

Lecture 7

7.1 Using Language

Speaking about language, now to be honest, AI can probably help you a lot with writing, but remember you won't just write the three essays that you submit in class, you will also write the final exam. You will not have any access to AI in the final exam. 🙄 So it's important that you do learn this stuff.

Please do not get AI to write the essay for you. I've already had a couple of students send me their essay by email. And again, don't send me your essay by email, okay, I cannot grade it until you hand it in. However, these students did send me their essay by email and they were written by AI. It is super obvious, I could tell right away. If you do that it will just be an F, okay? There will not be any debate, it will simply be an F. If you dispute that "AI didn't write it, I wrote it myself", well, then you can come to my office and you can go over it in detail explain to me. What the words mean and stuff like that and if people convinced me that you wrote it yourself, but trust me, I've seen many AI written essays. The other thing as well, I've been teaching this course since before AI, so I know what Chinese students writing looks like, both good and bad, okay? So when suddenly ChatGPT came out and I saw this brand new writing style that I'd never seen before. It's super obvious that AI is doing work. Use AI to help you find evidence, use AI to suggest things, like values, arguments and things like that, that's fine. Use AI to review the essay, "can you spot any errors here" kind of thing, but do not say to AI "write to me a policy essay" or do not upload the requirements to AI and say "how would you write this essay", it won't do good job. I have ChatGPT, paid version, I have the most up to date version. I pay \$20 a month for it and I know all the GPTs like humanizer that helps you to write more accurately like a human and even they aren't very good. I've tried using them to see how good they are and in my experience they're not very good.

- ① **Write short clear sentences using common words**

So you should aim to write short clear sentences using common words, there is no advantage if you write long sentences that are clear with big words. I will not say "well done, extra credit", okay? I will just say "huh, that's good". But if you try to write long sentences and use big words and you mess up then it will lower your score.

So I have two important rules for this essay. The first one is, if I cannot understand what you've written, I will try again. If I still can't understand, I'll give you one last try. If after three tries, I cannot understand you, it will just go down as no credit for that part, okay? And imagine that's your main idea. If there's no credit for your main idea, you're probably getting a B- at that point, at best. So make sure it's clear.

The other important role I have for this class. For this assignment, if I have to put down your essay and fire up Google, that is bad for you, okay? If you write something and you use a word I've never seen before or an acronym (缩写) I've never seen before and I have to look it up. I'm not going to say "thank you for teaching me that new word", I'm going to say "this is not clear", all right? So try and make sure you're using clear language.

- ② **Structure your paragraphs properly**

That's the TEA. Put the "would" first or the "should" first, then the piece of evidence "according to" and then analyze it with your logic. In the second essay, if you want to, you can mix this up however you want, or you can put the claim at the end or whatever, but in the first essay, make sure you've followed this, it is a rigid requirement.

- **③ Using wording**

Use the wording "would", "should", "my opponents would say" and "according to". What you're doing with the wording that's also very important in the final exam, all right? I would strongly encourage you do that in the final exam as well.

- **④ Try to use words that you are familiar with**

- **⑤ When using new words, check them in context**

If you haven't used a word before, check the context sometimes. The meaning might be slightly different, the English word and the Chinese word might have parts that are not common to both words, okay?

- **⑥ Pay special attention when using evidence**

Really pay attention with evidence. Because a lot of evidence from scientific sources may contain jargon (术语) and if you're going to use a scientific word, explain it, don't let me look it up. If your essay doesn't explain what that means, then that's a bad thing.

You all know George Orwell, who wrote *Animal Farm* in 1984. He had six rules for writing.

- **① Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.**

If it's something that you use all the time and you see it all the time, it's usually quite cliché (老生常谈) and it loses its meaning. So in the beginning don't say "as we all know", in the conclusion don't say "in a nutshell". These kinds of things, I see them again and again and again.

- **② Never use a long word where a short one will do.**

If you can think of a common everyday English word, use that one, don't use the the long, unusual word.

- **③ If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.**

When you write the essay, you are thinking as the writer. That can be a problem because you know what you mean, right? If you write an essay and then you read that essay again, you might not spot the problems, because you're still thinking as the writer, even if the sentences are unclear, because you know what you are trying to say, your brain doesn't spot them.

Have you ever done this, where you've said someone an email and they reply to you the next day. You scroll down and read your email from the day before and it's not very clear, it sounds weird, and you think why didn't I notice that? It's the same thing with the essay when you're writing it, you might not spot the parts that are wrong. So my advice is write the essay and then give yourself an extra day to go back and review the essay. Finish writing the essay on Wednesday, look at it again on Thursday, and hand it in on Friday. I know many of you will finish writing it on Thursday at midnight and then hand it in on Friday morning, but you might have this problem, okay?

A lot of the time you look at your essay and there are many words you don't need, you can cut them out, right? If your paragraphs are very long, one way to fix that is by taking out unnecessary words.

- **④ Never use the passive where you can use the active.**

Doesn't it sound weird if I say "today my students were taught by me", much clearer to say "today I taught my students".

If I say "the man was bitten by the dog", it's much more clear to say "the dog bit the man".

- ⑤ **Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.**

What's the difference between a dog and a *canis familiaris*, one is the jargon, one is the everyday English word. If you're a medical student and you're writing a paper for other doctors, then you would say "myocardial infarction", but remember you are not writing this essay for specialists, you are writing this essay for a general audience. Please use the general English word, like "heart attack".

Do we ever borrow Chinese words when we're writing English essays? Rarely. There are a couple of Chinese words we use in English, for example, "磕头". It's a common English word that comes from Chinese. But generally speaking, we don't. You know which language we often borrow from? Yeah, French. But I don't really see that problem with Fudan students using French words in English essays. Avoid it as George Orwell said anyway.

