



WRITING SKILLS

THE WRITING PROCESS (this section relates directly to writing the term paper).

The writing process is that chain of events and actions that starts from the conception of a writing idea/task and ends with a finished, well-written and properly edited text. This includes choosing or narrowing a topic; gathering materials from different sources; selecting the useful materials; preparing an outline; writing the major parts of the term paper (Introduction; Body; Conclusion; Recommendation and References) drafting; peer/other evaluation; re-drafting; editing and writing a clear copy/word processing.

1. Choosing or Narrowing a Topic

You may be required to choose your own topic but usually a topic is assigned to you and you have to focus on a particular aspect. Let us choose a general topic "**Environmental Pollution**". This is a very wide topic that will be difficult to write on in a 5 - 10 page assignment. You have to decide the particular focus of your writing.

There are several parameters that can be used to narrow a topic. Two will be discussed here. They are tempo-spatial -considerations and picking a subset. Tempo-spatial considerations have to do with time and location (tempo from Latin this refers to time; spatial, adjective for space). All events occur in time and space. By specifying a point in time and a place in space, you narrow your topic. The general topic '**Environmental Pollution**' now becomes "**Environmental Pollution in the Niger Delta between 1995 and 1999**".

The time and space can be as narrow as you wish. The time could be as narrow as a week, a day or a few hours, depending on the event you are writing about. The place could be as large as FUTA or as small as Abiola Hall. Your final topic could then be **Environmental Pollution in Abiola Mall in 2003**.

Our 'final' topic is no doubt still very wide. Even though time and space have been narrowed, the topic implies you have to write everything about **Environmental Pollution (E.P)** . To deal with this you must choose a subset of the topic. For **E.P** the different aspects include **types, causes, effects control and so on**. If you choose as your focus **TYPES** then you may end up writing on "**Land Pollution in Abiola Hall etc**".

TASK (A) Choose two of the topics below and narrow them using tempo-spatial Parameters.

- i The Economy
- ii. Waste Management
- iii. Weather
- iv. AIDS

- (B) Of the two you have chosen, further narrow one topic by picking a very small subset.
- (C) Compare your final topic with that of your friend.

You may choose to write about the health problems caused by air pollution if, as an asthmatic, you have had some of these problems yourself. An Ogoni living at home is best placed to write on the environmental impact of crude oil prospecting. This way, your experience will be of advantage to you. Apart from experience, one's interest can lead him/her to choose a particular topic. Your interest can lead you to look for information in an area in which you have no experience. Getting information leads to knowledge. It is not impossible that you may have knowledge in an area in which you have neither experience nor interest. But if you do not have knowledge of a topic, then you can look for information from different sources.

2. Gathering Materials from different sources

Everyone working on a topic needs to gather materials from different sources to make up for gaps in knowledge. You may also need to corroborate facts you already know, crosscheck facts and data, find out different sides of an argument and so on. So where can you go? A library is a good place to start:

TASK: - Make a list:

What kinds of resources are available in a library?

What kinds of books and audio-visual resources are available?

What kinds of information can you get from the media? From the Internet?

SELECTING AND ARRANGING INFORMATION

Having consulted many sources of information, you will probably have more information that you can use. You will therefore need to pick what you need and arrange it in an order that is logical and that adequately develops your message. Information on outlining is presented below:

OUTLINING

A. Definition

An outline provides formal and detailed information of the content and structure of a written or spoken text. We say it is formal because it is constructed according to some rules and it is detailed because it contains all the important ideas of the communication.

B. Purpose

It presents the key ideas and important details in a text as well as the relationships between these ideas. An outline is useful for the following: planning and writing assignments; preparing for examinations; taking and making notes; summarizing; studying etc.

C. Construction

An outline must accurately represent the structure of the material in question as well as the relationships between the ideas it contains. This suggests that the major divisions and minor subdivisions of your outline must correspond exactly with the main ideas and the important details of the material. In addition, the relationship between the main ideas and the important details must match the relationships expressed in the material.

