An Academic Report Standard

with illustrations and partial explanations
Version 0.4i

Standard

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Abstract

In the academic world texts flourish. Yet, simple showcases of basic technical requirements on academic texts are difficult to spell out. They are difficult to detail because, for academics, they are so self-evident. This text showcases and explains a standard for academic writing. The text exemplifies how technically correct writing achieves accountability within the academic world.

Keywords: academic writing, essay writing, academic reports, standardisation, accountability

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Contents

A very short introduction

This text attempts to support you in your learning process to write better – to be able to excel in your writing. The following sections present standards of good writing – including explanations and illustrations. The text is rich of references to websites and freely accessible literature. This allows you to identify examples elsewhere. I restrict myself to sharing basic examples to keep this readable (otherwise I would have to confront you with a book). The best introductory line comes from a former student who wrote 'I love the document. I think it's a good learning tool and something the students can go back to and check out' (well, I admit, I slightly edited this quote).

1 The more detailed introduction

How to explicate basic 'technical' requirements on an academic report – be it an essay or a thesis? This text approaches this question by highlighting, literally *showing*, key characteristics of what the author considers to be 'basic' and 'technical'. Showing the basic and the technical, this text recognises, performs and positions, i. e. defines and takes part in shaping a reality in which 'characteristics', the 'basic' and the 'technical' exist. The objectives of this document, in other words, are a) to explicate the criteria of the basic, technical requirements on academic writing, b) to illustrate how these criteria can be met and c) to make visible the very process of defining the set of criteria as a standard. In support of meeting these objectives this document and its resources are offered as a material that can be read, that can be deconstructed and that can be rewritten.

This document sets out from several years of experience of transdisciplinary teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate level in Europe and in Asia. These are the author's experiences, i. e., my experiences. At the outset of this standardisation document the document introduces the 'I' – I, the author. I invite you to read this document as emerging from my experiences about learning and teaching how to write well. Learning, after all, is what university might all be about.[1]

Before I set out to the task, here are my cautions, i. e. caveats. First, this text attempts to explicate *my* standard. Most certainly I have not

[1]Well, 'all' is much too simplistic a claim. Studies of higher education indicate a range of roles of university life, including but not limited to strengthening the neoliberalisation of societal relations, the accumulation of symbolic capital, marriage (see Bourdieu 1996; Giroux 2002; Reay 2004; Stevens, Armstrong and Arum 2008).

succeeded in completely explicating it. It will be transformed in interactions with its readers and 'implementing' community. This standard is not a universal standard. However, it is not completely individual either. The standard is positioned between writing in sociology and science and technology studies, and in relation to my socialisation within science (grown up in a family that included a biological taxonomist, a molecular biologist, a veterinarian, and a mathematician – and by the co-formation of an academic habitus in my first degree at a science and engineering faculty). Second, this text does not substitute an engagement with the relation of academic thinking, reading and writing. On the latter I recommend you to read Jones, Quinn and Brown's (2010) open access book. Third, if you have never looked into a social science essay beforehand, I urge you to check the details of layout and writing convention exemplified by Online Writing Lab (2014).

In the following I first attend to the author's (i. e. a student's) own voice. The major body of this text engages with the relation to others' voices, such as academic authors and quotations from their texts. This involve turning to searching literature, to referencing and citing, to relating to authors and their texts, to quoting, paraphrasing and summarising. Subsequently I point briefly to three strategies of strengthening the author's voice. The paper ends with repositioning the paper as a prescriptive device.

2 The author's voice

As you, dear reader, have encountered, this document is written by an 'I'. Whether we are, or become, or not, a 'we' is a completely different kind of question. I do not claim that we are interested in thinking about the author's voice. However, I can be certain that I am interested in this theme. Why is that? I am interested in who speaks and who writes, who makes claims about the world.

In much academic writing some impersonal voice brings forward claims about reality. You may know that style, maybe best from the sciences (consider, e. g., 'On earth we have gravity'). In that dominant genre the world is known. 'We know that ....' You would find these formulations all over recent pasts – some more or less arbitrary examples are, in these single-authored, texts

- by Bilsing (1920, 215): 'we find that spiders as a group surpass all the other orders of Arachnida';

- by Nordhaus (1975, 170): 'Continuing the system in footnote 1, above, we know that comparing two stationary points, the actual rate of inflation (π) must equal the expected';

- by Aizawa (2014, 14): 'in several cases we find that those who embrace the operationalist approach at one point will also embrace alternatives at other points'.

Often the 'we' is absent, just offering the claim as if 'seen from nowhere'.[2] Consider a statement like 'In democracies the people are in power', or for that matter 'In companies the managers are in power'. Everybody agrees. Does everybody?

Feminists have developed a specific sensibility for claims that make universal(ising) claims. In feminist epistemology discussions, scholars and activists developed a concern for asking who is making knowledge claims, who is represented in them and who is excluded (Haraway 1988; Code 1993; Nelson 1993). Who becomes the exception, who is 'we' and who isn't? For my discussion here it suffices to say that I have been convinced by their critique. I am comfortable to claim that in my understanding of reality, reality is always known by *somebody*, not by nobody, it is known from *somewhere*, not from nowhere. And in this discussion an ethics emerges: Haraway (1988, 583) argues that '[i]rresponsible means unable to be called into account'. I read this as proposing that we, the authors, can only make responsible knowledge claims if we allow the readers/our audiences/others to call us to account for our claims; we ought to be answerable to their questions.

