



Academic English Writing

Week 1 19/2/24
Li Yanrui

Institute of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics
School of Foreign Languages

Agenda

- Introduction to the course
- Introduce yourself
- Introduction to Academic English Writing

Introduction to the course



Course description



Learning outcomes



Course schedule and
coursework



Assessment

About the course

- Academic writing is a formal style of writing used in universities and scholarly publications.
- You'll encounter it in journal articles and books on academic topics, and you'll be expected to write your essays, research papers, and dissertation in academic style.
- This course introduces students to the basics of academic writing in English.

About the course

Philosophy of this course:

Writing is a process.

- a four-step process: planning, drafting, revising, and editing.
- all these are essential practices in developing thoughtful arguments and constructing an effective essay.

Every writer needs a reader.

- Share your writing with other readers and to respond to the writing of others.

Learning outcomes

- Learn **information-seeking skills and strategies**.
- Make **effective use of information** retrieved, organized, and synthesized from appropriate sources.
- Present ideas and information **clearly and logically** to achieve a specific purpose.
- Use **appropriate academic style and conventions** associated with communicative forms, genres, and disciplines.

Course schedule

Sequence 1: Introducing academic writing

Week 1	19 Feb	Orientation to academic writing
Week 2	26 Feb	Academic writing: Key features
Week 3	04 Mar	Argument

Sequence 2: Engaging with the ideas of others

Week 4	11 Mar	Looking for a research topic
Week 5	18 Mar	Working with sources; Summary
Week 6	25 Mar	Library; Plagiarism; Annotated bibliography (Assignment 1)
Week 7	01 Apr	Citation; Endnote
Week 8	08 Apr	Developing an argument; Outlining (Assignment 2 ; Assignment 1 due)

Sequence 3: Developing an effective argument

Week 9	15 Apr	Sample essay analysis (Assignment 2 due)
Week 10	22 Apr	Structuring the text
Week 11	29 Apr	NO CLASS
Week 12	06 May	Writing workshop 1: Peer review (First draft due)
Week 13	13 May	Language: Cohesion, style, and sentence skills
Week 14	20 May	Writing workshop 2: Revising your essay (Second draft due)
Week 15	27 May	Oral presentations
Week 16	03 Jun	Oral presentations; Class wrap-up (Final project portfolio due)

Coursework

- Short writing assignments
 - 1) annotated bibliographies (summary + evaluation)
 - 2) essay outlining
- Project portfolio
 - a major writing project throughout the semester
 - given topics **OR** new topics of your choice
 - a group of 3 students work under the same topic
 - submit your paper and portfolio **individually**
- Oral presentation

What is a project portfolio?



What is a project portfolio?

- As a process, writing requires
 - planning
 - drafting
 - revising
 - editing
- In this course, you will
 - write several **drafts** for your final writing project
 - present your drafts to your groupmates
 - comment on each other's work and provide constructive feedback (**peer review**)
 - revise and edit your essay
 - Your final work will be submitted as a **portfolio**

The content of the portfolio will typically include:

- **Drafts** of project essay (i.e., first draft, second draft ...)
- Peer review **checklists**
- **Final version** of project essay (1000 – 1200 words, excluding references)
- Writer's memo
- Any other relevant notes or writings of your choice (e.g., reading notes, brainstorm scratch paper etc.)
- Your portfolio will be assessed as a whole.
- You will need to
 - demonstrate your engagement with the writing process;
 - show your development as a writer.

Peer Review Checklist for Argumentative Essay

Carefully read your group member's draft essay. Based on your reading, address the following questions through constructive comments and suggestions. When you comment, keep in mind what the author did well, as well as provide constructive comments on possible improvements. Your comments are as specific as possible.