D. Labelling

To label the various divisions of the outline, you use different sets of symbols to represent different levels of ideas. You may decide to use one of these: **I, II, III; or A, B, C; or 1, 2, 3** to illustrate your main idea. A popularly used system of notation consists of the use of Arabic numerals to number ideas and full stops indicate the subdivisions of the ideas. An example has been done for you below:

1. Main division

- 1.1 Subdivision
 - 1.1.1 Minor subdivision

2. Main division

- 2.1 Subdivision of 2
 - 2.1.1 Minor subdivision of 2.1
- 2.2 Another subdivision of 2
 - 2.2.1 Minor subdivision of 2
- 2.3 Yet another subdivision of 2
 - 2.3.1 Minor subdivision of 2.3
 - 2.3.2 Another minor subdivision of 2 3

3. Main division

- 3.1 Subdivision of 3
 - 3.1.1 Minor subdivision of 3.1
 - 3.1.2 Another minor
- 3.2 Another subdivision of 3
- 3.3 Yet another subdivision of 3

E. Rules

- i. Each new division is indented more than the preceding division.
- ii. All entries of the same level will be indented the same number of spaces.
- iii. All entries on any given level of division in the outline must have the same grammatical form. That is, if the entry for the first component is a sentence, then other equivalent entries must be sentences.

F. How to write a good outline

- i. **Try to understand the text.** This involves using the heading or topic to anticipate what the author will mention in the text, e.g. if the text is titled "**Earthquakes**", begin to anticipate how you think the author will develop the theme. Some of the things he may mention may include-definition of earthquakes, causes of earthquakes, severity of earthquakes, consequences of earthquakes, areas prone to earthquakes etc. Some of the words he may use could include-tremor, active, Richter scale, destruction, magnitude, amplitude, effect etc. From trying to generate the meaning globally try to use things like chunks of paragraphs, important sentences like topic sentences, phrases, signal words etc. to generate more meaning. This means that you will be moving from the global to the specific; the more specific, and back to the global again to check your comprehension.

ii. Then **try to understand the organisation of the text**. Watch for topic sentences, subdivisions of ideas, details etc. Remember that your topic sentences occupy the initial position in some cases -not all. Occasionally they appear in the middle or end of paragraphs, so think! Your topic sentence contains the main ideas or important details of your paragraph. Other sentences merely develop, amplify, exemplify or illustrate these ideas. Signal words are vital too -they communicate the direction of an author's thoughts or ideas e.g. "**in fact**" suggests that more specific information is being added to the preceding statement; "**still**" introduces unexpected information and "**furthermore**" introduces the next item in a list; it may also introduce more important or more specific information about the previous item.

iii. You may need to draw a flowchart that will help to illustrate the structure of your text in a graphic form and present your ideas and the relationships between them.

Drafting

Your **outline should be a statement of the structure and content of your essay**. Your **first draft is a re-working of that structure and content into paragraphs**. A paragraph comprises a string of sentences expressing and logically developing one main point. The sentence that expresses that main point or core idea is called the topic sentence. This usually comes at the beginning of the paragraph, where it states the core idea and all subsequent sentences develop that idea by re-defining, explaining, restating or exemplifying the core idea. Sometimes, the topic sentence may come last, as a conclusion to the paragraph. (See the section on The Paragraph). It is necessary to know how to develop your paragraphs. Medubi (1996) quoting Trimble (1985) describes four methods of paragraph development resulting in four types of paragraphs.

(i) In the **deductive paragraph** the topic sentence is at, or near the beginning of the paragraph. The remaining sentences supply supporting information. E.g.

Industry produces a large number of hazardous metal wastes. There are five extremely dangerous ones: lead, cadmium, mercury, chromium and arsenic. Breathing in even tiny quantities of these metals damages the lungs.

(ii) In the **inductive paragraph** the topic sentence is at, or near the end, and the preceding sentences give reasons for the generalization made at the end. E. g.

Many of the world's rivers and lakes are devoid of marine life-killed by industrial Waste. The amount of lead in the bodies of urban dwellers is dangerously high. Millions of factory workers live with hearing impairment. So it is high time man started tackling his pollution problem with the seriousness it deserves.