At this point I need to make explicit that, following this line of argument, a text ought not be written without making explicit who is speaking/writing. The 'ought' expresses the ethics, the normative standpoint, the politics. I demand from others as much as I demand from myself to make our presence in our texts visible (and of course I, or you, may partially or completely fail in this quest; however, in this respect I define partial failure

[2]I trace the notion 'view from nowhere' back to Nagel's (1986) book titled *The View From Nowhere.* A well accessible text to his philosophical discussion of science and knowledge has been authored by Avramides. Avramides (2006, 230) summarises Nagel's discussion of the knowledge claims of physics: The 'physical conception of objectivity has certain important features: it is centreless, and it is featureless (p. 14). It contains "no points of view and nothing that can appear only to a particular point of view" (p. 15). ... By definition, the objective conception leaves out specific viewpoints and perceptions. Nagel insists that, as perceptions and viewpoints must be taken to exist, we should conclude that the physical conception of objectivity is incomplete.' Interestingly, with Google's *Ngram Viewer* I perceive the notion's use as closely resembling the career of the notion 'feminist epistemology' or the reference to Donna Haraway.

as preferable over grossly ignoring this demand). This is not neutral. This is politics in the midst of writing.[3] And, to make the issue even more pressing, it is not possible to write neutrally. Of course one can technically write from a position of seeing reality neutrally, *as if* from nowhere. However, this genre a) reproduces a politics that makes knowledge-claimers invisible and, therefore, more difficult to call them to account and b) incorrectly pretends its claims to be unproblematic while the very 'we' or the absence of the author renders the statements problematic.

It follows then a technical prescription: You are to formulate texts in a way that does not hide your authorship but keeps your authorship and your responsibility for the text present throughout your text.

'How to keep my authorship present in the text?', you may ask yourself now. I propose that you use the first person singular if you write alone; and if you co-author a text with others then, of course, it gets tricky because you rightfully can claim a 'we'. In the latter case, then, you need to find ways of qualifying that identifier.[4] Who is the 'we'? Which 'we' are you referring to when you use it? Two scholars who offer some guidance of how to use own voices in texts are Ellis and Bochner (2000). In their chapter 'Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject' they simultaneously show and explain how it is useful and generative to write in the first person.

Interwoven with making yourself visible in writing (without following into excessive celebrations of the self[5]) are most likely references to others and some entities you might want to present as seen 'out there'. In the following, therefore, I turn to possibilities of relating to academic voices, understandings and ideas – that you probably have to engage with.

3 Academics' voices

Drawing on Swales (1990, 148), I suggest we understand academic writing, in the English-speaking world and beyond, as very much characterised by citing, referring and quoting – needed to characterise the territory within

[3]The politics looms also in the unequal distribution of the prerequisites to making one's identity present in the text; or so at least Hyland (2002) argues. He suggests that second language English speakers are differently positioned with respect to how they make themselves visible compared to those who speak English as a mother tongue.

[4]Consider the discussion on multiple 'we' by Endaltseva and Jerak-Zuiderent (2021). They discuss the 'we' that composes an ethnographic analysis and indicate relevant further readings on the 'we'.

[5]For discussions of the nuances of writing about yourself and your relation to the realities you study see Strathern (1987) and Maguire (2006).

which the author is operating. Here is a two-fold reasoning: First, normally scholars converse with other scholars. They are influenced by their ideas and are committed to making recognisable with whom they are in a conversation or who lends them support for their claims. Latour (1987), for example, spells out how scientists weave into their knowledge claims other scientists' voices. Second, even if the author is not actually engaging with others' work, the author may still stage their work as relevant precisely by referring to others, in particular well-accepted scholars. In the latter I identify a source of a particular politics: already well-cited scholars (their publications) are more likely to be cited than less known scholars/publications (Börner, Maru and Goldstone 2004, 5273). In either way, bibliometric studies scholars see academics as increasingly collaborating, expressed in quantities and qualities of explicitly linking to each other (Borgman and Furner 2002, 55).

If practices designated as citing, referencing and quoting are so central to academic writing – and academic work – it should not surprise that the ways of how one performs these practices are tightly monitored. So it happens that academic journals and publishing houses as well as many universities clarify in fine detail how relations to literature are to be conducted (see for instance Dowdey 1992; Goldsmith Library 2019). However, before I attend to these details, let me briefly attend to the theme of identifying 'appropriate' literature.

3.1 (Re)Searching and Reviewing Literature

Identifying the literature that speaks to the same empirical topic of interest, to the same theory, method or methodology or the literature that problematises the author's take is key to academic writing. Substantively, I propose, identifying and closely engaging with the relevant literature is helpful because it allows the scholar to develop a more nuanced understanding of her or his study. However, even if a scholar does not care about the nuances of understanding, academic institutions still evaluate studies in terms of how well the study has been positioned in relation to the relevant literature. Independently of your relation to your study, engaging with the literature is likely helpful in ensuring that you know how your text might be read (as part of your audiences may be well-read in the field you are working in); and, for your equipment with this knowledge, you can assess the risks and chances of pursuing particular scholarly takes. You can also consider that only by investing your time into getting to know your field's literature,

you can increase your efficiency (if you like to save time), as knowing the literature will help you to not waste time and word-space on re-establishing something that you can easily summarise by briefly reviewing the relevant texts. All this boils down to: whether you are intrinsically motivated or 'merely' want to perform well enough, you will have to a) identify the relevant literature, b) engage with the content and c) offer the audience an account that evidences that you have actually appropriately identified and engaged with the literature. The doing of a literature review is, unfortunately, not widely explicated. A helpful resource for the uninitiated is Hart's (2001) textbook. He summarises:

> Initially we can say that a review of the literature is important because without it you will not acquire an understanding of your topic, of what has already been done on it, how it has been researched, and what the key issues are. In your written project you will be expected to show that you understand previous research on your topic. This amounts to showing that you have understood the main theories in the subject area and how they have been applied and developed, as well as the main criticisms that have been made of work on the topic. The review is therefore a part of your academic development – of becoming an expert in the field. (1)

Researching and reviewing literature is not just about listening the abstracts of articles and books; the process is about tracing the relations within and between texts. The practice of tracing and reconstructing argumentative relations has a performative effect: you will be able to position your own considerations in relation to other authors' voices.

