

Academic Teaching Excellence English as a Medium of Instruction Dissemination Seminar



Issues of Academic Writing
November, 26th 2015
Young Scholars Council
Vasyl Malikov

Issues of Academic Writing

Introduction: academic writing challenges

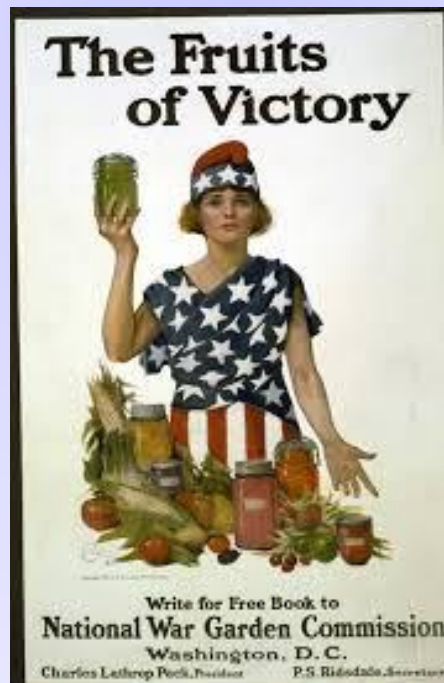
Key points in writing papers and abstracts

Making language of our research paper clear

Available digital resources in academic writing

Introduction

What are our expectations and aims of writing a research paper in English?



Introduction

What are the main challenges of writing a research paper in English?

- Lack of confidence
- Lack of motivation
- Perfectionism
- Poor vocabulary
- “Bad” writing style
- ...



Key points in writing research papers and abstracts

General features of academic writing:

complexity, formality, precision, objectivity, accuracy, responsibility, hedging, explicitness

Recommendations that are helpful in writing papers:

- Focused analysis. Choose your level and unit of analysis.
- Integration.
- Simpler sentences; logical paragraphs.
- Active voice in English grammar.
- References and bibliography.
- Native speakers of English as your co-authors or editors of your paper.

Key points in writing research papers and abstracts

In order to fulfil these recommendations we need to take practical steps and solve several tasks:

Introduce a work

Give a brief synopsis of literature, bibliography

Describe our methods

Report and discuss results

Write conclusions

Organize a list of references.

Write an abstract (see the hand-out).



Five Key Questions

1. What is an abstract?
2. Who is an abstract for?
3. Why write an abstract?
4. When do we write abstracts?
5. How long should they be?



