

Contents

Preface to the Second Edition	x
Acknowledgements	xii
Chapter 1 The Nature and Process of Academic Writing	1
1.1 Why is writing so important?	2
1.2 The nature of academic writing	4
1.3 The process of writing	12
1.4 Playing to your strengths and preferences	21
1.5 In conclusion: the process of academic writing	21
Chapter 2 Understanding the Nature of an Assignment	24
2.1 The IPACE model	24
2.2 Putting IPACE into practice	33
Chapter 3 Two Popular Types of Assignment	37
3.1 Questions to ask your assessor	37
3.2 Interpreting the nature of the task	38
3.3 Beginnings, middles and ends	40
3.4 Essays	43
3.5 Practical reports	47
Chapter 4 Researching an Assignment	55
4.1 Being strategic	55
4.2 Different strategies for different assignments	56
4.3 Being selective (using RABT)	60
4.4 Becoming more discerning	67
Chapter 5 Being a Purposeful Reader and Note-taker	71
5.1 Kinds of reading	71
5.2 Beginning with the end in mind	73
5.3 Surveying (scanning and skimming)	75

5.4	Establishing a purpose	77
5.5	Deciding on a reading strategy	78
5.6	In-depth reading (using SP3R)	80
5.7	Annotating and note-taking	81
Chapter 6 Planning and Structuring More Assignments		88
6.1	Business-style report writing	89
6.2	Critical reflective writing	94
6.3	Presentations	100
6.4	Posters	105
6.5	Dissertations	107
6.6	Planning: from large- to small-scale	111
Chapter 7 Composing		117
7.1	Balancing the critical and the creative	118
7.2	Composing your first draft	119
7.3	Writing to a prompt	121
7.4	Freewriting	121
7.5	The ‘no composing’ approach	124
7.6	Managing your composing	125
7.7	Twelve ways to overcome writer’s block	128
Chapter 8 Words and Images		132
8.1	The role of visual elements	132
8.2	Content and design	133
8.3	Using tables	133
8.4	Using graphs and charts	136
8.5	Other kinds of figure	141
Chapter 9 Citing, Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism		145
9.1	Citing and referencing	145
9.2	Citing, referencing and academic integrity	148
9.3	Using citations and quotes	150
9.4	Plagiarism	158
9.5	Avoiding plagiarism	161
9.6	Remember, your writing is an argument – your argument	163
Chapter 10 Reviewing and Editing Your Work		165
10.1	Fulfilling the brief	166
10.2	Structure and argument	167

10.3	Paragraphs	168
10.4	Sentences	171
10.5	Grammar	176
10.6	Punctuation	179
10.7	Spelling	182
10.8	Presentation	183
Chapter 11 Using Technology to Help You		188
11.1	Using your word processor's functions (but critically)	189
11.2	Using bibliographic databases	193
11.3	Using reference management software	196
11.4	Creating tables and figures	197
11.5	Handling large documents	199
Chapter 12 Building on Success		203
12.1	Cycles of learning	203
12.2	Making the most of feedback	205
12.3	Where to get help	210
12.4	Be inspired by what you read	210
12.5	Final word	212
Glossary		215
Cited References and Further Reading		220
Index		225

The Nature and Process of Academic Writing

Whatever programme of study you are taking at university, at some point you will need to put words on paper or enter them in an electronic file. You might wish to make notes from a lecture you've attended, a book chapter you've read, a professional organisation's website you've visited, or an academic paper you've studied. And then there are the assignments you need to complete. These might be essays, practical reports, slide presentations, a review of an article, webpages you're designing – the list could be long.

Each kind of communication you create has its own particular cluster of features. It is written for a particular *audience* with a certain *purpose* in mind. For example, in a social sciences, humanities or arts discipline you might be asked to write an essay. In a science or engineering discipline, you might be required to submit a report on a laboratory investigation you'd just completed. In completing either writing task, you would need to follow certain conventions. There are likely to be certain rules to follow about *structure* (how the writing is organised around a beginning, a middle and an end). You will normally be expected to adopt a certain kind of *writing style*; such as how informal or formal the writing is, the viewpoint you are going to adopt, what level of knowledge is assumed for the reader of your writing, how citing and referencing will be used to underpin the argument in your writing, and so on. How you do these things, and more, is what this book is about.

A note about style

The style in which I'm writing this book is not the style you're likely to use when completing assignments for your course. For one, it is quite a casual style. I use contractions such as 'I've' instead of 'I have' and 'you'll' instead of 'you will'. Also, I write as though I am talking directly to you, the reader. Much of the time I'm writing as though I'm actually sitting with you, talking you through a process. I use 'I', 'we' and 'you'. The use of contractions and direct style is not normally acceptable in academic writing. However, be aware that I am choosing to write in this manner as a

2 Success in Academic Writing

means to help you write in a more academic manner, much as a tutor or lecturer might sit with you to discuss writing, and how you can write more effectively.

Notice the difference between my writing style in guiding you through this book, and the academic and other styles of writing I'm encouraging you to use (and that you'll be expected to use on your course). Noticing these distinctions in structure and style will help you develop your writing overall. Doing so will be invaluable to you now, later in your course and in your future career.

1.1 Why is writing so important?

Of course, some people write because they gain a great deal of satisfaction from doing so. It is in their blood. They write to express themselves. Being a writer is a major part of their identity. It is how they express their creativity. Taking that into account, for you as a university student there are, in addition, at least five very good reasons for writing. They are probably so obvious that you've rarely, if ever, stopped to think about them. Robert Barrass, in his book *Students Must Write* (2007), lists four reasons. To me, those first four underpin an all-important fifth reason:

- 1 Writing helps you to remember.** By taking notes – whether from a lecture, a video, a book, an article, or some other medium – you are keeping a record of that interaction. In doing so you are being selective about what you record. You are organising your thoughts around that experience. Keeping notes helps you to recall the experience. In fact, if we didn't take notes, which we can review afterwards, many of us would forget much of what we experienced. Fundamentally, therefore, note-taking is keeping a record. As we will see later, it is much more than that. Good notes are dynamic. They can be added to as our knowledge and understanding grows. But more of that when we turn to note-taking in Chapter 5.
- 2 Writing helps you to observe and to gather evidence.** Whether observing what is happening during a laboratory experiment, at a tutorial meeting, or when watching a video programme, writing notes (perhaps accompanied by drawings) focuses our attention. It aids our concentration and provides a descriptive record of the event. The recording of observations – concisely but in detail – is key for gathering and analysing evidence in many disciplines, whether in science, engineering, social sciences, humanities or the arts.
- 3 Writing helps you to think.** Writing is both an expression of your thinking and a vehicle for helping you think. When writing an essay or preparing a practical report you set down what you know. Doing so helps you identify gaps in your knowledge and encourages you to seek answers and deepen your understanding.

When you write and see your thoughts expressed ‘outside of yourself’, your relationship with those ideas shifts. You can reflect on what you have written and can evaluate its worth. In so doing, you shape, refine and clarify your ideas. They become transformed through reflection and rewriting.

