational order and disciplined style to compel adherence. These seminal efforts crystallized philosophical essay tenets rooted in cogent assertions buttressed by structured support.

2.2.15.3 The Birth of Modern Academia

The proliferation of universities in Medieval Europe spurred further format standardization to facilitate teaching. Thesis-driven models emerged, outlining knowledge frameworks anchored to cited canonical texts and validated authorities. Style concentrated on strict informational conveyance rather than creative expression. Enlightenment thinkers later continued applying essayist writing to disseminate ideology, championing ideals of truth, liberty and reason through words. Their template of propositional argument bound to evidence persists in academia today.

- ▶ Medieval standardization

2.2.15.4 Artificial Intelligence's Modern Influence

Recent exponential leaps in computational linguistics and machine learning have enabled automated essay generation through artificial intelligence. By ingesting millions of texts, AI models can now produce submissions covering myriad topics with coherent flow, relevant citations and appropriate vocabulary. Advances in natural language processing allow refined edits tailored to specific registers, styles and audiences. Such technologies offer assistants for drafting and proofing, though responsible oversight is crucial to uphold integrity.

- ▶ AI essay generation

While programming progresses, the philosophical essence of essays as vehicles for intellectual exploration remains unchanged. Formatting and phrasing evolve, but knowledge building through questioning, reasoning and unveiling deeper wisdom endures as seminal academic writing traditions, whatever the tools employed. The legacies of history's great thinkers persist in guiding today's scholarly ideas.

- ▶ Philosophical continuity

2.2.16 Practise, Practise, Practise!

The following are some essay topics from the broad discipline of English language and literature on which the learners can work. You are expected to adhere to and employ the various components and criteria for writing a competent research essay, as detailed in this Block. For both structural and intellectual guidance, use the hints added for each topic.

- ▶ Essay Topics



Topic 1: Representation of nature in Romantic poetry across cultures

Hints

- ▶ Compare common symbols like water or trees in English and Russian works.
- ▶ Discuss the interplay between emotions like longing, passion, and loss.
- ▶ Contrast finding refuge versus peril in wild settings.
- ▶ Assess the influence of place-specific geography on national literature.
- ▶ Identify shared yearning conveyed through nature metaphors.
- ▶ Assess wilderness's influence on imagination across boundaries.
- ▶ Determine the impacts of local landscape inspiration.
- ▶ Question the universality of Romantic ideals beyond Europe.

Topic 2: Evolution of antihero characters in modern Western television

Hints

- ▶ Trace gradual shifts from clear-cut heroes and villains to conflicted protagonists.
- ▶ Contrast moral ambiguity levels across decades from 1950s Cowboy icons to modern figures.
- ▶ Evaluate how factors like psychology and moral relativism permeate storylines.
- ▶ Determine whether audiences identify more with flawed versus upright heroes.

Topic 3: Impact of social media on English linguistics norms

Hints

- ▶ Analyse the effects of platforms on the perceived prestige of standardization
- ▶ Research meme culture's shifting of acceptable expression
- ▶ Quantify/assess the adoption of Internet dialect vocabulary
- ▶ Critique "call-out culture" regulating language via activism
- ▶ Chart meme vernacular assimilation rates over generations
- ▶ Scrutinize marginalizing effects of promoting internet words
- ▶ Examine viral content shifting connotations and usage

Topic 4: Historical influences on fantasy literature monsters

Hints

- ▶ Research myths and legends that inspired modern creature interpretations
- ▶ Assess continued reflection of societal prejudices in villain depictions
- ▶ Analyse the use of monsters as political or cultural allegories
- ▶ Compare religious, cultural, and sociopolitical origins across regions

Topic 5: Impacts of globalization on English lingua franca users

Hints

- ▶ Analyse whether cultural context shifts language understanding
- ▶ Study how vocabulary usage and figures of speech translate
- ▶ Discuss effects on clarity and precision in communication
- ▶ Compare standardized policies versus adaptation for local relevance