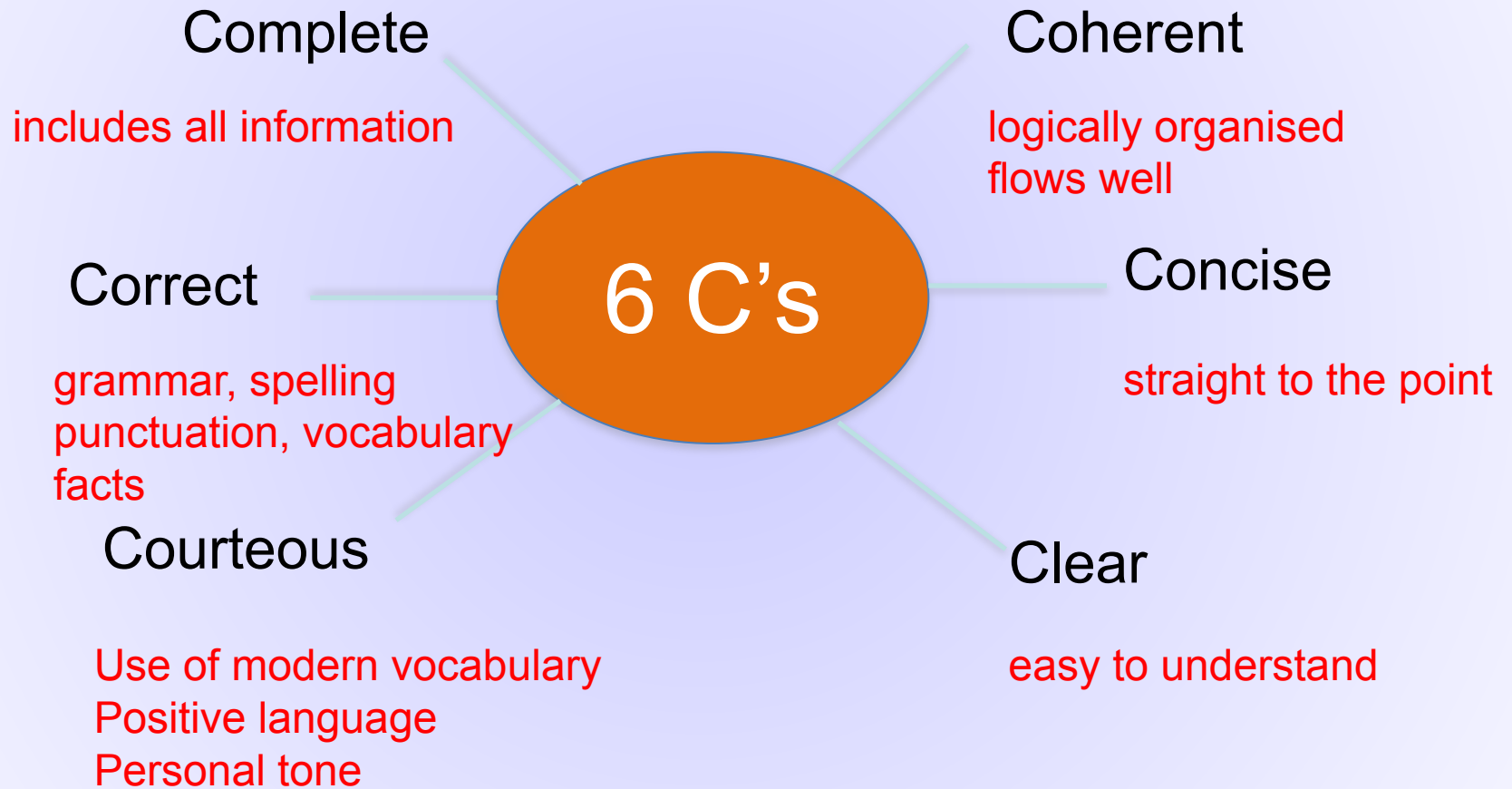
Abstract writing task

- **250** words maximum
- Write in the **active** voice
- Include **3** key words
- No **jargon**



- Make sure you have a clear objective
- Use an appropriate structure and style for your
- Conference aims, audience and objective
- Include title, authors, institute and date

The 6Cs of modern writing



Making language of our research paper clear

Giving a brief synopsis of the relevant literature in English can help to enrich our topic specific vocabulary.

The first thing that all researchers agree upon is that time spent reading is the single most important factor in increased word knowledge. There are times when it is necessary to learn content vocabulary explicitly.

Making the language of our research paper clear

Signposting language: starting, ending, linking parts of text

The aim of this study is to ...

The main questions addressed in this paper are ...

Finally, ...

In conclusion, ...

Listing: First(ly),... Second(ly),... Finally,...

Adding: In addition,... Furthermore,...

Showing contrast: However,... Nevertheless,... On the other hand,...

Giving a reason: For this reason,... because... because of... due to...

Indicating result or consequence: Therefore,... Thus,... As a result,...

Consequently,...

Giving examples: For example,... For instance,... To exemplify,...

Making language of our research paper clear

Some general guidelines for academic writing

- ✓ Avoid using contractions in academic English writing.
- ✓ Avoid the use of personal pronouns to refer to a reader.
- ✓ The use of the passive voice is very common in academic texts and makes it easier to avoid the use of personal pronouns.
- ✓ Use the more formal single word instead of the multi-word verb.
- ✓ Avoid using slang expressions, colloquial language and subjective adjectives and adverbs in an academic context.
- ✓ Use more formal vocabulary of French or Latin origin. It is longer, with more syllables.
- ✓ Nominalisation: formal written English uses nouns more than verbs.

Making language of our research paper clear

Some general guidelines for academic writing

Do	Don't
Use formal language	Use contractions (isn't, won't)
Be impersonal and objective	Use slang
Be clear and concise	Use phrasal verbs (get on with, looks at)
Use cautious language when making unsupported assertions	Use "run on" expressions (eg., etc. and so on)
Be precise and avoid vagueness/ambiguity	Make assertions or arguments without supportive evidence
Use specialist/subject vocabulary	Use bullet points, numbered lists or notes
Reference the work of other writers in the field	Use direct questions

Complex noun phrases

- Head nouns preceded by adjectives or other nouns
- Helps the text be *concise* and *precise*
- E.g. Statistically significant emissions
 - *emissions that are non-negligible from a statistical perspective*
- Potentially toxic chemicals
 - chemicals that may have a toxic effect

Complex noun phrases

- Multiple nouns can modify the head noun
- E.g. *University staff pension scheme*
- In phrases with two nouns, the first is singular even when referring to something plural
- E.g.
 - staff rights (*the rights of staff*)
 - resource use (*the use of resources*)

Avoid nominalisations(?)

- Nominalisation is the use of the noun form of the word rather than the verb.
- It makes sentences overly long and seem less human.
- Often easy to identify by a noun sandwiched between 'the' and 'of'
- E.g. 'the avoidance of' instead of 'to avoid' or 'the use of' instead of 'to use'

Avoid nominalisations

- The solution is to replace the noun with the verb
- E.g.
- “We ensured the engagement of students in the experiment with the use of lunchtime meetings.” to
 - “We used lunchtime meetings to engage students.”

Shorten when possible

- On account of the fact of
- At the present time
- In the majority of instances
- On the part of
- Remove altogether
- Regular weekly meetings
- *Because*
- *Now*
- *Mostly*
- *By*
- *Remove*
- *Weekly meetings*

Available digital resources in academic writing

<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/> The Academic Phrasebank.
University of Manchester

www.uefap.net Using English for Academic Purposes.

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice> - Advice on Academic Writing.
University of Toronto.

Swan, Michael. Practical English Usage. 3rd edition. 2005.

<https://translate.google.com.ua/>

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

***Thank you for attention,
support and feedbacks!***