- 4 Writing helps you to communicate.** It is through writing that, in many cases, your academic progress is assessed, whether by coursework or in examinations. Writing, of course, is also the common medium by which academics report their research findings and opinions to the world. And writing may not be the final form of that communication. It could be a stepping stone to another medium of communication, such as a talk, a speech, a video clip streamed on a website, a radio play or a television documentary.
- 5 Above all, writing helps you to learn.** Taking all the above points together, writing is a powerful device for helping you to learn. Writing is a key way in which you reveal your knowledge and understanding to yourself, as well as to others. It is a vital ingredient in your learning, both as a process and as a product. Writing is clearly a key part of your educational process. Without writing, most of us would not reach the depth and clarity of thinking required in our discipline. And it is through writing that we reveal some of our thinking to the scrutiny of others. By showing our work to others, gaining feedback and reflecting on it, our thinking and writing develop. Writing can be transformative, changing the way we interpret our world.

Added to these five, of course, is the value of writing for other aspects of your life. Writing is a uniquely powerful, precise and satisfying form of expression. It is also a vital skill for future employment. In the UK, university graduates’ writing ability (or lack of it) is a recurrent press story (for example, Paton, 2014). In the latest UK Confederation of British Industry’s survey of employers, the Education and Skills Survey 2016 (CBI, 2016), more employers were concerned about graduates’ literacy and communication skills than they were with their numeracy. Writing ability is a key concern for employers, and so it should be for you.

Writing for academic purposes, and shaping your communication to match your specific purpose and audience, will stand you in good stead for other kinds of writing. Universities are increasingly aware of the need to cultivate graduates with skills of value to a range of employers, not just those in a specific discipline. With this in mind, some course assignments are likely to require you to write for non-academic audiences.

Most of us have become used to writing from an early age. It is therefore easy for us to take it for granted. Much of the writing we do, we carry out almost automatically, without much thought. If English is not your first language, forming phrases, sentences and paragraphs may require more thought. But over time, drafting flowing text (prose) will become more and more an automatic process.

4 Success in Academic Writing

It is helpful to take stock of the writing you already do. For example, you might text and email your friends every day, and you might have a blog or a Twitter account. These various kinds of communication in technological media each have their own conventions. On Twitter, of course, you are currently limited to 280 characters, and abbreviations are almost essential in getting your message across.

For your study programme the kinds of writing you will be asked to do are usually much more formal. You might be asked to write practical reports, literature reviews, essays, and so on, each according to certain conventions. So, it is likely that you're already involved in writing in a wide range of styles, from casual to formal. Take a moment to think about the range of writing you already do.

ACTIVITY 1.1**The writing you already do**

Jot down the kinds of writing you do (not all of which might be in English):

- For day-to-day communication with other students
- For academic staff
- For administrative and other university staff
- For wider communication within your university
- For wider communication outside your university (this could be study-related or not)
- For yourself (for example, writing a diary, personal log, short stories or poetry)

Making an inventory like this of the kinds of writing you do shows that you are already writing for a wide range of audiences (readerships) and purposes. In other words, you already have a wide range (repertoire) in your writing. This is a strong foundation on which to build.

1.2 The nature of academic writing

A major challenge for many students is to write assignments in an appropriate *academic style*, with a suitable *structure*, that develops an *argument* in an appropriate way. As we shall see later, there is no single kind of academic writing. Unless you are taking a generic, introductory writing course, writing academically usually has a specific disciplinary context. Almost invariably you are writing for a particular audience within a certain discipline and with a specific purpose in mind.

Features of writing that assessors value

Given that academic writing is about developing your learning, and evaluating your learning, the assessors of your academic writing are normally looking for some or all of the following features in your writing:

- That you reveal your *knowledge* and *understanding* of the subject.
- That you show that your work is *original* in the sense that you are not simply copying word for word from someone else. You are crafting your own account.
- That you are following the *conventions* of your discipline, such as document structure, writing style and viewpoint.
- That you are using *scholarly method*. Your account must show accuracy and skill in investigating and discussing its subject. This usually means that you reveal the sources of information you are using by *citing* (referring to sources in the text) and *referencing* (listing full entries for your sources, typically at the end of your document). You are usually expected to show evidence of *critical analysis*, which includes considering the strengths and weaknesses of an argument and coming to your own conclusions about it.

Conventionally, most essays have a structure with a clear beginning (introduction), main body (development of an overall argument) and end (conclusion). This is based on the traditional notion of a lecture, which itself dates back to the conventions of the political debating chambers of ancient Greece and Rome: tell the audience what you're going to talk about, talk about it, and then tell them what you've talked about.

Tailoring writing to a specific discipline

In reading an essay, what your assessors are looking for to some extent reflects the culture of the discipline. A science lecturer is likely to have different expectations, and use different assessment criteria, compared with a history lecturer.

Thesis statement or not?

Imagine you are writing an essay in humanities or in a social science. That being the case, your lecturer or tutor might ask you to express a clear opinion about the topic in your assignment. She or he might ask that you make this apparent in the introduction by making a thesis statement.

Commonly, a *thesis statement* is taken to be a sentence or two at or near the end of an assignment's introduction that summarises a student's argument and their point of view on the topic they are considering. For example, consider an essay assignment in Economics or Marketing entitled 'By reference to one or two large companies, and drawing upon appropriate economic or marketing theories, discuss strategies for making best use of the online environment in a business context.' A student might respond with an assignment that includes this thesis statement in its introduction: 'Given that the world wide web offers large companies huge potential for marketing and promotion, businesses should make best use of it. They can do so by taking every opportunity to target their advertising to specific potential customers while at the same time offering strong support online to existing customers.'

6 Success in Academic Writing

- Being asked to include a thesis statement can make for ‘stronger’ writing, insofar as you are writing to defend your *thesis* (argument). In doing so, you still need to consider both sides of the argument – evidence and reasoning both for and against the position you have chosen to take.
- Be aware, however, that in some disciplines the use of a thesis statement is not encouraged. Instead, in writing your essay it is expected that you allow the evidence and reasoning in support of your overall argument to unfold gradually. You are not expected to give away your conclusion at the beginning. This second approach – not having a thesis statement – is common in scientific and engineering disciplines.

Personal or impersonal?

Imagine you are writing a practical report for a scientific discipline. The report is likely to have a structure indicated by sections such as: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusion(s). Commonly, scientific reports are written in a formal, objective style, in which the person carrying out the investigation is not mentioned, but actions are referred to in the impersonal, for example: ‘An investigation was carried out ...’ rather than ‘We investigated ...’ or ‘I investigated ...’.

In many university programmes, students go out on work placement at some point in their course. When they do so, they are often required to write a reflective report about their experience of the placement. In doing so they are usually encouraged to write a more personal account, using the ‘I’ form to discuss their experiences, for example, ‘In the second month of the placement I encountered a problem with ...’. Clearly, different kinds of academic writing have distinct conventions. Nevertheless, there are generalisations we can make about what many kinds of academic writing have in common.

Some common features of academic writing

The following features apply to many kinds of academic writing:

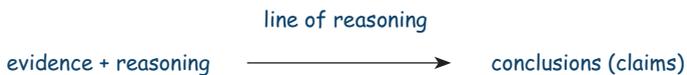
- It is usually written for a narrow range of purposes, to develop or assess learning.
- Depending on its purpose, academic writing has particular requirements in terms of structure, organisation and presentation.
- It usually presents a structured argument overall, supported by secondary arguments.
- Arguments are built up from evidence and reasoning, either your own or from what you have read, heard or observed.
- Academic writing adopts an appropriate writing style, usually in formal written English.
- It follows the conventions of a particular discipline, using appropriate technical vocabulary and agreed principles for citing and referencing.

