**Writing an essay**

1. **Peer evaluation**

Work in a group of 3. Show your group 1 main body paragraph of your essay. Reflect on our learning points from Unit 3 so far, using some of the questions below, and use some of these to help you discuss peer feedback on your partners’ paragraph.

1. Is there a clear topic sentence? (SU)
2. Is the paragraph well structured? (CO)
3. Can you see logical development of the ideas through the paragraph? (CO)
4. Are ideas supported by example or explanation or evidence? (SU, SY)
5. Have sources been used effectively to support the points? (SY, SU)
6. Is there in-text citation and a reference list? (SY)
7. Do you think the argument is a strong argument? Why/why not? (SU)
8. Is the language appropriate for an academic audience? (WL)
9. Is the language effective and accurate? (WL)

Make a note of any feedback that you want to keep in mind for later.

1. **Language focus**

Reflect on your own writing. What do you think are common errors that you or other students commonly make in written language?

Below are 7 grammatical areas, and examples of common errors that many Hong Kong students make.

With a partner, decide if each example below is correct or not.

Use the links provided if you need further explanation or practice.

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|  | **Examples** | **Explanation and further exercises, if needed** |
| 1 | **Adjectives ending with –ing vs. –ed**  a) I met the most interested person at orientation.  b) I met the most interesting person at orientation.  c) I was frustrating when I didn’t succeed at first.  d) I was frustrated when I didn’t succeed at first. | <http://icosa.hkbu.edu.hk/vocabulary/word-forms-collocations-academic-usage/ed-v-ing-adjectives/index.htm> |
| 2 | **Articles (a / an / the)**  a) I got ‘A’, two ‘Bs’ and ‘C’ last semester.  b) I got an ‘A’, two ‘Bs’ and a ‘C’ last semester.  c) I help the elderly have a lunch in my volunteer work.  d) I help the elderly have lunch in my volunteer work.  e) Computer is most useful invention in my opinion.  f) The computer is the most useful invention in my opinion. | <http://icosa.hkbu.edu.hk/grammar/articles/articles/index.htm> |
| 3 | **Subject-verb agreement**  a) 50% of the data was lost.  b) 50% of the data were lost.  c) There is a number of reasons to support this.  d) There are a number of reasons to support this.  e) Everyone have strengths.  f) Everyone has strengths. | <http://icosa.hkbu.edu.hk/grammar/verbs/agree-multiple-ex/index.htm> |
| 4 | **Modifiers**  a) The woman saw the car accident eating lunch in the park.  b) The woman eating lunch in the park saw the car accident.  c) At the age of twelve, my father took me scuba diving.  d) At the age of twelve, I went scuba diving with my father.  e) When I opened the door of the laboratory, a horrible smell hit me.  f) Opening the door of the laboratory, a horrible smell hit me. | <http://icosa.hkbu.edu.hk/grammar/dangling-modifers/index.htm> |
| 5 | **Verb tenses**  a) I had taken a gap year last year, and I really enjoyed it.  b) I took a gap year last year, and I really enjoyed it.  c) I wanted to apply for a work placement, but I am struggling to identify the right one so I talked to my supervisor.  d) I wanted to apply for a work placement, but I was struggling to identify the right one so I talked to my supervisor.  e) I think I apply for the internship next month.  f) I think I will apply for the internship next month. | <http://icosa.hkbu.edu.hk/grammar/verbs/present-perfect-tense/index.htm#pt> |
| 6 | **Sentence construction**  a) The experiment which is complicated. We found it very interesting.  b) We found the experiment, which is complicated, very interesting.  c) The benefits of living in a city are many the disadvantages are fewer.  d) The benefits of living in a city are many. The disadvantages are fewer.  e) My fear was public speaking, and my mother helped me overcome this.  f) My fear was public speaking, my mother helped me overcome this. | <http://icosa.hkbu.edu.hk/grammar/sentence-structure/fragments-sentences-comma-splices/index.htm> |
| 7 | **Prepositions with verbs**  **discuss**  a**)** The panel will discuss about the effects of urban renewal.  b) The panel will discuss the effects of urban renewal.  c**)** The panel will have a discussion about the effects of urban renewal.  **lack**  d) Teenagers lack of knowledge about politics.  e) Teenagers lack knowledge about politics.  f) Teenagers are lack of knowledge about politics.  **emphasise**  g)The university puts emphasis on the importance of cultural awareness.  h) The university emphasises the importance of cultural awareness.  i) The university emphasises on the importance of cultural awareness.  **stress**  j) Our teacher stressed on the benefits of proofreading our writing.  k) Our teacher stressed the benefits of proofreading our writing.  l) Our teachers laid stress on the benefits of proofreading our writing.  **request**  m) The student requested for an extension. The deadline was yesterday.  n) The student requested an extension. The deadline was yesterday.  o) The student made a request for an extension. The deadline was yesterday.  **demand**  p) The construction workers are demanding for better pay.  q) The construction workers are demanding better pay.  r) There is a demand for better pay among the construction workers. | <http://icosa.hkbu.edu.hk/grammar/prepositions/hk-preposition-errors/index.htm> |

Which of the above 7 grammatical areas do you think you are most confident with? And least confident?

Now back to your own essay draft, and proofread the carefully, to see if you made any of the above errors. To do this, read slowly, and search for *specific* errors. For example, if you are trying to proofread for verb tenses, stop reading at every verb and ask yourself “*What tense is this? What tense should it be?”.*

1. **Self reflection - Homework**

Now consider how you would write your whole essay, and start preparing for your consultation at the end of the course. Note that a consultation is not for proofreading. It is an opportunity to discuss your progress, development and difficulties with the instructor and seek specific advice on how to progress. *To do this, you should take the lead by asking specific questions, and highlighting specific parts of the essay that you want to discuss.*

To help you, you can reflect on some of our key competencies on this course so far, and highlight where in your essay you have demonstrated these competencies. Highlight or annotate your text with some examples of the following. If you cannot find any good examples of these, remind yourself to make some edits to your essay to improve it.

For example:

* What makes good Critical Analysis (CA)? Which parts of your text demonstrate this well?
* What makes good Coherence (CO)? Which parts of your text demonstrate this well?
* What makes good Substance (SU)? Which parts of your text demonstrate this well?
* What makes good Synthesis (SY)? Which parts of your text demonstrate this well?
* Which parts of your text demonstrate good audience awareness (SU; WL)?
* Which Written Language (WL) in your text do you think is particularly effective?

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| **In the next few lessons of Unit 3, we will explore important skills for academic writing. In particular, we will explore how to paraphrase effectively (SY), how to build effective coherence and cohesion and linking between ideas (CO), and how to use features of academic writing style (WL). After each lesson, you are recommended to go back to your essay, and use the learning points from the lesson, to make some edits to your essay to improve it.** |