Of course the precise demands about how well a student is expected to review the relevant literature depends on a variety of considerations. For my part, here are some indicative expectation. Junior bachelor students need to learn to reproduce, understand and reconstruct academic texts. By the end of the undergraduate degree, students need to show that they themselves have moved considerably beyond the mere understanding and reconstruction of academic texts. Now I also expect them to identify key literatures for narrowly defined research projects. At master level, students need to learn to actively develop relational understandings of texts within subfields and between disparate fields. Which texts do relate in what ways? Students, at this point, need to train themselves in working through larger amounts of texts to identify e. g. counter arguments, missing links, critiques in relation to their field. They also need to show that they are able to dive

into texts, actively work with the referenced texts, question and reconstruct or problematise the primary text's relation to the sources referred to. This implies that a master student needs to be able to account for the intertextual construction of constitutive monographs in the field. At the entry of a PhD, the respective junior scholar is expected to be familiar with the broader landscape of the field they would do their PhD in. Literature-wise, a key and normally multi-year quest is to then develop the ability to develop a study that can be positioned in relation to the broader landscape, making explicit in what respects the study problematises or adds to the field.

At the concrete level of practical work, working with literature requires to position the different texts' understandings vis-à-vis each other. The students' task, thus, is one of comparative order. Practically, to narrow down literature search, it is of definite help to position one's study. Whether searching in an academic database or on google scholar, or even by verbally querying a scholar, it is helpful to specify the study's position through reference points, like author's names, key monographs' titles or significant concepts in the empirical, theoretical, methodological realm. Table 1 (on the following page) illustrates the effectiveness of such searching (results from 13/7/2014).

Significantly, no uniform way of defining *what* the relevant literature is exists. Some fields lean to emphasising how a study links to the field's classics, other fields prioritise showing how a study links to the most recent publications (Hargens 2000). While you have to show both (relation to classics and to the most recent publications), what is valued more depends on the dynamics in your field. The latter means that you have to explore your preferred field identifications and you have to research what their respective literature linking dynamics are.

3.2 Referencing and citing

It might sound simplistic and overly obvious: You need to cite all sources. This statement has five components:

1. you,
2. need to,
3. cite,
4. all,
5. sources.

Table 1: Amount of texts found from Google Scholar, Sage and JSTOR

Engine	Strings	Hits
Google	car	≈ 4,260,000
Google	car, 'information technology'	≈ 199,000
Google	car, 'information technology', accountability	≈ 35,000
Google	car, 'information technology', accountability, Suchman	≈ 1,020
Google	car, 'information technology', accountability, Suchman, Neyland	14
Google	car, 'information technology', accountability, Suchman, Neyland, relationality, partial	5
Sage	car	108,870
Sage	car, 'information technology'	2,900
Sage	car, 'information technology', accountability	389
Sage	car, 'information technology', accountability, Suchman	11
Sage	car, 'information technology', accountability, Suchman, Neyland	2
JSTOR	car	75,817
JSTOR	car, 'information technology'	408
JSTOR	car, 'information technology', accountability	72
JSTOR	car, 'information technology', accountability, Suchman	78
JSTOR	car, 'information technology', accountability, Suchman, Neyland	1

The risk of (un)intentionally plagiarising can be contained when all these five components are well understood. I set out from component 1, 'you'; then I first discuss the seemingly technical components 3 as well as 5; and subsequently I turn to the ambiguity of 2 and 4, i. e., the normative boundary-drawing around what is a necessary part of 'all'.

It is highly relevant that you, as an author, take responsibility for how you relate to the voices you bring into the texts, the other authors. Even if other people do not reference properly this does not imply that the demands on you would be lowered. Indeed, you need to carefully pay attention about how you draw on others and how you write them into your text.

As a prerequisite of getting referencing and citing right, you need to be familiar, comprehend and apply technical referencing and citation stan-

dards. For the purposes of this document and my teaching, I prefer the Chicago Standard as the standard.[6] This standard, entitled 'The Chicago Manual of Style' (in short CMS), contains specifications of how particular types of media are to be referenced and how references are to be inserted into the text (Wikipedia 2014a; see CMS 2014b; Online Writing Lab 2014). As this standard, in itself, allows for a variety of styles, I shall prescribe that you implement an author-date style. It follows an illustration. '[W]e caution students to record all bibliographical information each time they identify or use a source' (Turabian, Colomb and Williams 2021, 14). North Carolina State University (2014) and Cornell University (2014) both offer a distinction between the notions 'documentation', 'citation' and 'reference'. Between my announcement 'It follows an illustration' and this sentence, two types of literature relations exist. Let me spell these out.