Topic 6: Narrative techniques in immigrant stories across cultures

Hints

- ▶ Examine immigrant tale conventions and divergences across regions
- ▶ Compare hybrid perspective functions as a reflective device
- ▶ Contrast assimilation stages and how identity is expressed linguistically
- ▶ Assess translation decisions balancing representation authenticity

Topic 7: Language and gender politics in Victorian novels

Hints

- ▶ Critique usages promoting female submission and male domination
- ▶ Scrutinize symmetry/asymmetry in gendered dialoguing
- ▶ Identify heteronormative patterns in speech and social spheres
- ▶ Relate word usage to wider political underrepresentation

Topic 8: South Asian postcolonial theatre traditions

Hints

- ▶ Contextualize the historical influence of British censorship laws on content
- ▶ Track stylistic fusions of folk, and traditional performance with Western forms
- ▶ Analyse progressive political commentary conveying anticolonial views
- ▶ Compare staging innovations as acts of reclamation

Summarised Overview

This unit is about skills for developing ideas in research writing. Students will learn how to ask good research questions. This is key for impactful writing. They will ask open-ended questions that require deeper thinking. They will ask questions from different viewpoints. This encourages new ideas. They will look for gaps in previous research. Finding overlooked areas points to new things to study. They will question assumptions by asking “what if.” This leads to fresh ideas.

After questions, students conceptualize arguments. They map out different sides of debates. They look at how theories see issues differently. They find background information for context. They break big questions into smaller pieces to study. They think about possible impacts from many views. Looking widely gives evidence-based arguments instead of cherry-picking. Students who base research on thoughtful questions and explore concepts broadly can make logical ideas with strong support. This self-control helps create insightful academic writing. With practice, students become skilled at contributing to scholarly knowledge.

Assignments

1. Why are good research questions important for impactful academic writing? What techniques can help generate insightful questions?
2. How can researchers move from asking good research questions to outlining potential arguments and concepts in response? What is the value of conceptualising issues from multiple angles?
3. What role does identifying knowledge gaps in existing literature play when developing strong research questions to investigate? How does realizing areas overlooked by previous research help position new contributions?
4. When evaluating existing assumptions or dominant perspectives around a research area, what kinds of probing “what if” questions can researchers ask to encourage deeper analysis from new angles?
5. As researchers outline arguments responding to core questions posed, why is it useful to break down sub-issues and envision hypothetical implications around debatable topics? How does this lead to more evidence-based idea development?
6. What self-discipline must student researchers practice to derive ideas purely from questioning when reading essay prompts or directions rather than straying off track? Why is this important for producing substantive analysis?
7. How can conceptualising issues from multiple standpoints, backed by robust ev-



idence, support the development of logical and compelling academic arguments?
What role does gathering contextual background information play?

Suggested Reading

1. Given, Lisa M. *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. United Kingdom, SAGE Publications, 2008.
2. Howe, Stephen and Kristina Henriksson. *PhraseBook for Writing Papers and Research in English*. N.p., The Whole World Company, 2007.
3. Zemach, Dorothy E., and Rumisek, Lisa A. *Academic Writing: From Paragraph to Essay*. Germany, Macmillan, 2006.