(iii) In the **hybrid paragraph** inductive statements precede the topic sentence, and deductive statements follow it. *ie - in middle*

(iv) The **implicit paragraph** does not have a topic sentence, but the core idea can be inferred by the reader. For purposes of academic writing, types I and II are preferred.

Task: Improve on the outline presented below. Pay special attention to: the schematic structure; labelling and relevant aspects of grammar.

Effects of High Temperature on Horticultural Crops in Ikere Ekiti in 2008.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 General Overview
- 1.2 Definition of terms
- Area under Consideration
- 1.4 Aim of Study
- 1.5 Scope of Work

2.0 Causes of high temperature

Low rainfall
Deforestation

3.0 Effect of high temperature on horticultural crops

- 3.1 Increase in rate of transpire
- 3.2 Delayed photosynthesis process
- 3.3 Reduce in quantity and yield
- 3.4 poor water and nutrient absorption
- 3.5 Slow enzymic activity

4.0 Control measures

- 4.1 irrigating
- 4.2 afforestation
- 4.3 Mulching

5.0 conclusion

6.0 Recommendation

References

Adapted from: GNS 102 assignment submitted by-Agboola, O.Y; Ojebile, O.P; Akinrotimi, B.J.; Ojolo, G.T; Ganiyu, M.A; Okeke, O.D- 2008.

WRITING SKILLS II

WRITING INTRODUCTIONS

This is an advanced indicator of the content and in some cases the structure of the rest of the paper (term paper & other forms of academic writing). The introduction is where you make a first impression on your readership. The frame below will help you to view your introductions as having four communicative parts or moves:

- MOVE 1: Presents a general overview of your writing.
- MOVE 2: Defines key terms e.g. earthquakes, climate change, water pollution, etc.
- MOVE 3: Mentions the area (location) under consideration (or discussion).
- MOVE 4: Presents the aim of the study or investigation.
- MOVE 5: Presents the scope or structure of the study- this is optional. See the end of the introductory segment of the passage on Mariculture.

The four move structure is illustrated in the introduction below:

COLLECTION OF SOLID WASTE AT ONYEARUGBULEM MARKET, AKURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Collection of solid waste has become one of the most serious problems in **Onyearugbulem** market in Akure. Solid waste is defined as 'unwanted or unusable items, remains or by products or household garbage such as bones of meat, vegetable leaves, husk of food, fish fins and tails, containers of canned food and fruit items etc' (Encarta, 2009). Waste collection is defined as ' the gathering, transportation and hauling away of waste materials' (Wikipedia, 2009). Oyearugbulem market is located in the eastern part of Akure town ship. It is a local market that was set up in the late 1990s by Navy Captain Anthony Ibe Oyearugbulem. The market has a sloppy topography and a stream flows besides it. Akure is the administrative headquarter of Ondo State. This paper focuses on the collection of solid waste in Oyearugbulem market in Akure.

The moves are illustrated below:

{Collection of solid waste has become one of the most serious problems in Oyearugbulem market in Akure= **MOVE 1 (general overview)**

{Solid waste is defined as 'unwanted or unusable items, remains or by products or household garbage such as bones of meat, vegetable leaves, husk of food, fish fins and tails, containers of canned food



and fruit items etc' (Encarta, 2009). Waste collection is defined as 'the gathering, transportation and hauling away of waste materials' (Wikipedia, 2009) = **MOVE 2 (definition of terms).**

Oyearugbulem market is located in the eastern part of Akure town ship. It is a local market that was set up in the late 1990s by Navy Captain Anthony Ibe Oyearugbulem. The market has a sloppy topography and a stream flows besides it. Akure is the administrative headquarter of Ondo State= **MOVE 3 (area under consideration)**

{This paper focuses on the collection of solid waste in Oyearugbulem market in Akure= **MOVE 4 (aim of study).**

Tense Form: generally the present simple tense is used. The aim of the study could take forms like-

This paper reports on.....

The aim of this report.....

This investigation considers.....