A quote In the first sentence I introduce a quote from a text. My text cites this other text through a reference '(Turabian, Colomb and Williams 2021, 14)'. This reference consists of the text's authors, a year and a printed page number.[7] The authors' point is cited in the form of a quote. I, however, have altered this quote. To indicate the change I have used square brackets, i. e. '[. . .]'. You have to use such square brackets whenever you change something within a quote.

Paraphrase The second sentence takes the form of a paraphrase. I summarise what the two authors say or do in their text. In this case, the authors are institutional authors. Still, the author is named and a year information is provided to link to the reference in the References section at the end of this document. Page number or alternative specifiers are missing in this case because the sources are short webpages.

The practice of making visible an idea or point *from* somebody else is called citing. Whenever you cite, you also have to make recognisable to the reader *that* you have cited by means of referencing the cited idea or point. The

[6] for the history of the CMS see, e. g., Schaefer (2013) and Wikipedia (2014a)

[7] Note that some documents have different page numbers than the technical page numbers of a file you have. For instance, you might have a journal article that has printed page numbers from page 1432 to 1439; and p. 1432 is the first technical pdf page. More complicated, in some digitalised, OCRed, documents, e. g. book chapters, the page number is printed into the text similar to the form of `[p. 115 ↓ ]`, which precedes the text showing up on the page of the original book publication. Always cite the printed page. If the document does not have printed page numbers, check for other printed elements, e. g. paragraph numbers or sections, and, in the last resort, use the non-printed technical page numbers of a file.

reference has to link to a detailed bibliographic entry in the References section.

The layout of the References section is standardised in much detail that you have to closely engage with – to get the form right. However, with as ethnomethodological points and finitism I note that no standard can regulate everything absolutely.[8] In the absence of a universal rule I point you to three authoritative sources you can use to understand the correct form of handling bibliographic entries in the References section. First, you can and should use CMS's (2014b) own website; further you can use Online Writing Lab's (2014) and the Biblatex implementation of CMS introduced by Fussner (2021, 7–15). These sources contain sufficient specification; but I still like to offer you examples for bibliographic entries.

for a journal article Haraway, Donna. 1988. 'Situated Knowledges: the Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective'. *Feminist Studies* 14 (Autumn): 575–99. doi:bvtwq4

for a book Hart, Chris. 2001. *Doing a literature search: a comprehensive guide for the social sciences*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Dehli: Sage

for a webpage without a personal author Goldsmith Library. 2021. 'Referencing'. Accessed 25 November 2019. https://www.gold.ac.uk/library/subjectsupport/referencing/.

With respect to referencing online sources, especially websites, the 17th CMS recommends providing information that helps to understand the web resource status and to identify possibly archived versions. Both for yourself and for your reader, I recommend you archive online resources, ideally online,[9] alternatively offline.[10] Therefore, an URL may be complemented with information like '(site discontinued)' and with an indicator of an archived version, such as in this case:

a webpage with an archived version, no personal author Goldsmith Library. 2019. 'Referencing'. Accessed 25 November 2019. https:

[8]For introductory literature on the impossibility of effectively universal prescriptions see for instance Sharrock and Button 1999; MacKenzie 2006; Suchman 2007, 79; for the foundations, see Barnes 1982; and on Wittgenstein, in particular, see Rodych 2011.

[9]For free online archiving of webpages, you can use the Wayback Machine at https://web.archive.org/, which is provided by the Internet Archive.

[10]For offline archiving of text, simply 'print' the website into a pdf file and store that for later (re)use, or, for dynamic pages, produce a screencast of your interaction with the website.

//www.gold.ac.uk/library/subjectsupport/referencing/, archived at https://web.archive.org/web/20191125121525/https://www.gold.ac.uk/library/subjectsupport/referencing/ on 25 November 2019.

The CMS contains many more specifications, for music records, newspapers, magazines. Check it out. The layout itself is also specified. References sections do not, for example, include bullet pointed lists.

Once you can implement the standard well you can start thinking about what may not be necessary to reference. But let me start from what you need to reference. First, *everything* that you look up for the purposes of a text needs to be referenced. This includes, amongst other sources, websites like Wikipedia or dictionary.cambridge.org. Second, if you think you know something that is self-evident and does not need to be referenced, ask yourself: Where is actually a reliable and sufficiently critical source on this 'self-evident' point? What and where is the evidence? Academic writing is very much about *questioning the ground of your assumptions*. Third, you can consider that as a student you have still to prove that you can actually dig up the facts. While some big names authors do not show all their sources, that behaviour does not legitimise you to not show all your sources. Further, do engage with the kinds of facts usually questioned by your lecturers or in your field. For example, in a course that takes as its object accounts of reality or fact-making, you can assume that even 'public' facts may need to be opened up.[11] A case is the 'fact' that humans come in two biological forms, females and males. In a class that questions fact-making, you have to question this very fact.[12] To support your engagement, look for literature on all these themes; cite and references accordingly.

Whatever your claims are, you need to argue for them or at least show evidence. Your text should not be a collection of assumptions but an exposition of careful research on the text's topic. This matters for all parts of your text. Consider introductions: often I read introductory ungrounded claims by students about why their topic is relevant. For instance I read sentences that set out from 'nowadays technology shapes how people relate'. Such a claim needs to be backed up historically: what is specific of 'nowadays', 'technology', 'people'? It is always worth to write to the point you can actually argue for.

[11]This also runs counter to the suggestion by some guides that those statements 'that belong to the basic knowledge' (ATW 2021) do not need to be referenced. I insist that all sourced wordings need to be referenced, and relevant premises need to be evidenced.