Reference

1. DiYanni, Robert., Pat C. Hoy II. *The Scribner Handbook for Writers*, Allyn and Bacon, USA, 1995.
2. Smith, Pauline. *How To Write An Assignment, 8th Edition: Proven Techniques for Producing Essays, Reports and Dissertations that Succeed*. United Kingdom, Little, Brown Book, 2010.
3. Sommer, Robert F.. *Teaching Writing to Adults: Strategies and Concepts for Improving Learner Performance*. United Kingdom, Wiley, 1989.
4. Reppen, Dr Randi. "Brainstorming: A Foundation to Successful Academic Writing | Cambridge English." *World of Better Learning*, Cambridge University Press, 1 Mar. 2021, www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2021/03/01/brainstorming-a-foundation-to-successful-academic-writing/.
5. "Finding Your Focus in a Writing Project." *Vanderbilt University*, www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/resources/handouts/finding-focus-in-a-writing-project/.
6. Johnson, Helen. "How Specificity Can Elevate Your Writing." *The History Quill*, 14 Dec. 2023, <https://thehistoryquill.com/how-specificity-can-elevate-your-writing/#:~:text=Specificity%20in%20writing%20is%20about,woman%20walked%20into%20a%20room.>
7. "A Blueprint for Your Research Paper." *Prezi.com*, <https://prezi.com/z6ulakprxpvu/a-blueprint-for-your-research-paper/>
8. "The Royal Literary Fund." *The Royal Literary Fund*, 2014, <https://www.rlf.org.uk/>



Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Model Question Paper Sets

End Semester Examination

M21EG09DC - Literary Theory

M21EG10DC - English Literature from 1946 to the Present

M21EG01SE - English for Academic Purposes

M21EG01DE - African and Caribbean Literatures

Model Question Paper Set-01

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE :

Reg. No :

Name :

Third Semester - Discipline Core Course

MA English Language and Literature

M21EG09DC - Literary Theory

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks. (5x2=10 Marks)

1. What is meant by Signified?
2. Define Aporia.
3. What do you mean by Structural Anthropology?
4. Brief the concept of Castration Anxiety?
5. Define Womanism.
6. How does Freud present his concept of Condensation?
7. What is Decentering?
8. What do you mean by Symbolic Order?

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks. (6x5=30 Marks)

9. Differentiate between Synchrony and Diachrony.
10. Discuss Foucault's knowledge-power dichotomy.
11. Why does Freud consider dreams as the "royal road to the unconscious"?
12. Explain Lacan's concept of the Mirror Stage.



13. Detail on Ecriture Feminine.
14. What is New Historicism?
15. Differentiate between Shallow Ecology and Deep Ecology.
16. Discuss how Deconstruction is connected with Post-structuralism.
17. Trace the intersectional aspects in Black Feminism and Dalit Feminism.
18. Write down the major differences between New Historicism and Cultural Materialism.

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks. (2x15= 30 Marks)

19. Discuss how Structuralism, as a theoretical framework, seeks to uncover underlying patterns and systems within language.
20. How does Lacan's emphasis on language and the symbolic order challenge traditional Psychoanalytic perspectives and reshape our comprehension of the unconscious mind?
21. Define Gynocriticism and explain its significance in literary analysis.
22. Explore the intersection of Gender and Ecology in an eco-feminist framework, examining how Eco-feminist perspectives challenge and redefine traditional environmental discourses and practices.

Model Question Paper Set-02

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE :

Reg. No :

Name :

Third Semester - Discipline Core Course

MA English Language and Literature

M21EG09DC - Literary Theory

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks. (5x2=10 Marks)

1. Define Deep Ecology.
2. What is a Mytheme?
3. Define Semiology.
4. What do you understand by Discourse?
5. What is Jouissance?
6. Define Anthropocentrism.
7. What does the term Supplement refer to in Deconstruction?
8. What do you mean by Defense Mechanism?

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks. (6x5=30 Marks)

9. Comment on arbitrary nature of language.
10. Find out the differences between Langue and Parole.
11. Elaborate on Freud's Id, Ego, and Superego.
12. What is Gynocriticism?
13. Describe key theoretical concepts in Cultural Materialism?
14. Discuss the reciprocity between Text and Context.



15. What are the major ideas of Structuralism?
16. How does Derrida explain Logocentrism?
17. How does the Post-Feminist attitude differ from the Feminist outlook?
18. Discuss Freud's concept of Dream Work.