We will now consider some of these features.

Academic writing as argument

I have used the word ‘argument’ several times already. I find it helpful to keep in mind that academic writing is almost always about argument. This moves you beyond writing description – recalling a theory or fact, for example. Description is important, but usually it is a starting point to building an argument, or part of an argument. Thinking of your writing as argument encourages you to weave facts, ideas or opinions into a reasoned overall account. Lecturers, tutors and other assessors of your work are often keen that your writing goes beyond mere description, to critical analysis.

As a starting point, I regard an argument as essentially:



What different disciplines regard as suitable evidence and reasoning can vary, and different assignments within the same discipline might require different forms of evidence. For example, on a psychology course, an individual’s own experience of being a pupil at school might be appropriate evidence to include in an essay about models of behavioural psychology applied to classroom practice. Another assessor, setting a psychology literature review in which there is an emphasis on quantitative research (analysis of numerical data), might not regard personal experience as suitable evidence.

You can recognise an overall argument in a piece of writing because it has the following features:

- The author gives *evidence* and *reasoning*, assembled as *reasons* (sometimes called supporting arguments, premises or propositions) that support the eventual conclusion. For example, in responding to an essay title ‘Is it never too late to learn?’ one of the supporting arguments might include the statement ‘In the last 15 years, government schemes have helped millions of UK senior citizens (here, defined as males and females over 60) to learn to use computers and access the World Wide Web.’
- Reasons are presented in a logical order, an overall *line of reasoning*, which takes the reader convincingly through to the conclusion. For example, by compiling evidence for improvements in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing among over 50s who have engaged in government-backed educational initiatives.
- There is a *conclusion* – the position that the author wants the reader to accept. For example, ‘The evidence presented suggests that, within certain limitations, it is rarely too late to learn.’

In short, an academic argument contains evidence and reasoning that guide the reader, through an overall line of reasoning, towards a conclusion.

ACTIVITY 1.2**Which of these is an argument?**

By the criteria used above, which of the three items (a)–(c) below is an academic argument, and which is not?

(a) *The main active chemicals in the Cannabis sativa plant are two forms of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD), collectively called cannabinoids. A ten-year follow up study of recreational cannabis users, reporting in the British Medical Journal in 2011, showed a doubling in the risk of psychosis among cannabis users compared with a control sample. Previous studies suggest that there is great variation in individual susceptibility to onset of psychosis on exposure to cannabinoids. Pre-clinical studies show promise for THC and CBD, on their own or in combination with other medicinal drugs, in halting or at least slowing the growth of specific cancerous tumours in brain or lung tissue. Further pre-clinical testing, and if successful, then clinical testing, is required to establish the value of cannabinoids as anti-cancer agents. Even if their use is indicated, their psycho-active effects need to be considered carefully, and ways found for countering or minimising them. By that time, genetic screening may have determined which patients are likely to be most susceptible to cannabinoids' negative psychoactive effects. Public attitudes to recreational cannabis use, or use of cannabis extracts in a clinical context, are very mixed. However, any public concerns about clinical use may be dwarfed by the potential for cannabinoids to treat aggressive cancers.*

(b) *Medicinal drugs can trigger an allergic reaction – an abnormal response from the body's immune system that can range from mild to life-threatening. The signs and symptoms of drug-induced allergic reactions include wheezing, swelling, an itchy rash, and nausea or diarrhoea. In the worst cases, so-called anaphylactic shock, sometimes brought about by extreme sensitivity to antibiotics such as penicillin, the person's airways narrow dangerously and their blood pressure drops dramatically. If not treated rapidly, normally by injection of adrenaline (epinephrine), the person can die within minutes.*

(c) *Complementary therapies are seen by many people as a valid supplement or alternative to conventional forms of medical treatment provided by doctors. Complementary therapies such as reflexology, homeopathy and chiropractic are provided by trained practitioners, with many patients claiming that they gain great benefit. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence in support of complementary therapies but I have yet to be persuaded by it.*

Is it an argument?

(a) yes/no

(b) yes/no

(c) yes/no

Check your answers at the end of the chapter.

Being critical

In the higher education traditions of developed Western nations, criticism is encouraged. Being critical involves evaluating what you read; in other words, making judgements about how relevant and important it is in relation to your task. Being critical does not just involve being negative about what you have read. It involves weighing up both sides – the pluses and minuses – of what you have read, seen or heard, and then drawing your own conclusion as to its value in relation to your assignment, or to your learning overall.

The best of Western academic traditions encourage you to think for yourself. In such traditions, if your reasoning is flawed or weak this should be noticed by your assessors, and perhaps by other students, who will help guide you in more fruitful directions.

By thinking for yourself, and helped by others' questioning, you are encouraged to develop higher-level skills, including:

- **Analysing.** Reading the work of others and breaking down their arguments into component parts in order to better understand them.
- **Synthesising.** Building your own arguments, drawing upon the work of others.
- **Applying.** Taking facts or ideas and using them in another context, such as a practical, real-world one.
- **Evaluating.** Judging the validity of elements of an argument, whether your own or those of others.

Being critical, from start to finish

As we shall see, although there are times when you want to put your 'critical mind' on hold and encourage creativity, being critical applies to many stages in completing an assignment. You will want to think critically about how you interpret an assignment, how you begin to devise your response and what materials you need to read. You then need to think critically about the material you are reading, and decide which is strong and relevant and which is weak and irrelevant. As you write the text for your assignment,

you will need to check that your writing is building a strong case. Finally, you will need to check that your submitted assignment is written to a high standard, with attention to detail – both in its text and its visual appearance. Being critical is a frame of mind you need to come back to again and again.

Being formal

I am writing this book, for the most part, in a reasonably casual style. The writing you are asked to do in your assignments is usually much more formal. It normally needs to meet these requirements:

- Employing words that have *precise meaning*; for example, ‘analyse’ rather than ‘think about’.
- *Avoiding jargon or colloquial English*. For example, instead of writing ‘ideas were knocked about’ or ‘everyone pitched in with their ideas’, you might write ‘ideas were discussed and considered’.
- *Not using contractions*. Instead of ‘can’t’ and ‘doesn’t’, write ‘cannot’ and ‘does not’.
- On many occasions one avoids writing in the personal (for example, ‘you’, ‘I’ or ‘we’). Instead, the *impersonal* is often encouraged by assessors, such as, ‘The analysis was carried out’ rather than ‘We carried out the analysis’. The use of the impersonal is linked to the use of the *passive voice*, something to which we will return in Chapter 3.
- Academic writing usually *avoids using direct or rhetorical questions*; for example, ‘Was the solution to the problem within the hands of the protesters?’

TIP

Formal, with clarity

Writing formally does not mean that you cannot write clearly. Aim for formality *and* readability.

Using words with precision

Academic writing often goes beyond description. It usually involves being critical and making judgements about the worth of sources of information that are used in writing an assignment. In academic writing, words tend to be used with greater precision than in everyday writing.

Here, for example, I have chosen a range of verbs (doing words) that might be used in an assignment brief or in an examination question. Each verb has a specific meaning.

ACTIVITY 1.3

Words and precise meanings

Match the following verbs with their meanings. Draw a line between the verb on the left and its best meaning from the list on the right.