[12]On the theme of sex differences in humans, see e. g. Haraway's (1991) and Blackless et al.'s (2000) critique of the assumed binary structure of humans as male and female.

Plagiarism is the use of ideas or points (both analytic and conclusive) from others without or with insufficient indication of the form of *how* you enlist their ideas or points and *where* the reference can be found.

3.3 Relating to authors and texts

All texts are effects – effects of various actors, statements and their relations, producing them. Often enough it is possible to figure out who the author is – a discursively clearly marked position. It is your task to provide your readers with intelligible links to the authors (that you relate to). I shall briefly attend to different kinds of actors involved in text production – all of whom you could reasonably relate to (reasonably, however, does not mean arbitrarily). Subsequently, I turn to how to name and relate to authors and their products.

A caveat before I move into the technicality. Who is the author? The question seems easy enough. To answer it we have to know, of course, what an author is, how an author is constituted. This is a concern raised by Foucault's (1980) lecture 'What is an Author?' Continuing this line of questioning Latour (1987) engages the production of authorship in the laboratory. Engaging with this concern can be highly interesting, problematising and transformative. You will encounter the intellectual and legal risks, ranging to religious matters and property rights: who takes the risk for a statement, whom is credit due? If you pursue deep analyses you will find yourself engaging with it. In that case you are probably not reading this text anyway – or you might as well directly switch to engaging with Foucault's œvre. For this section, however, I shall assume that you first of all need to learn or confirm with the help of the present text how you can relate to an author – without problematising the author's very existence.

Texts that you need to cite may come in all kinds of forms. Text can be spoken (or sung) words, from a friend, your grandma, on a radio broadcast or an indymedia movie clip; text can come as still or moving images, a website, a newspaper, a poem, a poster, an academic journal, a book. These are just some of many examples. In many cultures you can find an indication of the author's identity at the top or at the bottom of a visible text, in the beginning or its end. Use such author information.

If you cannot identify an author easily, investigate how the text has been brought into presence wherever you encountered it. Consider a seemingly authorless website. Who is running the website? Who is running the server? Some old texts are anonymous. However, you might identify the editor of

the text or its translator. The CMS specifies how to cite all kinds of authors and other designators that can qualify as substitute in references.

Now I turn to the typical structure of Western names.[13] Western names have a given name and a family name. The default academic way to relate to authors is to use their family name. You can choose to also use their given name – this is fine, and can be read as a sign of respect, yet has the risk of being read as an accident or demonstration of limited skill (see also Harwood 2008). However, using only the given name to refer to an author would normally be perceived/read as presumptuous. In Western names the given name comes first, followed by the family name. Consider, for example, my name – a simple case: Ingmar Lippert. Ingmar is the given name; Lippert the family name. Here are more difficult cases: Names that have two (or more) given or family names.

Prefixes The author of *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography* is John Van Maanen. This name fits a particular pattern: The family name has a *prefix* 'van'. Prefixes are part of the name, and for in some names they are capitalised, in others not. You need to check. In the reference list, the family name starts with 'Van' because the prefix is part of the family name. In many European languages such prefixes exist, e. g. De, Du, Von, Van, ver, ter, Von der, zu, Da, Dos, z, af, ...[14] When citing the book cited above, you would have to cite the author/text as '(Van Maanen 1988)'.

Several given names A colleagues of mine is called Brit Ross Winthereik. If you cannot access the person personally and ask what their family name is, you will have to find another way. 'Today', you can in most cases use a simple MetaGer search or google scholar. Then you will have to identify the 'normal' way of how the person is referenced. An authoritative source are the respective person's own websites (if they have one). You can check how they list their own references. In this case, you would find on my colleague's university website[15] a list of the publications she authored or co-authored. And there she identifies herself as 'Winthereik, Brit Ross'. Thus, then you can cite her work, e. g. 'Ethnographic Stories as Generalizations that Intervene', as '(Winthereik and Verran 2012)'.

[13]This is, of course, a very limited realm – but for the practical purposes of this text it should suffice. I welcome your support in spelling these onomastic considerations out for other naming cultures.

[14]For a list of possibilities organised by language, see e. g. https://web.archive.org/web/20131120055420/http://www.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/entryele.htm.

[15]see https://web.archive.org/web/20170731054540/https://itu.dk/tip/author/brwi/

Several family names In some cultural-linguistic contexts, people have two family names, with or without a hyphen connecting these. For instance, in the Hispanic naming, family names are drawn from mother and father (Fernández and García 2003); in several legal cultures, half of married people are entitled towards hyphenated names (Boxer and Gritsenko 2005). Again, the easiest is you check how they list their own references.

Also, you should consider that authors usually have some form of gender identity or at least a normalised public performance of their gender. They are not all male. Many are male or female – but not all. Again, if not certain, search the internet for how the person is performing themselves or how others perform their gender. If unsure, you can use 'they'.[16]

If the text you cite has been produced by several authors, then, you need to count the number of authors. For up to three authors you have to name all authors (e. g. '(Benos, Kirk and Hall 2003)'). In other words, if a text has two author and you only refer to one of them you are not citing correctly. For more than three authors you cite only one author and indicate the presence of multiple co-authors with an 'et al.' but provide the complete list in the reference list (e. g. '(Blackless et al. 2000)').