Name of writer: _____

Comments by: _____

- Peer review **checklists**

I. Overall structure	Comments / Suggestions
Does the essay have a title that clearly announces its thesis?	Yes.
Does the essay contain an introduction, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion?	Yes.
Are the needs of the audience kept in mind? For instance, do some concepts or words need to be defined?	Yes. Terminologies like "the Coase Theorem" are clearly explained, yet definition of "data cooperative" may need further elaboration.
II. Introduction	
Does the essay begin with a well-developed introduction that engages the reader and create interest? What strategies are used to attract the reader's interest?	Yes. Listing common scenes and raising a question makes the beginning very captivating.
Is background information provided to set the context for the essay? Is the information adequate (i.e. neither too much nor too little)?	Yes. Those recently published legislations are cited, and the context is well set.
Does the introduction clearly explain the issue under discussion?	Yes. It points out the individual-centric feature of current legislation, and offered reasons to refute it.
Thesis statement - <i>Please underline the thesis statement on your workshop partner's draft.</i>	
Does the essay has a debatable and focused thesis?	Yes. "Granting the ownership and control of data to individual consumers will not be advisable, because they have neither the capacity to manage these digital assets nor the leverage to bargain with those giant companies; and the quality of the data cannot be guaranteed under individuals' complete management. A better system could have been devised as an alternative." This is a debatable and focused thesis.

- Brainstorm scratch paper



Why use portfolio?

- Provide fairer grades that take growth and multiple texts into account
- Model writing as a process
- Develop your ability to analyze your own process and writing
- Give you real-world skills in presenting your own abilities, strengths, weaknesses, contributions, thinking process, role in a team, and plans
- Take the focus off of finishing a paper to receive a grade, and put the focus on developing skills and ideas over time, thus delaying the “high-risk” writing until you have received lots of feedback and carefully reflected on your own work

Guidelines for the project portfolio

Sequence 2

+

Finding your topic; Searching for relevant sources; Evaluating sources; Synthesizing sources into your writing without plagiarizing...

Sequence 3

=

Argumentative writing; Clarity, consistency, and structure of arguments...

A well-written
argumentative essay

Portfolio: **writer's memo + final version;**
draft(s); peer review checklists; any other
relevant documents of your choice.

Independent work

- A group of 3 students work under the same topic, but you will submit your **individual portfolio**, rather than a group one.
- The aim of the group
 - Discuss your ideas on similar topics;
 - Expand your horizon by considering different perspectives;
 - This group will also be the group for the **Peer Review**;
 - Get targeted feedback from peers who know about your topic;
 - You need to write your essay **independently**.

Writer's memo

- Submitted as a **coversheet**.
- The memo should be at least one paragraph but **no more than** a page.
- In this memo, you will describe your **purpose** and **strategy** in approaching the essay to provide some **context** for your writing.
- You are also encouraged to **reflect upon your writing process**, describing, for example, how you came to focus on a specific topic, what difficulties or challenges you have encountered, and what you have done to overcome the challenges, etc.

Draft(s)

- We use the term 'draft(s)' to refer to **unfinished** or **preliminary** version(s) of your project essay.
- Draft(s) will not receive explicit grades, although you will receive credit for completing them on time.

Final version

- You are expected to write an **argumentative essay**.
- References and citations should be in **APA** style.
 - ✓ At least **6** references.
- **Font**: Times New Roman;
- **Size**: 12 point;
- **Spacing**: 1.15;
- **Length**: 1000 - 1200 words (excluding references and writer's memo).

Assessment

- Attendance & participation (15%)
- Short writing assignments (20%)
- Oral presentation (15%)
- Project portfolio (50%)

1. Attendance & participation (15%)

I expect you to attend all classes.

3 absences without official notes are regarded as automatically failing the course.

Please contact me in advance if you are unable to come to class.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what was covered in class.

- On days when we are having a Writing Workshop, your presence is especially important
 - A missing student can affect his/her group adversely. Therefore, **an absence on a workshop day** or failure to participate in a workshop will severely affect your participation grade (5 points off).