Verb	Meaning
1 Compare	A. Make clear the meaning of something. This might include giving a personal judgement.
2 Contrast	B. Set two views in opposition in order to highlight the differences between them.
3 Evaluate	C. Give an overview of the general principles and/or main features of a subject, omitting fine detail.
4 Interpret	D. Give reasons for decisions or conclusions reached, which might include responding to possible objections.
5 Justify	E. Assess the value of something, which might include offering a personal opinion.
6 Outline	F. Point out similarities and differences between two or more views. This might involve coming to a conclusion as to the preferred view.

Check your answers at the end of the chapter.

During a lecture, a member of staff might use the phrase ‘Now, let’s look at ...’ to mean ‘Now let us consider ...’ rather than ‘Now let us observe ...’. Using ‘look at’ (when it does not mean ‘observe’) is perfectly acceptable in speech. In academic writing, however, the use of the phrase ‘look at’ can be replaced by more specific verbs that are more precise in their meaning.

ACTIVITY 1.4

Avoiding ‘look at’

Without using the words from Activity 1.3, write down six verbs that could replace the term ‘look at’, but not in the sense of ‘to observe’.

Imagine you are writing the first sentence in part of a report. You’ve started writing. ‘This sections looks at ...’ You could replace ‘looks at’ with ‘considers’, as in ‘This section considers ...’. Think of six other verbs you could use in place of ‘looks at’.

Compare your answers with those at the end of the chapter.

1.3 The process of writing

Different people write in different ways. For example, Creme and Lea (2008) describe four kinds of writer. The ‘diver’ likes to plunge into writing part of an assignment as soon as possible. The ‘patchwork writer’ likes to plan, and starts writing sections of an assignment at an early stage, and might then move those sections and their contents around within the written assignment. The ‘grand plan writer’ likes to do plenty of research and thinking before committing to writing. They seem to hold the structure of the assignment in their head, and commit little to writing until they are ready to write the whole assignment. The ‘architect writer’ prefers to build a visual structure for their assignment, perhaps a mind map or spider diagram, a flow chart, or a concept map (Chapter 5). They then organise their research and writing around this visual structure.

Not everyone falls into one of these four categories of writer. In fact, a person might be a blend of more than one category or, for example, might behave like a ‘diver’ for short assignments but be more like an ‘architect writer’ for longer ones. Even if you don’t fall neatly into one or more of these categories, you no doubt have preferences; for example, whether you like to make very detailed plans or like to start writing as soon as possible.

ACTIVITY 1.5

What kind of academic writer are you?

Which kind of writer (diver, patchwork, grand plan or architect), on balance, do you most closely resemble?

Not only are there different kinds of writer, but the same individual typically writes in different ways depending on the nature of the writing task. If you were to write a casual email to a friend your writing process would almost certainly be very different from the one you’d use when writing a practical report or an essay.

ACTIVITY 1.6

Different assignments, different approaches

Do you find you behave differently depending on the kind of assignment you are writing? If so, how?

- (a) Write down two different kinds of assignment you need to complete for your coursework. Examples you might include are: an essay, a practical report, a review of an academic paper, a reflective account of your experience on a work placement.
- (b) Is the way you organise your writing similar for both assignments? If not, in what way(s) is it different?

Despite there being differences between people in the way they like to write, and differences in the way an individual likes to write depending on the task, there are nevertheless recognisable stages in the academic writing process, which I've summarised in Figure 1.1.

Planning, researching, reading and note-taking	Composing (drafting)	Reviewing and editing
(everything you do before you actually start writing flowing prose)	(writing flowing prose in sentences and paragraphs)	(evaluating, rethinking, and revising what you have written)



Figure 1.1 Stages in an academic writing process

The writing process flows from left to right, but it is not one-way. It is an *iterative* process (stages may be repeated, so that the writing becomes refined through gradual improvement). For example, after a student has planned her essay, and started composing it, she might find that there are gaps in her argument. She may discover this as she composes, or only after she reviews her work after composing. In either case, she will find herself going back to the research stage to gather more information. This is not uncommon. If we remember that writing is a creative process, which develops our thinking, we may only discover gaps in our argument when we start to compose, or when we review our work. That is fine. But we do need to leave ourselves enough time to react to such events, which is why planning our writing is so important. But before that, we need to be sure that we have understood, as best we can, the task we are about to undertake.

Understanding the task

In a book like this I cannot cover every eventuality, or every writing task you might carry out. But what I can do is help you to ask appropriate questions, so that you can discover for yourself what you need to do to complete a task.

To be sure that you are fulfilling the requirements for a writing task, some of the key items you need to know are the *purpose*, *scope* and *audience* (readership) for your task. 'Purpose' concerns why you have been given the task. Normally the purpose is framed as one or more learning objectives or learning outcomes (what you are expected to learn or develop, and show evidence of, as a result of completing the task). 'Scope' concerns the detail and breadth of the task. Usually, the assumed reader is your assignment assessor.

Consider a task that has been set late in the first year of an undergraduate Psychology course:

Listen to the three examples of popular song provided and analyse their lyrics in terms of motivational theory. To what extent does each song reflect examples of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation?

The assignment contributes to your ability to: describe and apply motivational theory to everyday contexts; demonstrate your awareness of the significance of motivational theory in relation to contemporary Western society; recognise how cultural context favours or discourages different types of motivation. Your analysis should extend to 1,000 words.

The scope of the task has been made clear in both paragraphs of the assignment description. The purpose of setting the assignment has been given in the second paragraph (and the assessment criteria for the assignment should reflect this). The assumed qualities of the reader of the assignment have not been stated, and the student might need to ask their assessor to clarify who such a person might be. Usually the reader is taken to be at a similar level of experience to the student's own. This means that basic knowledge is assumed, but ideas and terminology that are specific to the assignment may need to be defined and explained. A student might need to check with their assessor what knowledge they should assume on the part of their reader.

To give another example, Narduzzo and Day (2012) describe a Physics lecturer early in the first year of an undergraduate programme setting his students a 200–250-word assignment on a science topic that interests them. He directs them to read certain kinds of publication (such as *New Scientist*, *Scientific American* and *Physics World*) and asks them to write a *clear* and *effective* explanation of the chosen topic. Examples of topics students had chosen included Schrödinger's Cat, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, and hydrogen fusion. To meet the assignment's criteria, students need to include a figure (image) in their account and at least one equation or symbolic expression (using mathematical or chemical notation). They also need to cite and reference 3–5 sources of information they have used. The assumed reader of their work is another student in their year. In other words, they have to write the assignment in a manner that another student in their year would understand.

Taking the information above, the scope of the assignment and the nature of the reader have been outlined. But the purpose of the assignment is not clearly stated in terms of learning objectives or outcomes (although the students are given the assessment criteria for the assignment). If I were a student given such an assignment, some key questions I would want to be able to answer in my own mind would be:

- Why has the lecturer set this assignment? What exactly is he looking for?
- How do I know if what I have written is *clear* and *effective*?
- How do I include mathematical expressions within my text?

- In the text how do I refer to a figure?
- How should I cite my sources and list my references?

If I were completing this assignment, I would also want to choose a topic that I was genuinely curious about, and that I wanted to know more about myself. Motivational theory (for example, Ryan and Deci, 2000) suggests that we are likely to find it easier, and perform better, if we take on a task that is intrinsically motivating (engaging in it because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable).