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks. (2x15= 30 Marks)

19. Discuss how the ideas of Post-structuralist intellectuals, such as Jacques Derrida, dismantle conventional notions about language and meaning through an examination of deconstruction as a method for interpreting texts.
20. How does Lacan's concept of the Mirror Stage contribute to the understanding of identity formation and subjectivity in Psychoanalysis?
21. What are the characteristics of French Feminism, and how does it contribute to the feminist discourse?
22. How does New Historicism examine the significance of historical context in interpreting literary texts?

Model Question Paper Set-01

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE :

Reg. No :

Name :

Third Semester - Discipline Core Course

MA English Language and Literature

M21EG10DC - English Literature from 1946 to the Present

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks. (5x2=10 Marks)

1. Identify two ways in which advancements in technology drive mass culture in Britain during the 20th century?
2. Identify any two prominent Neo-Romantic poets.
3. What does the speaker contemplate during his visit to the church in Philip Larkin's, "Church Going"?
4. Why does Salman Rushdie advocate for freedom of expression in his essay, "Outside the Whale" ?
5. What term is often associated with the protagonist, Jimmy Porter, in?
6. What is the central theme of Zadie Smith's essay, "Speaking in Tongues"?
7. In which theatrical movement is *Waiting for Godot* often categorized?
8. What is the central theme of Thom Gunn's poem, "On the Move"?

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks. (6x5=30 Marks)

9. What impact did Margaret Thatcher's conservative agenda have on reshaping British politics during the 20th century?



10. Write a note on two salient features of Movement poetry.
11. Examine the unique perspective presented in Ted Hughes' "Hawk Roosting."
12. Evaluate the symbolic significance of Godot in Samuel Beckett's play, *Waiting for Godot*.
13. Examine the themes of cultural identity and assimilation in Zadie Smith's essay, "Speaking in Tongues".
14. Analyze Seamus Heaney's exploration of guilt and historical trauma in the poem, "Punishment".
15. Analyze Salman Rushdie's views on freedom of expression and censorship in "Outside the Whale"
16. Comment on the theme of rebellion in Thom Gunn's poem, "On the Move".
17. Discuss the portrayal of love and memory in Carol Ann Duffy's poem, "Anne Hathaway".
18. Write a brief note on kitchen-sink drama? Explain.

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks. (2x15= 30 Marks)

19. Examine the ethical and political aspects of British poetry concerning global challenges, including the refugee crisis, climate change, and human rights.
20. Reflect on the loss of innocence in William Golding's novel, *Lord of the Flies*.
21. Examine the power dynamics and perspectives in Ted Hughes' poem, "Hawk Roosting".
22. Analyze the theme of existentialism and the portrayal of the human condition in Samuel Beckett's play, *Waiting for Godot*.

Model Question Paper Set-02

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE :

Reg. No :

Name :

Third Semester - Discipline Core Course

MA English Language and Literature

M21EG10DC - English Literature from 1946 to the Present

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks. (5x2=10 Marks)

1. How did the Cold War influence Great Britain?
2. Who are the notable playwrights associated with the Theatre of the Absurd genre?
3. What does the speaker contemplate during his visit to the church in Philip Larkin's "Church Going"?
4. What is the central theme of *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett?
5. What is the theme of Elizabeth Jennings' poem, "One Flesh"?
6. What is the significance of the tree in *Waiting for Godot*?
7. What is the main message in Zadie Smith's essay, "Outside the Whale"?
8. Identify one symbol representing the conflict of civilization versus savagery in William Golding's novel, *Lord of the Flies*.

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks. (6x5=30 Marks)

9. What were the key features of the welfare state established in Britain, and how did it provide social protection?
10. Examine the symbolism and imagery employed by Seamus Heaney in "Punishment."



11. What are the main features of postmodern fiction?
12. Explore Salman Rushdie's critique of the "Mythic Method" in modern fiction.
13. Discuss the symbolism of the hawk in Ted Hughes's "Hawk Roosting".
14. Evaluate the role of leadership and power in *Lord of the Flies*.
15. Explore the role of gender in Carol Ann Duffy's "Anne Hathaway."
16. Discuss the portrayal of Anne Hathaway's relationship with Shakespeare in Carol Ann Duffy's poem, "Anne Hathaway."
17. Explore the postcolonial perspectives in Salman Rushdie's essay "Speaking in Tongues."
18. Discuss the complexities of marital relationships depicted in Elizabeth Jennings' "One Flesh."