Within the text you are writing, you can, and should always consider to, relate to the authors as people. So, at least, I read Jones, Quinn and Brown's (2010, 70) commentary on 'dropped citations'. Referencing their prescription back to the State University of New York at Geneseo Guide to Writing's *Section on Quotations*, they ask the student to *introduce* quotations: 'Quotations without introductions are called "dropped quotations".' (70, quotation marks and full stop changed to British English conventions) Within this paragraph you are seeing such an introduction. Compare the way I introduced their prescription to introduce quotations with the following paragraph in which I drop a quotation (a warning: the quote includes some code, which may be confusing to you, but it will become more clear afterwards).

The discussion so far looked at people. 'A. If your text is mainly meant to convey information, you can indicate italics _like this_ or <italic>like this</italic> or like this. If you want the text to display nicely, some applications allow you to use color or boldface or underlining. A last resort is to use all caps or quotation marks.' (CMS 2014a)

[16]Well, I admit, this seems to deviate from the Chicago Manual of Style; you can also say 'he or she' or only partially subvert this by 'she or he'. I speculate, the CMS does not seem to have encountered intersex people and queer realities yet.

The prior paragraph may be difficult to make sense of because its quotation has not been introduced. Let me revise it in the following. When relating to authors and their texts it can be evocative to bring the title of a cited text into the sentence – not just the authors' names. If you want to integrate a title into your sentence, then you need to differentiate whether the text is a freestanding source or something 'smaller', like an article, a chapter or a poem: titles of books, websites or freestanding publications are italicised (recall the reference to *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography* above); while article's (etc.) titles are enclosed in quotation marks (recall the reference to 'What is an Author?' above) (see UWC 2014). Recognising that the CMS is not fully conclusive, the standardisation organisation offers a FAQ. Responding to a question on how to cite a book's title when, for technical reasons, the author cannot italicise, (CMS 2014a) responds with a suggestion to use coding signs instead:

> If your text is mainly meant to convey information, you can indicate italics _like this_ or <italic>like this</italic> or like this. If you want the text to display nicely, some applications allow you to use color or boldface or underlining. A last resort is to use all caps or quotation marks.

The prior paragraph sits at the intersection between a discussion of citing titles and illustrating how to quote. The next section renders the latter more explicit.

3.4 Quoting, paraphrasing and summarising – and your relation to other authors' content

To relate to the content of what authors say you can offer quotations, you can paraphrase short passages or you can summarise their work. Inspired by Jones, Quinn and Brown (2010, Chapter 6) in this section I shall offer an example of plagiarism and then I explicate two very basic rules. Subsequently I turn to the qualitative integration of other authors' content into your written work.

Example

> Garfinkel's notion of 'accountability' does not, however, involve a relationship between two objects – an action, and the account of the action – but refers instead to the ways in which actions are organized: that is, put together as publicly observable, reportable occurrences. They are not only done, they are done so that they can be seen to have been done. The study of 'accountability' therefore focuses upon the way actions are done so as to make themselves identifiable within the social setting. (Button and Sharrock 1998, 75)

In the following I show versions of what a student might be writing – and for each of a students' version I offer a comment.

Wrong Version A I define accountability as the ways in which actions are organized. By this I mean that actions are constructed as publicly observable and reportable occurrences.

My comment This is clearly wrong. Version A contains two major types of plagiarism features. First, no author is acknowledged. Second, several phrases are stolen. As Jones, Quinn and Brown (2010) put it, 'Note that the writer's interweaving of his own words with the source's does not render him innocent of plagiarism.'

Wrong Version B Drawing on Garfinkel, I define accountability as the ways in which actions are organized. By this I mean that actions are constructed as '*publicly observable, reportable occurrences*'.

My comment This is clearly wrong. First, it is not clear where precisely the quoted passage is from. Where did Garfinkel say so? Second, did Garfinkel actually say so? Version B claims that the phrase is from Garfinkel. However, this is not the case. The phrase is from Button and Sharrock (1998, 75). Thus, the student is misleading the reader. Furthermore, why is the quote italicised ('*italicised*')? This is wrong. In the original it was not emphasised in this way. Never arbitrarily add emphasises. Third, another phrase is stolen and not marked as a quotation.

Wrong Version C Drawing on Garfinkel to define accountability, Button and Sharrock (1998, 75, author shifted spelling to British spelling) understand 'accountability as the ways in which actions are organised'. They characterise this type of organisation of 'actions' in terms of 'publicly observable, reportable occurrences'. (Button and Sharrock)

My comment This is wrong. While Version C correctly cites the authors and while the version correctly point to some phrases that its has taken from Button and Sharrock (1998, 75), Version C is wrong in the following ways. First, how has the language precisely been shifted? Second, in the original 'accountability' is not directly linked to 'as the ways'. So, which phrases are from where? Third, 'accountability', in the original, comes in quotation marks. Note, in quotes quotation marks are to be preserved. If a quote contains quotation marks, you have to represent their presence by means of also including quotation marks at the same locations within the flow of signs. However, you need to ensure that quotation marks are properly nested (rather than repeating the same sign of quotation marks repeatedly). Thus, within a quotation 'the inner quotation marks around another word as in "word" should be different to the outer quotation marks'. In British English, thus, you have to indicate outer marks as '. . . ' and inner marks as ". . . " (and in American English the quotation marks are single inner and double outer). Fourth, the 'as' was not part of the original quote. Fifth, in the original '*organized*' was italicised. Sixth, what does the reference to 'Button and Sharrock' at the end of Version C belong to? This is not clear. A reference has to belong to a sentence (with the exception of block quotes, where the reference can be positioned at the block quote's end).