Planning and completing the task

For a piece of academic work, most of us plan the work before we write it. This planning might involve both scheduling the *overall process* (such as the time to be given to each part of the writing process) as well as outlining the *structure* of the document we are going to write.

For example, imagine a student is being asked to write an essay responding to the question ‘With reference to three examples, how can the benefits of river dams be maximised and their negative impacts minimised?’ It is near the end of the first year of a Human Geography degree programme and she has attended relevant lectures, and a tutorial session with several students and her personal tutor during which the assignment was discussed. She has also been given an initial reading list of three books as background reading for the assignment. Knowing that she has three weeks to write the 2,000-word essay, and that she has many other tasks to do, she might schedule the writing of the assignment as in Figure 1.2 (technically called a Gantt chart – a means of displaying parallel activities through time).

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3
Planning			
Literature searching, reading & note-taking			
Composing			
Reviewing & editing			
Final checks			
Submission			

Figure 1.2 A schedule for writing a 2,000-word essay: ‘With reference to three examples, how can the benefits of river dams be maximised and their negative impacts minimised?’

Firstly, notice that the different stages of the overall process overlap in time. This makes sense. Planning the structure of the essay, for example, is likely to be influenced by the information the student discovers during the literature searching and reading phase. The plan suggests that this student is not a 'diver'. She is not plunging into composing but is holding back until she has done much of her research and reading. Notice too that she plans to review and edit during the composing phase. In other words, parts of the work are to be checked and improved while other parts of the essay have yet to be completed. Again, this makes good sense and is also the way that many professional writers work.

Notice, too, that in the student's plan she is being realistic about finishing the main research phase more than a week before the assignment is due in, and that she will start composing more than a week before the deadline. She aims to finish writing a near-final version 1–2 days before the deadline, so that she has time to make final checks.

TIP**Give yourself enough time**

Many students do not leave themselves enough time to do final checks on their work. This includes making sure that they've kept to the word limit of the assignment, have cited and referenced correctly, have checked spelling, grammar and punctuation, and above all, that they've met the brief for the assignment. Completing these final checks can make all the difference between a pass and a fail, and can often improve final marks by 5–15% compared with what is achieved without this careful checking.

As for planning a structure for the assignment, doing this goes hand in hand with literature searching, reading and note-taking. After early research, the student might make a plan, either as headings and lists or bullet points (Figure 1.3a), or as a mind map or similar (Figure 1.3b).

One of the essay structure outlines in Figure 1.3 is a starting point. Once the student has carried out further research she will probably fill in more detail (such as which examples of dams to use) and might want to revise the plan, fine-tuning the content. As we shall see in Chapter 3, some students plan the essay in some detail, paragraph by paragraph, once they have finished the bulk of the research phase.

Literature searching, reading and note-taking

As the student writing the human geography essay is at an early stage in her degree programme, she has been given guidance about books to read and key papers to view, and she has attended relevant lectures and a tutorial. It is rarely too early to reveal curiosity and independence of mind and so she may decide to

(a)

With reference to three examples, how can the benefits of river dams be maximised and their negative impacts minimised? (target 2,000 words)

Introduction:

Importance of topic for wildlife, and human health and wellbeing. Key measures e.g. socio-economic value, biodiversity, ecosystem services. Rationale behind choice of examples e.g. variety, and those for which good data are available. Aim and structure of the essay. (200 words)

Benefits of dams:

Examples from North America. Overview of benefits e.g. flood control; agricultural, industrial and domestic water supplies; power generation; leisure industry; wildlife; fisheries. (500 words)

Negative impacts of dams:

Examples from North America. Effects on migratory aquatic species, wetlands, river topography, irrigation, leisure industry and fisheries. (500 words)

Maximising the benefit and minimising the harm:

High-quality baseline data often lacking. Complex effects of changes in water flow regime. Effects on sedimentation, chemical transformation, water storage, temperature regime and biological dispersal. Environmental impact assessment before siting a dam. Possible mitigation of negative impacts e.g. alter flow regimes. (600 words)

Conclusion:

Drawing upon conclusions from the different sections, the need for better data and action at different time- and geographic-scales. Better scientific knowledge and understanding. Workable water management and policy frameworks. Public awareness-raising. Putting the pieces in place, from local to regional (national and international?). (200 words)

Total: 2,000 words

(b)

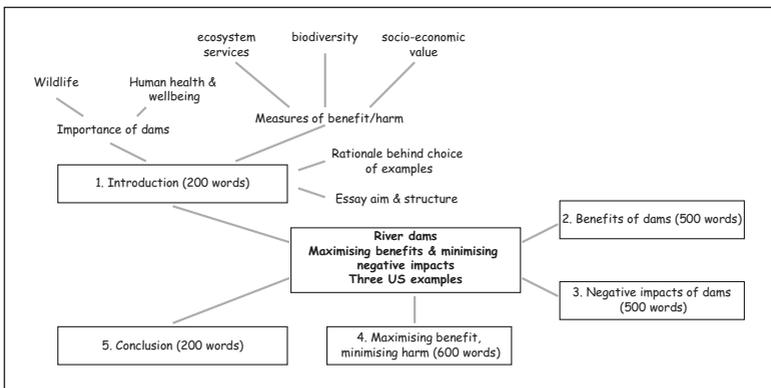


Figure 1.3 An early outline for the structure of the essay ‘With reference to three examples, how can the benefits of river dams be maximised and their negative impacts minimised?’: (a) using headings; (b) as a simple mind map (only Introduction shown in detail)

read further and delve deeper rather than just restricting herself to the material she has been given or the sources to which she has been directed. Those sources can provide leads to further sources, such as in the reference list at the back of a book or an article. Using web search engines such as Google Scholar or literature databases such as Web of Science, the student can discover more recent articles that have referred to earlier key papers (see Chapter 4).

It is helpful to read with a clear purpose in mind when studying an article, book chapter or reputable website. That way you read strategically, hunting for what you need to complete the task. This is an efficient and flexible approach. It works on the well-established principle that reading a piece of work two or three times, with specific purpose(s) in mind, takes about the same time and is usually much more effective than reading through a source document slowly from beginning to end only once (see Chapter 5).

As for note-taking, this is determined by your purpose in reading your source and your personal preferences. I take relatively few notes from a source article but annotate it with highlighting, underlining, and questions or comments in the margins. I normally do this on a printed copy of the article but you could do so on an electronic copy using appropriate software, such as Adobe Acrobat Professional. Many of the notes I take are comparisons between one source and another, sometimes entered into a table.

Whatever means of note-taking you choose, your plan for an essay often evolves as you learn and understand more about the topic you're writing about. When literature searching, reading and note-taking, it is important to keep referring back to the purpose of your assignment, so that you don't lose focus and waste time in gathering irrelevant information.

Composing

No matter how elegant your assignment plan, how extensive your reading or how detailed your notes, there comes a time when you have to start composing your assignment. This is the process of writing flowing prose in sentences and paragraphs (see Chapter 7). Having interviewed many academics, professional writers and successful students about their writing processes, I'm aware that there is much we have in common. Most of us do plenty of planning, research and, above all, thinking, but when it comes to composing we give ourselves permission to 'go for it'. What this means in practice is not being too self-critical when writing the first draft. Treat writing the first draft as 'getting your ideas down'.