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks. (2x15= 30 Marks)

19. Discuss the impact of the Absurdist movement on British drama in the post-war period.
20. Examine Philip Larkin's treatment of spirituality and the concept of religion in "Church Going."
21. Explore the role of magical realism in Angela Carter's "Nights at the Circus".
22. In *Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett explores existential themes of meaning, absurdity, and the human condition. Discuss how the play uses the characters of Vladimir and Estragon and the concept of waiting to explore these existential concerns.

Model Question Paper Set-01

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE :

Reg. No :

Name :

Third Semester - Skill Enhancement Course

MA English Language and Literature

M21EG01SE- English for Academic Purposes

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks. (5x2=10 Marks)

1. What are the two main features of academic writing according to the text?
2. Name two types of logical fallacies that should be avoided in academic writing.
3. Name two manual methods for detecting errors in academic writing.
4. Name two pre-writing techniques that can help in academic writing.
5. What are the key markers to keep in mind while crafting research problems for English language and literature students?
6. What is the significance of asking probing questions in identifying research topics?
7. Briefly explain the purpose of brainstorming in research writing.
8. What is the purpose of the introduction section in a research paper's blueprint?

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks. (6x5=30 Marks)

9. Explain why objectivity is an important attribute of academic writing. Provide at least two reasons.
10. Describe three key elements that contribute to strong academic essays.
11. Explain three different uses of commas in academic writing with examples of each.



12. Explain the key steps involved in constructing strong paragraphs for academic writing.
13. Compare and contrast inductive and deductive reasoning approaches in academic writing.
14. Discuss the different sources that English language and literature students can draw inspiration from to formulate research problems.
15. Analyze the characteristics of good research problems in English language and literature studies. Provide examples to illustrate your understanding.
16. Discuss the different sources that researchers can draw inspiration from to formulate research questions. Provide relevant examples.
17. Analyze the characteristics of a good research plan and its various components. Explain the importance of planning in research writing.

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks. (2x15= 30 Marks)

18. Explain the process of developing and conceptualizing research questions and structuring ideas in research writing.
19. Analyze the purpose and key attributes of various common genres found in academic writing.
20. Evaluate the diverse roles that punctuation plays in effective academic writing. Consider how proper usage of commas, semi-colons, colons, apostrophes, and other marks contributes to clear communication.
21. Imagine you are a researcher in the field of English language and literature. Develop a comprehensive research proposal that addresses a specific problem or gap in the existing literature.
22. Evaluate the evolution of academic essays over time, highlighting the major developmental stages, rhetorical techniques, and stylistic changes that have shaped the genre. Discuss the influence of technological advancements and cultural shifts on the structure and style of research writing.

Model Question Paper Set-02

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE :

Reg. No :

Name :

Third Semester - Skill Enhancement Course

MA English Language and Literature

M21EG01SE- English for Academic Purposes

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks. (5x2=10 Marks)

1. What does IMRAD stand for, regarding research paper structure?
2. What are the two most common types of case studies?
3. What are two ways to fix run-on sentences?
4. What are the three essential parts of a well-structured definition?
5. Briefly explain the concept of plagiarism in research writing.
6. Explain the concept of non-sequiturs in research writing.
7. Define academic jargon and its role in research writing.
8. What is the purpose of crafting effective titles for research papers?

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks. (6x5=30 Marks)

9. Compare and contrast descriptive and critical book reviews. What is the main difference in their approach?
10. Discuss two reasons why proper documentation is important in academic writing.
11. Discuss the importance of finding the right tone and style in academic writing. Provide at least two reasons it matters.