2. Short writing assignments (20%)

- annotated bibliographies (summary + evaluation)
- essay outlining

3. Oral presentation (15%)

- Explain your final project to the class
- about 5~6 minutes per person

4. Project portfolio (50%)

- A portfolio system enables me to consider process as well as product and to assess your work over time, holistically, and individually.
- To capture the various dimensions of effective writing, to allow you to demonstrate growth in your work, and to encourage drafting and revision.

A deadline is a deadline

Unless we have agreed on specific accommodations in advance or there is a true emergency, late submissions for any type of assignment are **NOT accepted**.

Emergency does NOT include: oversleeping, feeling “under the weather,” scheduled trips, family celebrations, employment obligations

Course material

- Bailey, S. (2015). *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*. Routledge.
- Langan, J., & Albright, Z. L. (2015). *English Skills with Readings*. McGrawHill Education.
- Purdue Online Writing Lab:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/index.html

Communication

liyanrui@stu.pku.edu.cn

I enjoy chatting casually or discussing questions (related or not related to the course) with you!

When in doubt, ask me!

When in need, talk to me!

Introduce yourself

Your name or preferred name

Hometown

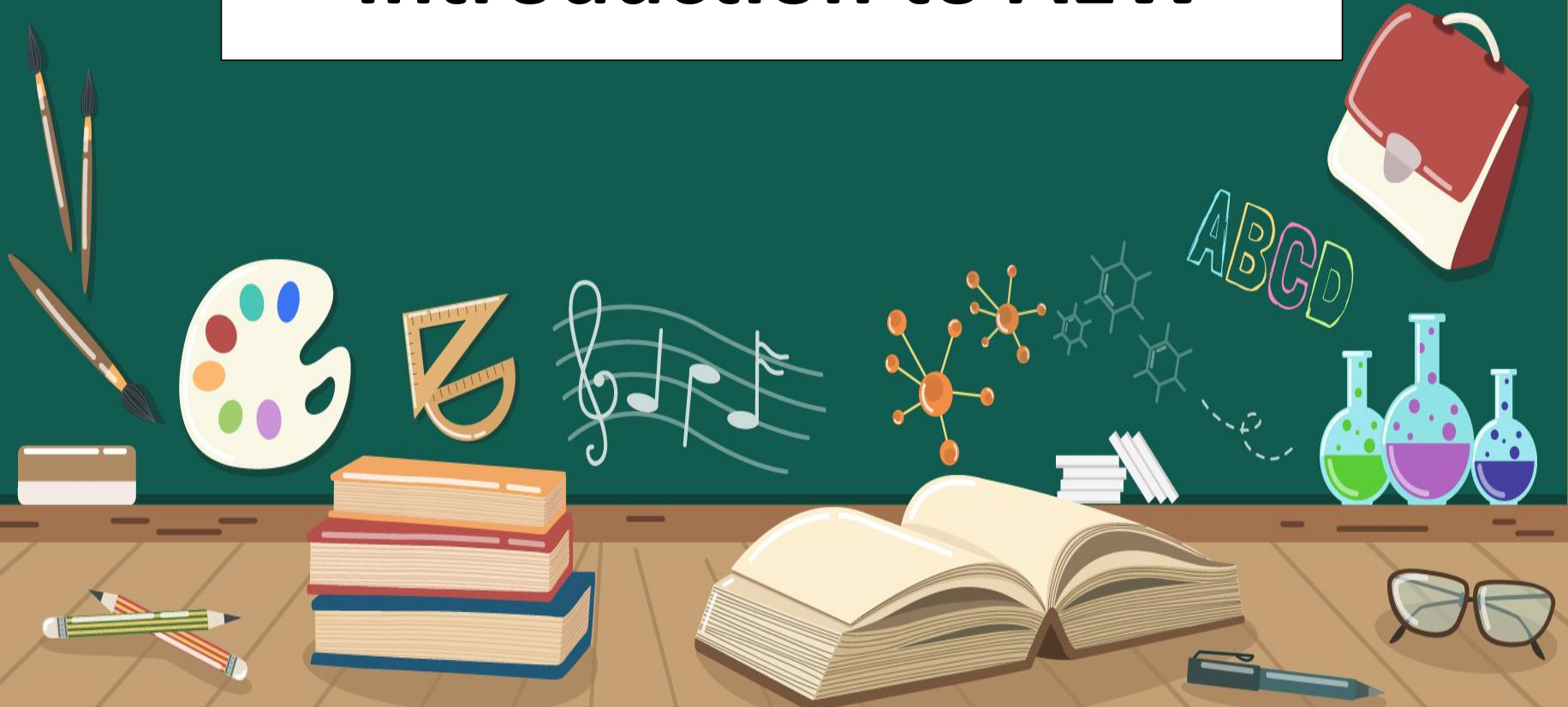
Major

Hobby

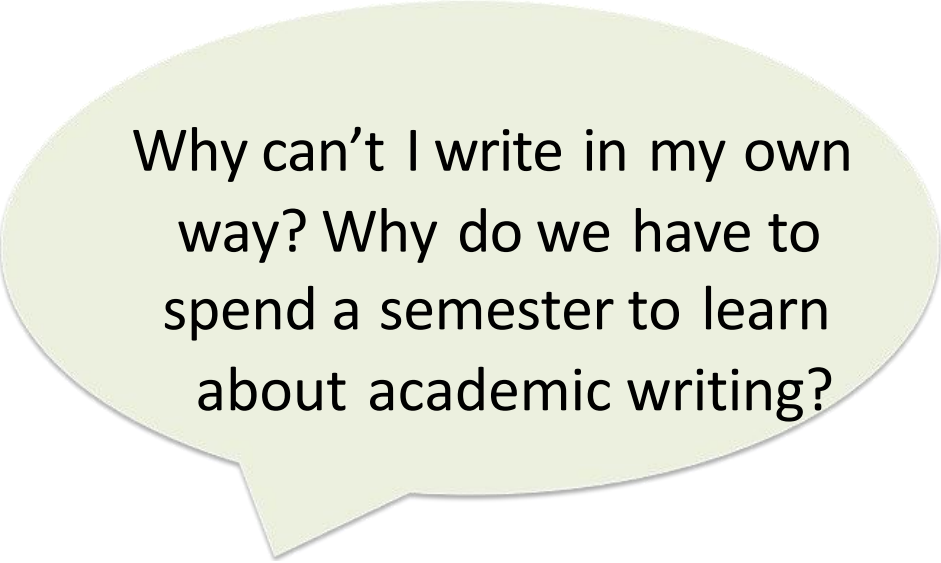
What did you do during the winter break?

...

Introduction to AEW



Why academic writing?