There is good reason for not spending much time in writing this first draft. Painstakingly writing the first draft, line by line, scrutinising each sentence you write before moving on to the next, means that you may have invested a great deal of time. Having invested so much time at an early stage you will be less likely to revise what you have written. But revising it may be just what you need to do. There are

various stages in the revision process, and the first often involves quite substantial changes, such as moving or rearranging whole paragraphs. The more time spent in writing the first draft, the less likely you are to invest time in substantially changing what you have written. But it is through redrafting that many of us come to write with clarity and precision. For most of us, writing with power comes through crafting our writing through several processes of revision (reviewing and editing). If too much time is invested in writing the first draft, and trying to perfect what we have written at an early stage, we are likely to be reluctant to make major changes to the argument and structure of our work; but doing so may be what is needed most.

They do it differently in English

If you have learnt to write academically in another language you will find that conventions in UK academic English are likely to be different to those with which you are familiar. For example, according to Karen Ottewell in the Language Centre at the University of Cambridge, and others who focus on working with international students, academic English has these characteristics amongst others:

It is **reader-friendly**. It is the responsibility of the writer to make their meaning clear to the reader. In some languages, this is not the case and the reader has to work hard at extracting meaning.

Context is explained rather than assumed. In some languages, much is assumed about the context of an academic communication. In UK academic English, context is often made explicit, e.g. in an essay, the breadth and depth of what is to follow is made clear near the beginning of the document.

Argument is developed cumulatively, in a logical and straightforward manner.

Some languages do not develop an argument in a direct way, but have digressions before returning to the main theme of an argument. Writing in academic English is usually more straightforward. Old information often comes before new and simple before complex. One paragraph builds on another.

The writing style is concise and direct. Some languages do not express themselves in a direct manner, but the language is more poetic and philosophical. Some UK academics would describe this style of writing as 'flowery' and with too much 'padding' – unnecessary words. In most academic disciplines, most of the time, those who mark assignments are interested in students 'getting to the point'. Writing in a concise and direct manner means fewer words. It does not mean that the writing is any easier.

Writing text that is reader-friendly, where the context is explained, that develops an argument cumulatively, and that is concise and direct, is what many forms of English academic writing aspire to be.

Reviewing and editing

Thirty or so years ago, small desktop computers had barely been conceived. Students who typed their assignments used typewriters and had little opportunity to correct their work, other than retyping whole pages or making corrections on the line they had just typed. You have the opportunity to use word-processing software, which enables you to quickly and easily change what you have written. You should make good use of the opportunities your software provides to revise your work.

In publishing, it is common to consider the process of revising what has been written in three stages: developmental editing, copy-editing and proofreading. *Developmental editing* involves moving whole chunks of text around, such as changing the order of paragraphs in your account, rearranging the order of sentences in a paragraph, and substantially rewriting sentences. Significant amounts of material may be added or removed – whole paragraphs, tables, figures, citations and references. Developmental editing is most likely to happen just after you've written the first draft, or part of the first draft, but it can occur at later stages as well.

Developmental editing – to create a complete, cohesive account and powerful argument overall – is often key to effective writing. A key question at this stage should be 'Are you meeting the assignment guidelines (brief)?'

Copy-editing involves fine-tuning the sentences in your paragraphs. This includes checking grammar, punctuation and spelling and improving the readability of your text and the strengths of your argument. In your text, have you removed unwanted repetition and unnecessary words? It is an opportunity to check that you have included appropriate sections, subsections, tables and figures. Are the citations and references accurate and do they support your argument? Have you checked that any facts and assertions are correct?

Proofreading – these are the final checks to ensure that all is present and correct. This stage focuses on completeness, consistency and fine-scale correctness. Are the sections and subsections, citations and references, figures and tables, complete and consistent? Is the layout and presentation correct? And a final check: Have you met the assignment guidelines?

Knowing when to stop

A significant proportion of students find it difficult to 'move on' from one stage of the writing process to the next. Some keep researching and reading, wishing to get to the bottom of the topic. In some cases, they might have been delaying composing. About half the undergraduate and postgraduate students I've asked regard composing as the most challenging part of the writing process.

Some students find it difficult to ‘let go’ of their writing and hand it in, because they don’t feel it is good enough. Many students who become the most accomplished writers suffer from feelings of not having done enough or not feeling happy about what they’re handing in. However, you do have to hand in your work on time and meet the guidelines (the brief) set for it. The more you are aware of the different stages in the writing process – planning, researching and reading, composing, reviewing and editing – the more likely you are to manage the overall process effectively. That means completing the different stages so that you can be more or less satisfied with your work and finish it in time.

1.4 Playing to your strengths and preferences

I’ve put forward various ideas and suggestions in this chapter about both the nature of academic writing and the process of creating it. Although these suggestions are based on more than a decade of research and coaching in writing development, and drawing upon the practices of many other academics involved in writing development, I am also acutely aware that each person reading this book is different. English may not be your first language. You may have unusual learning preferences. You are different because of your unique gifts, your specific social, cultural and educational background, and because the context in which you are writing is discipline-based. One of the key messages I hope you have gained from this first chapter is that, although there are generalisations we can make about the nature and process of academic writing, it is uniquely expressed because of your nature as an individual and the context in which you find yourself. We will explore this more in the chapters that follow.

1.5 In conclusion: the process of academic writing

Academic writing begins with *understanding the nature of the task* you have to undertake. Your writing assignment is normally set within a discipline that has certain conventions for the writing you are expected to do. This, in turn, shapes the *research* you carry out, the *reading* you do, and the *writing style* and *document structure* you will fashion. Writing an assignment usually involves *planning* the structure of the assignment you are going to submit, in order to *build an argument*. Planning shapes the act of *composing* (writing flowing sentences). Writing is normally done in stages, with text gradually being improved through *reviewing* and *editing*. Ultimately, the text and its presentation are *polished* to create the final version.

Key points in the chapter

- 1 Different kinds of academic writing have their own features, including specific forms of structure and style.
- 2 Writing is important in study because it helps you to: remember; observe and gather evidence; think; communicate; and above all, learn. Through writing, you also develop key skills that enhance your employability.
- 3 Academic writing has certain features that apply generally but that also need to be tailored to your specific discipline. Features of academic writing include: the use of argument; being critical; being formal; and using words with precision.
- 4 Different people write in different ways and the same person may write in different ways depending on the nature of the task.
- 5 The process of academic writing normally involves: planning, researching, reading and note-taking; composing (drafting); and reviewing and editing.

Cited references

- Barrass, R. (2007). *Students Must Write*. 3rd edn. London: Routledge.
- CBI (2016). *The Right Combination. Education and Skills Survey 2016*. London: Confederation of British Industry/Pearson. Available from: www.cbi.org.uk/cbi-prod/assets/File/pdf/cbi-education-and-skills-survey2016.pdf [accessed 2 August 2017].
- Crene, P. and Lea, M. R. (2008). *Writing at University: A Guide for Students*. 3rd edn. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Narduzzo, A. and Day, T. (2012). 'Less is More in Physics: A Small-scale Writing in the Disciplines (WiD) Intervention'. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*, 4, Case Study 5.
- Paton, G. (2014). 'OECD: UK Graduates "Lacking High-Level Literacy Skills"'. *Telegraph newspaper*, 9 September 2014. Available from: www.telegraph.co.uk/education/education-news/11082842/OECD-UK-graduates-lacking-high-level-literacy-skills.html [accessed 2 August 2017].
- Ryan, R. M. and Deci, E. L. (2000). 'Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions'. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25, pp. 54–67.