Wrong Version D You have not read Button and Sharrock's (1998) work by yourself but use aspects of their work, relying on the present document, when you formulate your own text. Button and Sharrock (1998, 75) draw on Garfinkel to define accountability. They understand ' "accountability" [. . . as] the ways in which actions are *organized*'. They characterise this type of organisation of 'actions' in terms of 'publicly observable, reportable occurrences' (75).

My comment This is wrong in one key way. But here is, first, what is correct: the quoted phrases have been correctly reproduced. Both the particular phrases, their emphases and quotation marks are included and the ellipse as well as the added word are communicated as such (using square brackets '[. . .]' for additions and '. . . ' within brackets for an ellipsis).

Second, the references are correct. The third sentence's reference to Button and Sharrock is correctly pointing to the page number. And because the referenced text was also the last-cited text before the third sentence's closing reference, the authors' names (Button and Sharrock) are not repeated (in the CMS, no *ibid* is necessary). However, as you have not read Button and Sharrock's (1998) on your own, you need to cite the actual source, from where you have the content, in this case, from 'Lippert 2017, "Version 0.4i", 15'. Button and Sharrock (1998) count in this case a secondary source; the names of the authors of such a secondary source are to appear in the sentence, followed by an '(in Lippert 2022, 15)'.

Version E You have not read Button and Sharrock's (1998) work by yourself but use aspects of their work, relying on the present document, when you formulate your own text. According to Lippert (2017), Button and Sharrock (1998, 75) draw on Garfinkel to define accountability. They understand '"accountability" [... as] the ways in which actions are *organized*'. They characterise this type of organisation of 'actions' in terms of 'publicly observable, reportable occurrences' (emphasis by Button and Sharrock 1998, 75, cited by Lippert 2022, 15).

My comment Version E is correct. First, the quoted phrases have been correctly reproduced. Both the particular phrases, their emphases and quotation marks are included and the ellipse as well as the added word are communicated as such (using square brackets '[...]' for additions and '...' within brackets for an ellipsis[17]). Second, the references are correct. The third sentence's reference to Button and Sharrock is correctly pointing to the page number. And because the referenced text was also the last-cited text before the third sentence's closing reference, the authors' names (Button and Sharrock) are not repeated (in the CMS, no *ibid* is necessary). Third, it becomes clear that you have not read Button and Sharrock's (1998) on your own, but that you rely on the present text as the source. You make your primary source (Lippert) explicit when pointing the first time to Button and Sharrock (1998) and you repeat the reference to the latter in your direct quote.

[17]Note, in the use of square brackets around ellipses, I deviate from CMS because I consider it of high relevance to differentiate between original ellipses (...) in a text and my own omissions.

Basic rules

Marking and reproducing quotations First rule: word-by-word copies from others have to be marked by quotation marks, e. g. 'publicly observable, reportable occurrences' (Button and Sharrock 1998, 75). No lower limit exists on the number of words. If you take a single word from a text that is a phrase from that text you need to mark it. If the text segment you are quoting is long – longer than about 4 lines, you have to mark the quotation differently – not with 'quotation marks' but as a block quote. Block quotes constitute their mark visually through indentation and single line-spacing. Here is an example.

> Here are some reasons to quote from your sources:[18]
>
> **To provide support.** Cite as an appeal to authority, to bring the voices of experts into your paper.
>
> **To use vivid language.** Cite because the wording of the original source is clearer and more effective than any paraphrase you could write.
>
> **To represent the source fairly.** When you quote accurately and directly, no one can claim that you have misrepresented the source.
>
> **To enrich an argument.** Cite to interject controversy, for example, and show what's at stake in taking a position. (Jones, Quinn and Brown 2010, 69, footnote number changed, without original's indentation, original emphases)

Remember two points: a) mark the quotation correctly and b) reproduce the original emphases correctly. The latter has a clear implication: Never, never, italicise all your quotations. If you italicise everything you cannot reproduce and mark the emphases by the original author.

Intentionality Quoting correctly is a basic academic skill. Plagiarism is diagnosed in the text and not in your heart or mind. Your intentions do not matter. It matters that the text is correctly produced.

Integrating your voice with other authors' voices

Integrating voices takes many forms. Here are two basic 'dimensions' of textual work that you need to consider.

[18]Section 6.3 adapted from: *The Skidmore Guide to Writing*, section on Documentation and Plagiarism.

Tense Let me set out from a simplification. When you read and engage with texts, you engage with them in the here-and-now. This matters because it helps you decide about the tense in which you write. You can safely write in present tense. Present tense is the basic academic tense. A text says something and you reference the text with the authors' names. Only if you have very good reasons for positioning a statement in the past, you can consider to do so (see, for instance The Writing Centre 2014; for a more detailed treatment, see Swales 1990).

Guiding the reader Instead of dropping various quotations, the safe option is to explicitly share with the reader at a meta-level how *you* engage with others' voices. This means you can write, for instance 'I read [author] as saying [paraphrase] (citation)'. Often it will be helpful to explicate the context of the point you bring into your text. First, you will want to understand the context well in order to write skilfully. Second, you will want to allow the reader to understand the point in its relevant context. Third, you will want to demonstrate to the university that you are in command of the literature. Investigating the context means that you have to think about why an author is saying something and what their arguments, analyses and claims are grounded on.

In many texts you are authoring you might want to represent a source's argument in more detail, e. g. summarising five pages from a text into one paragraph of your writing. For that it is highly relevant that you share with your reader what it is you are doing and where your summary starts and ends. Thus, instead of presenting a summary and at the end dropping a reference you should tell the reader that you are summarising something from these particular authors in the beginning and then structure your summary, by, for example, summarising the source in five argumentative steps (that the source takes). You could then offer the reader an in-text list, saying that [author], first discussed one point; and, second, the [author] engages with another points. ... However, you could also find yourself in the position to write that 'on the one hand' the [author] makes one point while 'on the other hand' the [same author] also makes another point, which you read as contradicting the former point.

