

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

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BA/BSC. FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION: 2014/2015

UGRC 110 ACADEMIC WRITING (3 Credits)

TIME ALLOWED: TWO (2) HOURS

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- A. WRITE YOUR GROUP NUMBER (AND / OR LECTURE TIME) AND YOUR LECTURER'S NAME
- B. THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF FOUR SECTIONS: SECTIONS A, B, C AND D.
- C. READ THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR EACH SECTION CAREFULLY.
- D. WRITE YOUR ANSWERS.

#### SECTION A: ESSAY

1. Discuss reasons why drug trafficking is on the increase in Ghana, in spite of the many risks and effects on society. (Remember to pay close attention to paragraph unity, coherence, and completeness. Your essay should not be less than 450 words in length.)

#### SECTION B: FEATURES OF ACADEMIC WRITING

2. Study the two passages below and use them as a basis to explain five major differences between academic and non-academic writing.

## Passage 1

1 Throughout the world, cell phones have become omnipresent in classrooms, cafeterias and hallways, and research indicates that cell phones are used more frequently to send text messages than to make phone calls (Mindlin, 2008). 2 Indeed, forty-three percent of teenage respondents in a 2010 report by the Nielsen Company claimed that they got a cellular phone primarily for text messaging (The Nielsen Company, 2010). 3 The same report found that American adolescents aged 13-17 send more text messages than any other age group, averaging 3339 a month. 4 However, this dramatic rise in popularity has led parents and teachers to question the effect of using this technology on adolescents' understanding of English grammar during a developmentally critical period of language-skills acquisition.

5 Similar to online communications such as instant messaging, the speed, ease, and brevity of text messaging have created a platform for adapting English language to better suit attributes of the technology. 6 This has led to an evolution in grammar, the basis of which we shall call 'techspeak.' 7 As Jones and Schieffelin (2009) explain this language differs from English in that it takes normal English words and modifies them, using conventions of abbreviation, such as initialisms (lol for laughing out loud), omission of non-essential letters (wud for would), and the substitution of homophones (gr8 for great). 8 In addition, techspeak adapts standard conventions of structure by de-emphasizing proper punctuation and capitalization (what we call 'structural adaptation'), all in the interest of speed.

9 Understandably, with this evolution of the English language there is much debate among leaders in education, teachers, and parents as to the effects of techspeak on students' grammar and writing skills. 10 Of particular concern, is the effect on adolescents during their formative learning years in the classroom setting (Eger, 2007; Sidener, 2003). 11 Indeed, routine use of textual adaptations by current and future generations of 13-17 year-olds may serve to create the impression that this is normal and accepted use of the language and could rob this age group of a fundamental understanding of standard English grammar. 12 As Edmonds (2007) stresses 'there is a need for teenagers to learn to exist in a world outside of their social networks, which requires them to use proper grammar and spelling when they speak and write'.

Source: Adapted from Cingel and Sundar, 2012

## Passage 2

1 Although the U.S. Department of Education reports that the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) is, at 78 percent, the highest it's been in nearly 40 years, it should not obscure the fact that many students are graduating without learning how to spell even the simplest words.

2 The evidence is starting to show up on resumés and job applications according to some recruiters.

3 Thanks to the 'art' of texting and anonymous blogging, proper spelling and syntax are falling by the wayside. 4 Abbreviations that were usually reserved for personalized license plates like "C U L8R" (see you later), have become standards in text lingo. 5 Improper word construction like 'where you at' has found its way into the mainstream, and too many children are not being corrected when they repeat what they hear, likely because their parents and a new breed of teachers don't know any better either. 6 There is a debate as to whether traditional grammar is even necessary anymore. 7 Since the new generation grew up texting and on Facebook, some say content matters over structure – that is, what is being said trumps how it is being said. 8 Content does matter, but a well-intended thought not properly written will most certainly turn readers off.

9 Some may argue that even at its best, professionals and expert grammarians alike tend to disagree on proper grammar usage (e.g. beginning a sentence with the conjunction "And" is widely found in newspapers), holding that it comes down to a matter of style. 10 Every writer has his or her own style or voice, but a writer who wants to be taken seriously, and be read on a wide scale owes it to him/herself to use universally recognized standards. 11 Texting is alright in its place, but can you imagine receiving a company manager's e-mail response that reads "F U on this"? I was shocked when I got it until I realized it meant "Follow up on this."

Source: Adapted from an article on Eurweb.com by Larry Buford, June 25, 2013.

## SECTION C: CONCEPTS IN ACADEMIC WRITING

3. In university courses, we continually engage with other people's ideas: we read them in texts, hear them in lectures, discuss them in class, and incorporate them into our own writing. Unfortunately, sometimes some of us are accused of plagiarism.

- a. What is plagiarism?
- b. Give five causes of plagiarism.
- c. Suggest three ways in which plagiarism can be avoided.

#### SECTION D: REFERENCING

4. Using either the APA or MLA format, generate a reference list from the information provided below:

a. On pages 17 to 27 of the issue 4, Volume 44 of Journal of Health and Medicine, we can find the article Teenage Musicians and Drugs Usage. The Journal was published in South Africa in May 2010. The writer of the article is Pearl Johnson.

b. A book published in the year 2011 by Edmonton University Press in London was written by Ann-Shirley Brown and titled The Days of Our Lives.

c. Charles C. Thomas contributed a chapter entitled Justice for Prisoners on Remand in Ghana spanning pages 40-56 in the book Criminal Justice Technology in the Twenty-first Century which was published in the year 2010 by Ahinson Press at Springfield. The book was edited by John Lewis Moriarty and Daisy Laura Carter.

d. Jeremy Jack Keeps, Peter Douglas, Amanda Anderson and Clare Betts are joint authors of the book entitled Singing His Praise in the Church. The book was published in Lagos, Nigeria by Random House in the year 1999.

e. USAID Ghana published a book in 2010. The title is The Use of Treated Mosquito Nets in Ghana. It was published in Accra by University of Ghana Press.

Examiner: Coordinator Academic Writing