Further reading

- Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process*. New edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zinsser, W. (2006). *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Non-Fiction*. 30th anniversary edition. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Zinsser, W. (2009). 'Writing English as a Second Language.' *American Scholar*, Winter 2010. Available from: <https://theamericanscholar.org/writing-english-as-a-second-language> [accessed 8 August 2017].

Answers for Chapter 1

Activity 1.2: Which of these is an argument?

- (a) Yes, this is an argument. The writer has sought to use evidence and reasoning, and careful wording, to shape an argument that leads to a conclusion.
- (b) No, this is not an argument. It is essentially a description or statement of fact.
- (c) No, this is not an argument. It is a description, followed by the expression of an opinion.

Activity 1.3: Words and precise meanings

Verb	Meaning
1 Compare	F. Point out similarities and differences between two or more views. This might involve coming to a conclusion as to the preferred view.
2 Contrast	B. Set two views in opposition in order to highlight the differences between them.
3 Evaluate	E. Assess the value of something, which might include offering a personal opinion.
4 Interpret	A. Make clear the meaning of something. This might include giving a personal judgement.
5 Justify	D. Give reasons for decisions or conclusions reached, which might include responding to possible objections.
6 Outline	C. Give an overview of the general principles and/or main features of a subject, omitting fine detail.

Activity 1.4: Avoiding 'look at'

Possible answers include: analyses, ascertains, assesses, challenges, critiques, deconstructs, determines, establishes, explores, introduces, investigates, judges, ponders, proposes, reflects, reveals, reviews, synthesises, verifies.

Index

- abstract (summary), 48–9, 153–4, 164
- academic journals (peer-reviewed journals),
53, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, 66, 150,
193–4
- active voice, use of, 51–2, 93, 94, 190, 215
- adjectives, 178, 215
- adverbs, 178, 215
- aims, 40, 43, 48, 49, 89, 102, 109, 154, 164
- analysing, definition of, 9
- annotating, 18, 72, 74, 80, 81–2, 85–6
- apostrophes, 181
- applying, definition of, 9
- architect writer, 12
- argument, 4, 5–6, 7–8, 9, 19, 31–2, 34,
40–1, 44–5, 92, 111, 145, 149, 151–5,
157, 163, 166, 167–8, 170–1, 208
- arts, *x*, 1, 2, 37, 117, 148, 193
- assessment, 4–7, 9–10, 13–14, 27, 28,
29–30, 34, 35, 37–8, 90–1, 166–7,
205–6
- criteria, 5, 14, 38, 100–1, 114, 205
- audience (readership), 1, 3–4, 13, 14, 24,
29–30, 34, 35, 37–8, 93, 100–6, 167,
192, 215
- for a presentation, 100–5
- balance, 61, 64–5, 70, 167, 196, 208, 215
- balance in an abstract, 153–4, 164
- Barrass, R., 2
- bias, 51, 61, 64–5, 70, 123, 148, 167,
208, 215
- bibliographic database, 56, 60, 66, 193–6,
215
- bibliography, 147, 197, 215
- body, 5, 31, 40, 41–2, 43, 44–5, 102
- of an essay, 5, 43, 44–5
- of a talk, 102
- Brande, D., 118
- Buzan, T., 73–4, 83
- charts, 50, 83, 90, 110, 136–42, 197
- bar chart, 138–9, 141, 144, 215
- Gantt chart, 15–16
- histogram, 139, 217
- pie chart, 140, 218
- citations/citing, *x*, 5, 127, 133, 136,
145–60, 161–2, 163, 166, 194, 196–7,
201, 207, 208, 215
- colons, 181
- commas, 180–2, 187
- common knowledge, 152–3, 216
- composing, 13, 15–16, 18–19, 20–1, 29,
117–31, 216
- concept maps, 83–4, 141, 197, 216
- conclusion(s), 5–6, 7–9, 17, 31, 42, 45–7,
51, 90, 91–2, 100, 112, 154, 164
- in an abstract, 164
- of a business report, 90, 91–2
- of a dissertation, 110, 112
- of an essay, 45–7
- of a practical report, 51
- Confederation of British Industry (CBI), 3
- conjunctions, 178, 216
- creative, being, 32, 85, 118, 119, 123, 127
- creative mind, 118
- Creme, P. and Lea, M.R., 12
- critical, being, 5, 7, 9–10, 39, 63, 94–8,
118, 189, 191, 208

- critical mind, 118, 119
 critical reflective writing, 88, 94–100
- determiners, 178, 216
 dictionaries, 189, 190, 191
 dissertations, 88, 107–13, 216
 diver writer, 12, 16
 drafting, *see* composing; editing; reviewing
 dyslexia, 183, 210
- editing, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20–1, 117, 118,
 124–5, 128, 161, 162, 165–87, 189,
 200–1, 203, 216
 Elbow, P., 118, 122, 124
 emotive language, 95–6, 122, 211
 end matter, 89, 90, 109, 110, 167
 engineering, x, 1, 2, 6, 37, 47, 51–2, 65, 89,
 94, 117, 123, 141, 152, 193
 essays, 1, 5–6, 7, 12, 13, 15–18, 19, 31,
 37, 38–9, 43–7, 58, 61, 64, 65, 67,
 183–4, 194–6, 203, 206–7, 209,
 212, 216
 ethos, 211–12
 evaluating, definition of, 9
 evidence, 2, 5, 6, 7–8, 13, 27, 31, 37, 41,
 42, 45, 46, 63, 66, 95, 149, 159,
 167–8, 207, 208, 211
 examinations, x, 3, 10, 43, 78, 81, 107, 118
- feedback, 3, 101–2, 103–4, 128, 204,
 205–7, 209–10, 213, 216
 formative, 205, 216
 summative, 205, 219
 feed-forward, 209
 figures, 132, 133, 136–42, 197, 216
see also charts; graphs
 first person, use of, 32
see also personal, use of
 flow chart (flow diagram), 12, 83, 102,
 197, 216
 Flower, L. and Hayes, J.R., 122
 footnotes, 136, 148
 front matter, 89, 109, 167, 200
 freewriting, 121–4, 129, 130, 216
 full stops, 150, 180, 182
- glossary of terms, xi, 89, 93, 109, 216
 goal setting, 126–7, 128, 129, 155
 grammar, 166, 176–9, 189, 190–1, 207,
 208, 216
 grand plan writer, 12
 graphs, 50, 92, 103, 106, 110, 132, 136–8,
 184, 197, 208
 line graphs, 136–7, 217
 scatter plots, 137–8, 219
- Harvard-style system, of citing and
 referencing, 145, 146, 147–8
 Harvey, G., 157
 help, 210
 humanities, x, 1, 2, 5, 37, 42, 63, 117,
 148, 193
- identity, 2, 24, 25–7, 33, 34, 35, 100, 107,
 166, 217
see also IPACE model
 impersonal, use of, 6, 10, 26, 32, 38, 51,
 88, 93, 99–100, 108, 121, 155
 information centre, *see* library
 intended learning outcomes, 13, 27, 28, 38
 introduction, 5, 6, 17, 31, 40–1, 43–4, 48,
 49, 51, 89, 102, 109, 112
 of a business-style report, 89
 of a dissertation 109, 112
 of an essay 43–4
 of a practical report, 48, 49, 51
 of a presentation, 102
 IPACE model, 24–35, 38, 100–1
 identity, 24, 25–7, 34, 35, 100–1
 purpose, 24, 27–9, 34, 35, 101, 218
 audience, 24, 29–30, 34, 35, 101, 215
 code (format, structure and style), 24,
 30–1, 32, 34, 35, 101, 107–8, 167, 215
 experience, 24, 32–3, 34, 35, 101, 216
- Kolb, D. A., 96, 97, 203, 204
- Latin abbreviations, 150, 216, 217
 learning cycles, 96–8, 113, 203–4, 213
 learning log (journal), 95, 204–5, 206,
 210, 217