Why can't I write in my own way? Why do we have to spend a semester to learn about academic writing?

- Creative writing?
- Personal writing?
- Any other types of writing you have read or completed in the past?

(e.g. fiction, poetry, journalistic report...)

Why academic writing?

Academic writing is a particular genre or type of writing.

- Occasion: academic settings, e.g. university
- Audience: students, professors, researchers, solution seeker, ...
- Purpose

The purpose of academic writing

- to report on a piece of research the writer has conducted
- to answer a question the writer has been given or chosen
- to discuss a subject of common interest and give the writer's view
- to synthesise research done by others on a topic
- To present a hypothesis for consideration by others
- To make notes on something read or heard

Common types of academic writing

BAWE Genre Families	
Category	Nature of task
1. Explanation	Conveying facts and understanding
2. Exercise	Applying knowledge and testing comprehension
3. Literature Survey	Presenting and reflecting upon literature
4. Methodology Recount	Communicating methods and their value
5. Research Report	Describing and assessing your research in full
6. Essay	Making a complete argument
7. Critique	Critically evaluating an argument
8. Event Recount	Reporting an event
9. Public Engagement	Translating into lower register
10. Case Study	Reporting an uncontrolled study or experiment
11. Design Specification	Specifying a product or process
12. Problem Question	Addressing a real-world problem
13. Proposal	Making a case for future action