The Body: A properly written outline will help you structure the body of your work well. It is an expansion of the outline. Here you develop the points you highlighted in your outline. As you write make use of the conventions of good paragraphing and note relevant aspects of grammar.

Task: An outline (not very well formatted but good content) and introduction of a paper on waste management are presented below. Note the following: topic selection; schematic arrangement i.e. relationship between major ideas, minor ideas and supporting details; notations used. Write aspects of the body labeled 2.0; 2.1 and 2.2 in the outline in one paragraph. Improve on the introduction, notations and indentation presented below; take into account the moves of writing the introduction of a term paper.

A TERM PAPER ON A PROPOSAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SANITARY LANDFILL FOR REDEMPTION STREET, FUTA AREA, AKURE, ONDO STATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Overview

1.2 Definition of Terms

1.3 Area under Consideration

1.4 Aim of Study

2.0 CURRENT DISPOSAL METHODS IN USE

2.1 Burning

2.2 Indiscriminate Dumping

3.0 EFFECT OF IMPROPER DISPOSAL METHODS

3.1 Effect on the Environment

3.1.1 Land Pollution

3.1.2 Water Pollution

3.1.3 Air Pollution

3.2 Effect on Human Health

3.2.1 Breakout of Disease



- a) Malaria
- b) Typhoid
- c) Cholera
- 3.2.2 High Rate of Mortality
- 4.0 PROPOSED METHOD OF DISPOSAL**
- 4.1 Use of Sanitary Landfill
- 4.1.1 Construction Requirements
- a) Viability of Site
- b) Topography of the Site
- c) Capacity of the Landfill
- d) Design of the Landfill
- 5.0 ADVANTAGES OF A SANITARY LANDFILL**
- 5.1 Protection of Public Health and Environment
- 5.2 Minimization of Fire Hazards
- 5.3 Reduction of Land and Water Contamination
- 5.4 Production of Useful Gases
- 5.4.1 Biogas
- 5.4.2 Methane
- 5.4.3 Ethanol
- 6.0 DEMERITS OF A SANITARY LANDFILL**
- 6.1 High Cost of Design and Construction
- 6.2 Reduction in Real Estate Value of the Nearby Area
- 7.0 CONCLUSION**
- 8.0 RECOMMENDATION**
- REFERENCES**

A PROPOSAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SANITARY LANDFILL FOR REDEMPTION STREET, FUTA AREA, ONDO STATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the indiscriminate dumping of refuse and litters at Redemption street has become an issue of great concern. The delay in the collection and disposal of municipal waste in the street constitutes a severe threat to public health and the environment. Thus, the construction of a sanitary landfill will address the improper disposal of waste in Redemption Street. A landfill is a site for the disposal of waste materials by burial (Wikipedia). A sanitary landfill is a modern method of dumping of municipal solid waste using an engineering facility that requires detailed planning and specification, careful construction, and efficient operation (O'Leary and Walsh, 1991). Redemption Street is located at the west side of FUTA south gate, a major residential area for students. This paper presents a proposal for the construction of a sanitary landfill.

Adapted from: GNS 102 Assignment submitted by- Mustapha, I; Irumekhai, I; Ogunfowote, G.D; Iso, M.O; Fasola, T.S (2009)

Conclusion: This section summarises the work. The idea of moves will help you write a good conclusion as well.



Move 1: Takes you back to the aim of the study, i.e. re-state what the original aim was and how you have fulfilled the aim

Move 2: Relates to the body of the work. You present the ideas in the sequence in which they were presented in the outline.

Move 3: You present your summary here.

The verb form is the past tense since the paper is a report of a study carried out.

Recommendation: Here you give advice based on the research conducted. Start this section with a preamble which relates directly to the aim of the study. The rest of this section will be a series of advice which follow from the preamble e.g.

This paper presented a proposal for the construction of a sanitary landfill for Redemption Street, FUTA Area. On the basis of this, the following recommendations are made/presented/proffered:

The government should.....(you are giving advice here therefore, the verb form and word used must reflect this).

References

You will find materials for this in the FUTA learning site.