- lecture notes, 1, 2, 33, 57, 81, 206, 207
- library (information centre, resource centre),
56, 58, 59, 91, 193, 210
- literature reviews, 1, 7, 25, 31, 52, 66, 98,
109, 127, 150
- literature searching (researching), 13, 15–17,
20–1, 55–70, 88, 117, 119, 128,
193–6
- logbook, practical, 204, 217
- logos, 211–12
- mind, state of, 73, 104, 125, 127, 130
- mind maps, 16, 17, 83, 197, 217
- Newton, I., 149
- no composing technique, 124–5,
130
- note-taking, 1, 2, 13, 15, 16, 18, 72, 74,
80–1, 81–6, 95, 102, 121, 204–5,
206, 207
- nouns, 175–6, 178, 217
- numerical style, of citing and referencing,
145–8, 196
- object, in a sentence, 51, 217
- objectives, 40, 89, 91, 109
- Ottewell, K., 19
- paragraphs, 13, 14, 16, 18–19, 20, 41, 44,
111–13, 117, 124–5, 166, 168–71,
182, 184, 208, 217
- paraphrasing, 154–5, 158, 159, 160, 161,
163, 209, 217
- passive voice, 51–2, 93, 190, 192, 217
- patchwork writer, 12
- pathos, 211–12
- peer review, 63–4, 193, 194, 218
- peer-reviewed literature, 47, 51, 56, 57, 59,
63–4, 66, 67, 193
- persona, in writing, 25–6, 29–30, 34, 35,
100–1, 167
- personal, use of/personal viewpoint, 6, 10,
32, 34, 88, 94–9, 108, 121, 208
- plagiarism, 56, 58, 84, 145, 149, 158–63,
208, 218
- planning writing, 12–13, 15–16, 21, 24, 33,
39, 85, 97–8, 111–3, 117, 128–9,
203–4
- posters, 105–6
- practical reports, 6, 26, 29, 47–53, 111–13,
218
- preferences, as a learner/writer, 12, 21, 81,
85–6, 125, 128, 181–2
- prepositions, 178, 218
- primary source (primary literature), 66,
150–1, 218
- pronouns, 175–6, 178, 218
- proofreading, 20, 165, 166
- punctuation, 16, 20, 166, 179–82, 184,
191, 208, 218
- purpose (in reading), 18, 72, 75–9, 80–1,
81–2, 85
- purpose (in writing), 1, 3, 4, 6, 13–14, 27–9,
34, 35, 37, 39, 124, 218
see also IPACE model
- qualitative research (qualitative analysis), 37,
107–8, 110
- quantitative research (quantitative analysis),
25, 38, 107–8, 110
- quotations/quoting, 40, 110, 155–7, 159,
161, 181, 208, 209, 218
- RABT, 60–7, 196
- readability scores, 189, 191–2
- readership, *see* audience
- reading, 15, 18, 29, 30, 56–7, 71–81, 85–6,
117, 119, 148, 165, 210–11
in-depth (SP3R), 72, 80
scanning, 72, 75–6, 77, 219
skimming, 72, 76–7, 219
- redrafting, *see* editing; reviewing
- reference list, 18, 61, 87, 147, 151, 196,
197, 218
- reference management software, 161, 162,
196–7, 201, 218
- referencing, x, 1, 5, 33, 34, 38, 56, 145–58,
163, 166, 196–7, 201, 207, 208, 218
- reflective writing, 6, 12, 88, 94–100,
113–14, 218

- reports, 1, 6, 26, 31, 37, 47–52, 53, 57, 62, 66, 88, 89–95, 100, 109, 113, 153, 154
 business, 88, 89–95, 100, 113
 practical, 1, 6, 26, 31, 37, 47–52, 53, 218
see also dissertations
- researching, *see* literature searching;
 qualitative research; quantitative
 research
- resource centre, *see* library
- reviewing (checking writing), 13, 15–16, 19,
 20–1, 80–1, 117, 118, 119, 120,
 124–5, 129, 165–84, 189, 203–4,
 207–8, 219
- rhetoric, 211–12, 213
- sciences, x, 1, 2, 5, 14, 26, 31, 37, 47, 51,
 60, 68, 117, 148, 154, 193
- scope, 13–4, 48, 56, 58–9, 89, 193
- secondary source (secondary literature), 66,
 150–1, 219
- secondary source (secondary evidence), 66
- semicolons, 181
- sentences, 18–21, 40–2, 51–2, 94, 111,
 117, 120, 121–2, 124–5, 154, 162,
 165, 166, 168–9, 170–1, 172–6, 177,
 179, 180–2, 191–2, 208, 219
- SMART, 126–7, 129
- social sciences, x, 1, 2, 5, 37, 42, 63, 117,
 147, 193
- SP3R, 72, 80–1, 82, 85
- spelling, 16, 20, 166, 182–3, 189, 190, 208
- structure, of assignments, 1, 2, 4–6, 12, 15,
 16, 17, 21, 31–3, 34, 39–42, 43–7,
 47–51, 89–92, 96–98, 101–3, 105–6,
 109–13, 167–70, 208
 business reports, 89–92
 critical reflections, 96–8
 dissertations, 109–13
 essays, 43–7
 posters, 105–6
 practical reports, 47–51
 presentations, 101–3
- subject, in a sentence, 51–2, 157, 171–2,
 173–4, 176, 177, 184, 190, 208, 219
- summarising, 48–9, 89–91, 153–4, 169, 219
- summary, *see* abstract
- synthesising, definition of, 9
- tables, 38, 49, 50, 83, 90, 92, 109–10,
 132–3, 133–6, 142, 166, 193, 197,
 199, 208
- tenses, 49, 92–3, 98–9, 172, 177, 179, 208
- thesaurus, 191
- thesis statement, 5–6, 38, 40, 43, 44,
 167, 219
- third person, use of, 32, 38, 93
see also impersonal, use of
- topic sentences, 168–9
- verbs, 10–11, 83, 98–9, 152, 156, 157, 162,
 171–2, 173–4, 176, 177, 178, 179,
 190, 208, 219
- visual elements, 132–44
- voice, 10, 24, 26, 38, 43, 51–2, 93, 94,
 157, 162
- Wikipedia, 59, 60, 63, 64
- word processing, 20, 29, 34, 118, 183,
 189–93
- writer's block, 124, 128–30
- writing styles, x, 1–2, 4–6, 10–11, 19, 32,
 33, 34, 37, 51–2, 88, 92–4, 98–100,
 107–8, 109, 159, 208
- writing to a prompt, 121, 129