From *The British Academic Written English (BAWE) Corpus*

Common types of academic writing

- Match the terms on the left to the definitions on the right




Notes	A piece of research, either individual or group work, with the topic chosen by the student(s).
Report	The longest piece of writing normally done by a student (20,000+ words), often for a higher degree, on a topic chosen by the student.
Project	A written record of the main points of a text or lecture, for a student's personal use.
Essay	A general term for any academic essay, report, presentation or article.
Dissertation/ Thesis	A description of something a student has done.
Paper	The most common type of written work, with the title given by the teacher, normally 1,000–5,000 words.

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Why do we write essays?

-  We write essays because we have to, in order to get our degree
-  To develop and demonstrate our **understanding of a topic**
-  To **synthesise and develop your own views** on a topic – as we will discuss later, the process of writing serves to help us work out what we ourselves think about an issue

Why do we write essays?

- ✍ To **intervene in academic debates** – when we write essays, we are joining the conversation in our field, and contributing to that exchange (this is why we reference properly)
- ✍ To demonstrate **critical thinking** – this is crucial, and we will return to it in more detail later in this course

The format of essays

- Short essays (including exam answers) generally have this pattern:

Introduction

Main body

Conclusion

The format of essays

- Longer essays and reports may include:

Introduction

Main body

Literature review

Case study

Discussion

Conclusion

References

Appendices

The format of essays

- Dissertations and journal articles may have:

Abstract

List of contents

List of tables

Introduction

Main body

Literature review

Case study

Findings

Discussion

Conclusion

Acknowledgements

References

Appendices

organization/structure

- Find the words that match the following definitions:

(a) A short summary that explains the paper's purpose and main findings.

abstract

(b) A list of all the sources the writer has mentioned in the text.

reference

(c) A section, at the end, where additional information is included.

appendix

- Find the words that match the following definitions:

(d) A short section where people who have helped the writer are thanked.

acknowledgement

(e) Part of the main body in which the views of other writers on the topic are discussed.

literature review

(f) A section where one particular example is described in detail.

case study

The features of academic writing

- Structure
- Language & Style
- Flow (idea development)
- Critical approach

The features of academic writing

- Academic writing is clearly structured

Title

Abstract

Introduction

Literature review

Case study

Findings

Discussion

Conclusion

Acknowledgements

References

Appendices

Title

Abstract

Introduction

Literature review

Methodology

Results

Discussion

References

Appendix

The features of academic writing

➤ Language & Style

- Written academic English is **OBJECTIVE**
 - a vehicle for logical argumentation; measured; fair; accurate
 - (not emotional; avoids exaggeration and bias; shows respect for views of others)

Poor style	Reason
... I think ...	Too personal
... lots of people ...	Vague – give names

The features of academic writing

➤ Language & Style

- Written academic English is **CAUTIOUS**
■ language used reflects the strength of evidence available to support an idea or claim

Poor style	Reason
. . . the world's poorest children . . .	Too absolute, no evidence
. . . etc . . .	Avoid using 'etc.' and 'so on'

The features of academic writing

➤ Language & Style

- Written academic English is **FORMAL**
■ precise; avoids colloquialisms and slang

Poor style	Reason
How to make people work harder . . .	Imprecise vocabulary – use ‘motivation’
. . . are ok	Too informal, colloquialism

The features of academic writing

➤ Flow

- Logic 1: G-S (General to Specific)
- Logic 2: P-S (Problem to Solution)
- Logic 3: Process (Method part)
- Logic 4: Old to New

The features of academic writing

➤ Critical approach

■ “Too much description, not enough analysis”

■ “Don’t just tell me what happened; tell me what it means.”