What you write reflects your understanding of the content. If you merely collect several dropped quotations interspersed with some unrelated claims you cannot expect the reader to understand you. If, however, you guide the reader through your content and argument, you can draw the reader into your argument and into your understanding of the subject matter.

4 Strengthening your voice

In the following I briefly touch upon some very different strategies for transforming your written work. First, you may be tempted to enrol some form of 'reality', i. e. an 'out-there', in your text. Second, you might consider using or even producing visualisations. And, third, you might ask others to reread your drafts.

'Reality' With respect to writing, reality does not speak itself but you, the author, is speaking. This means that you have to make evident for the reader how you, as an author, relate to the materials you enrol in the text as indications of what might be or has been going on elsewhere (in simple realist terms the 'out there'). In the following I am not engaging with the insights of the sociology of science and knowledge about fact-making (on this theme, please look into Latour 1987; Bourdieu 2003; Law 2004).

You need to name where you get your evidence from. Your sources might be conversations, interviews, newspaper articles, websites, dictionaries, ... All these need to be cited properly. If you like you can present your sources by separating academic literature from empirical sources (thus, have a list of references and a list of empirical material enrolled).

When you share with the reader what you present as the source's voice, then you need to position that voice within three major components: a) you need to introduce the source, b) you need to evaluate the source, c) you need to explicate for the reader what the voice said, i. e. you need to translate whatever the voice said into your text and show this shift/translation to the reader. As part of this you probably engage with the source's concepts. Do not use its concepts as if they are unproblematic. Distance yourself from the source's concepts and phrases. For that you can use quotation marks (see Berger and Luckmann 1966, 14). This allows you, for example, to engage with Wikipedia's (2014b) claim that most users of the platform 'can edit' the wikipedia entries. With these quotation marks I am not just showing that I used their phrase, but, foremost, I am creating a distance between myself and their claim. How is the ability to participate in the doing of a wikipedia entry socially and materially constituted? We might find that this is not just a question of 'physical' internet access ('physical' comes in quotation marks, too, because what that means is problematic) but also of, say, gender socialisation (Cohen 2011).

Visualisations Just like reality does not speak for itself so do visualisations not speak for themselves – at least for the purposes of academic

writing. You will need to explicitly relate to your visualisation, guide the reader to what it is they can see and helping them to *see* by telling them what, where and how they can identify something in the visual.

Visualising is not something simple but needs to be carefully thought through – for example by engaging with the analysis of visualisation in social science writing by, e. g., Lynch (1991) and Savage (2009).

Peer review You are very welcome to mutually support each other as students by reviewing each other's texts. On the internet, you can find ample material for how to conduct a peer review. If this is a new field, you might want to set out from the reports by Liu, Pysarchik and Taylor (2002), Benos, Kirk and Hall (2003) and Richards (2014). The most basic points to check your and other students' work for are

- read the introduction and the conclusion: does the introduction prepare the reader for the conclusion?
- read the main body of the text: does the text argue for its conclusion?
- argument of the main text: is the argument sound?
- overall: is the text's format, language and style apt?

5 Closings and openings

Academic writing is not arbitrary but standardised. Often enough, the standards are implicit and are not put up for discussion when they are applied or made to travel from scholar to student, intra- and inter-institutionally. This text attempts to contribute to opening up possibilities for learning about, and thenceforth for discussing, academic writing standards.

Standards do not need to be universal to be useful. For example driving on the left side or right side of the street takes both place in automobile traffic cultures. To coordinate traffic within a particular culture, however, the standards of local traffic practices need to be known and one needs to be ready to apply them. For academic writing the situation is similar. In different academic fields, different writing cultures exist. This text contributes to explicating just 'one' standardising gaze onto academic writing. The 'one', however, is not arbitrary but historically and infrastructurally positioned, e. g. between the Chicago Manual of Style and postmodernist understandings of voice, speaking and reality.

Membership in a culture is expressed through skilfully participating in, co- and reproducing a shared infrastructure (see Bowker and Star 2000). Academic writing standards co-constitute the infrastructure through which students and scholars communicate, i. e. achieve accountability of their arguments, considerations and claims. The present standard does not attempt to in any way 'fully' delimit and prescribe writing. However, it is still strict in the sense that the user is required to apply the standard wherever the standard is applicable. If in doubt, I recommend the student to check with their teachers whether or how the standard is applicable in a particular case.

The normative mode of constructing this standard as a prescriptive device differs significantly from written work a student likely writes. I dare to use a prescriptive tone in this text not 'because' but rather enacting its normative force as its key purpose. For an academic analysis to make normative prescriptions (indicated in English language for example by the notion 'should', 'must' or, technically often more correctly, 'ought to'), the analysis has to include a normative argument, including ethical and political considerations. Offering normative calls at all is a risky move. This does not mean you cannot engage normatively with your subject matter but it means you need to ground your normative engagement in an analysis. If, however, your text works primarily without normative or ethical argumentation, then it is unlikely that your text supports prescriptive conclusions.

I invite you, dear reader, to contribute to this guiding document by voicing any *issues* you face in thinking or working with the document, and by offering additions and revisions to this standard via *gitlab*.[19]

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[19]https://gitlab.com/ilippert/standard-essay

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