12. Discuss the typical structure and main elements commonly found in an academic report.
13. Describe four key guidelines to follow when writing descriptive essays.
14. Explain the concept of documentation in research writing and its importance. Briefly describe the differences between MLA and APA styles of documentation.
15. Describe the different types of plagiarism researchers should be aware of in academic writing.
16. Describe the different aspects of crafting effective arguments in research writing, such as claims, reasons, evidence, and warrants.
17. Discuss the importance of writing with a focus on research writing. Provide strategies and techniques to help writers maintain focus throughout their work.
18. Explain the process of drafting, editing, and refining research writing, including the roles of chiselling and proofreading in producing polished academic expression.

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks. (2x15= 30 Marks)

19. Analyse some key elements and mechanics in developing strong academic writing skills.
20. Evaluate the purpose and usefulness of seven common types of paragraphs found in academic writing. Consider how each format aids in logically structuring thoughts and ideas.
21. Imagine you are a researcher in the field of English language and literature. Based on the provided essay topics, select one and develop a comprehensive research proposal that addresses the chosen topic.
22. Analyse the importance of practice in developing research writing skills. Discuss specific strategies and techniques students can employ to improve their research writing abilities, such as brainstorming, planning, drafting, editing, and refining. Provide examples and explain how consistent practice can help students become more proficient in various aspects of research writing.

Model Question Paper Set-01

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE :

Reg. No :

Name :

Third Semester - Discipline Specific Elective Course

MA English Language and Literature

M21EG01DE – African and Caribbean Literatures

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Total Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks. (5x2=10 Marks)

1. What is the concept of Kongism in the play *Kongi's Harvest*?
2. Why did David Lurie falsify Melanie's grade?
3. What does the character Segi represent in the play *Kongi's Harvest*?
4. What does the term "Hemlock" mean, and what is its significance in the play?
5. In the first line of the poem, "I am Becoming My Mother," what descriptive terms are used by the poet to portray the woman, and what do they signify about her ethnicity?
6. How have African and Caribbean writers utilised European languages introduced during colonialism in their literary works, and what unique linguistic features have they incorporated?
7. What is a central theme in African and Caribbean literatures, particularly concerning identity, and how does it emerge in the wake of colonialism?
8. How has colonialism impacted the literary traditions of African and Caribbean regions, and what aspects of identity and storytelling techniques have been influenced as a result?



Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks. (6x5=30 Marks)

9. Write a brief account of the Negritude Movement in African and Caribbean Literatures.
10. "It was history speaking through them... A history of wrongs." Explain the context of this dialogue in the play *Disgrace*.
11. According to George Lamming's essay, what are the motivations behind British Caribbean writers' migration to London, and what challenges do they face in terms of recognition and identity?
12. Briefly describe the character Ugwu in the play *Half of a Yellow Sun*.
13. Write a brief note on the theme of liberation in African and Caribbean literatures.
14. Write a short note on the characterisation of Lucy in the play *Disgrace*.
15. Give a brief account of the concept of rootlessness and displacement described in the poem "South" by Edward Kamau Brathwaite.
16. Discuss the positive and negative outcomes of the Defiance Campaign for the African National Congress (ANC) and Nelson Mandela's personal transformation during this period.
17. Explain the symbolic significance of the reference to "ancestral savannahs" in the poem "Africa" by David Diop.
18. Briefly explain the theme of violence expressed in the poem "A Far Cry From Africa."

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks. (2x15= 30 Marks)

19. Examine the significance of the title *Disgrace* in the novel. Analyse how the concept of disgrace is portrayed throughout the narrative.
20. Analyse how Lorna Goodison portrays the relationship between mother and daughter in "I Am Becoming My Mother," emphasising the cyclical nature of transformation.
21. Explore the ways in which colonial education perpetuates feelings of inferiority among the West Indian writers and contributes to their decision to leave their homeland, as mentioned by George Lamming.
22. Explain in detail the internal and external factors that have contributed to the decolonisation process in Africa.