■ “Elaborate”

■ “Needs less description and more critique.”

The features of academic writing

➤ Critical approach

Acknowledge and deal with the complexity of the subject matter:

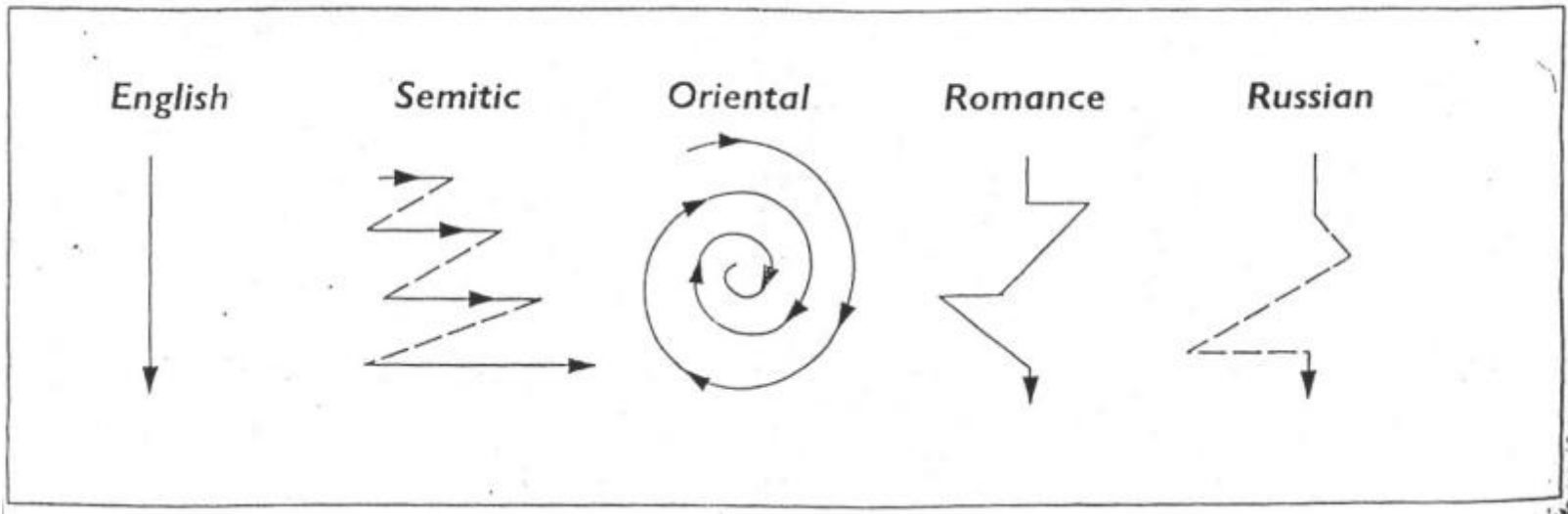
- explaining; giving reasons; examining or anticipating consequences
- comparing, contrasting and evaluating
- considering both sides of an issue
- taking a position
- supporting your claims with credible evidence
- investigating claims made by others and, if appropriate, questioning the evidence
- drawing conclusions
- making suggestions and recommendations

Writing for an academic audience requires you:

- to reflect on other academic writing, and **think critically** about a **topic**.
- to formulate **arguments** and consider **counterarguments**
- to organize your thoughts into large and small sections of text. Plot will be less important than **clarity** and logical **organization**
- to learn particular **terminology** -- not just the words, but also their correct application in your field.
- Academic writing is **no mere technical skill**: it is built on **a way of thinking**.

- Academic English is nobody's first language.
- It's even more difficult to write academically in a foreign language.

Figure 17.1. Patterns of Written Discourse (Kaplan, 1966:14).



- Academic English writing

appropriate language



clear ideas



good organization

your
ideas

ideas from
other sources

good writing