Model Question Paper Set-02

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE :

Reg. No :

Name :

Third Semester - Discipline Specific Elective Course

MA English Language and Literature

M21EG01DE – African and Caribbean Literatures

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Total Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks. (5x2=10 Marks)

1. What is the background of the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, and who wrote the novel?
2. Who were Afrikaners?
3. What is the Reformed Aweri Fraternity in the play *Kongi's Harvest*?
4. What is the significance of the title "a far cry" in the poem "A Far Cry From Africa" and how does it relate to the poet's physical and metaphorical distance from Africa?
5. Who is known as 'The Poet President' and why?
6. Who wrote *The Black Jacobins*? What does it chronicle?
7. How do authors in African and Caribbean literature explore the challenges faced by characters dealing with complex hybrid identities, and what aspects of identity do these struggles often involve?
8. How did colonialism significantly affect the social systems and customary lifestyles in Africa and the Caribbean?

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks. (6x5=30 Marks)

9. Briefly explain the character of Olana as a feminine national identity in the novel *Half*



of a Yellow Sun.

10. Describe the political challenges Nelson Mandela faced in 1948 with the emergence of the National Party and their push for apartheid policies.
11. Describe the sensual symbolism used by Senghor to depict Africa's beauty in the poem "Black Woman."
12. Discuss the portrayal of a refugee mother's love for her dying child in Achebe's poem, highlighting the poignant moments and emotions expressed.
13. How does Kamau Brathwaite use vivid imagery in the first stanza of "South" to evoke a sense of nostalgia and connection to the islands of his birth?
14. Briefly explore the symbolism of the river in "South" and its association with the universal human experience of "longing" and "striving." How does the poet use the river's relentless journey towards the sea to convey the speaker's deep-seated desire for purpose and meaning?
15. Briefly examine the concept of self-colonisation in the play *Kongi's Harvest*.
16. Give an account of the characterisation of David Lurie in the play *Disgrace*.
17. Discuss the themes and emotions depicted in Chinua Achebe's poem "Refugee Mother and Child" and how they reflect the harsh realities faced by displaced people, drawing from Achebe's personal experiences and the socio-political context of the Biafran war.
18. Write a short note on creolization in African and Caribbean literature.

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks. (2x15= 30 Marks)

19. Trace the evolution of Nelson Mandela's activism from his early involvement in the ANC to his leadership during the Defiance Campaign, highlighting key ideological shifts and challenges he encountered.
20. Analyse the symbolic significance of Africa as a Black woman in Senghor's poem "Black Woman," focusing on its portrayal and cultural implications.
21. Examine George Lamming's prose, "The Occasion for Speaking," from a postcolonial perspective.
22. Examine and analyse the exploration of the complex interplay between gender and identity in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*, considering its portrayal against the backdrop of post-apartheid South Africa.

സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യായാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ശ്രദ്ധപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കുതിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പറണം

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ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ
ജ്ഞാനകേന്ദ്രമേ ജ്വലിക്കണേ

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Regional Centres

Kozhikode

Govt. Arts and Science College
Meenchantha, Kozhikode,
Kerala, Pin: 673002
Ph: 04952920228
email: rckdirector@sgou.ac.in

Thalassery

Govt. Brennen College
Dharmadam, Thalassery,
Kannur, Pin: 670106
Ph: 04902990494
email: rctdirector@sgou.ac.in

Tripunithura

Govt. College
Tripunithura, Ernakulam,
Kerala, Pin: 682301
Ph: 04842927436
email: rcedirector@sgou.ac.in

Pattambi

Sree Neelakanta Govt. Sanskrit College
Pattambi, Palakkad,
Kerala, Pin: 679303
Ph: 04662912009
email: rcpdirector@sgou.ac.in

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Sreenarayanaguru Open University

Kollam, Kerala Pin- 691601, email: info@sgou.ac.in, www.sgou.ac.in Ph: +91 474 2966841

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