Here's an example:

Controlling the quality and level of the television shows that children watch as a continuing challenge to parents that they must meet on a daily basis.

Not bad, could be more clear, so you can change that to:

Ensuring children watch suitable TV shows is a challenge for many parents.

The meaning doesn't change, but the second one is much more clear and direct, and it uses about half as many words.

- ⑥ **Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.**

So aim for that try and cut down long sentences into short sentences. In the final exam, you can't do this, right? You've written it once, then you have to hand it in. But by practicing doing this when you're writing the other three assignments, hopefully it will mean that you're already good at it when you come to write the final exam, right? So you'll be practicing doing this and then when you write the final exam, you're good at writing short, simple, clear sentence. That's obviously another downside of using AI. If you get AI to write your essays for you, then you have a disadvantage in the final exam because you haven't practiced with the three assignments.

The Fudan student's world record for the longest sentence:

I will not deny the cruciality of IPR (Intellectual Property Rights), but when weighing humans opportunity to lift the health equity for every human being and the IPR, especially with the truth that patenting failed to incentivize innovation as we expected, it is undoubted that the precedent should be prioritized for the humanitarian reason, and moreover, because that the degrading of human rights and public health has been resulted in the scale of globe or the foreseeable curtailing and profit is only limited to several pharmaceutical companies who will still be able to generate profits from other medicines that are not lifes-saving ones.

Clear? Not at all.

This is 104 words. If you read out the acronyms, it's 104 words, can you understand this sentence? I've been using this example for a few years now, and I still can't understand what the student was trying to say. It's super, super unclear.

Do not do something like this. If your sentence has more than 25 words, you should definitely consider starting a new sentence. If it has more than 50 words, absolutely start a new sentence. If you get to 100 words, you're in outer space now, and you know, this would need to be 3 or 4 or maybe 5 sentences.

For long sentences, as you can see, I'm not going to go, "wow, 104 words", I'm going to go, "huh, this was a unclear sentence", and you don't get any credit for your analysis if you do that. When I grade the essay, it's just a checkmark activity. "Did you have a good hook", check, "did you have clear context", check, "did you have a clear main idea", check... If you get 11 check marks, then you get an A, okay? If you have a hook, but it's not very good, you'll get something that looks like ~~~, which means problematic. This might lower your score by a couple of points for each one. So if you had three of these, instead of getting 90, you might get 84 instead. If you get an \cross, that's going to significantly lower your score. If there is no hook, if there is no context, if there is no evidence, you get an \cross.

Here are three examples.

- Someone who is analyzing magazine advertising can find hidden messages, that once uncovered, are seen to be clever and persuasive.

Magazine advertising contains persuasive hidden messages.

- In today's uncertain economic climate, it is clear that people, especially average middle-class working people, have great difficulty saving much money or putting anything aside for emergencies.

Nowadays, working people have difficulty saving money.

Be careful, extraneous (无关的) words, words that mean the same thing but are different. So if I said "illegal crimes", what's the difference between a "crime" and an "illegal crime", all crimes are illegal, right? "Fascist Nazis", all Nazis are fascists, you don't need to say "fascist Nazis". "Made up lies", all lies are made up, you don't need to say "made up lies", right?

- It seems obvious to me, and it should be to everyone else too, that people can be harmed as much by emotional abuse as by physical abuse, even if you don't lay a hand on them.

Emotional abuse can be as harmful as physical abuse.

It's extraneous to say "even if you don't lay a hand on them", that's the definition of emotional abuse. If you lay a hand on them, it would be physical abuse, right?

I often get students coming to me who say, I don't know how to keep this in 600 words, I can only do 700 words. This is how you keep it lower, right? You cut out words that you don't need. and it will be shorter.

Be careful with meaning, sometimes it's meaning or connotation (内涵), you know, the deeper underlying meaning. Sometimes it's the strength of the word, right? The Chinese word might be very strong and the English word might be quite weak, or vice versa. "Anti-social", this is a good example of strength. In Chinese, "anti-social" is quite a strong thing whereas in English it's not that strong and it always sounds kind of funny. I would get students who say something like Hitler was very anti-social. And I imagine Hitler smoking on the bus, watching TikTok videos on the subway or something like that, playing loud music or having a party and the neighbors banging on the doors like "Hitler, keep the noise down", right? I think in Chinese "anti-social" is kind of like you want to destroy society, right? In English it just means you annoy people. It's quite a different level.

Sometimes it's register, which means how formal you are. For example, if I was having a party with my friends, I might say, let's go and get some booze, right? But if I was talking to a judge in a courtroom, I would say last night, he consumed alcohol. One is high register, one is low register, how you talk to your friends, versus how you talk to officials. A few years ago, I took the Fudan

public speaking team to New York University, a speech was called "China's Image in the World". After the speech was over, the judges asked questions, they said "How can China improve its image in the world". Fudan Boy said we need more propaganda. And the judges all put their hands to their foreheads — and so did I. What's wrong with the word "propaganda"? It has a negative connotation. "Propaganda" in English kind of sounds like "brainwashing", right? I think in Chinese, the translation is quite neutral, it just means like information. What could he have said, what would have been a better choice of words. How can China improve its image in the world? Maybe better public relations, that would be my choice.

I used to teach a class of adult students, a basic speaking class, and often I would break the ice and say how did you spend your weekend, and a few times some middle-aged woman would say "I went to the park with my lover". And I would say, oh, what did your husband say? I think she wasn't confessing her infidelity (不忠), what was she trying to say, or did she want to say? Yeah, "partner" would be fine, or just "spouse" I suppose, or "husband" would be fine. I guess in her mind, she was thinking in Chinese "爱人" and then in English "lover", but of course, in English "lover" means "情人", not "爱人". I always used to joke, it would be very funny if a Chinese couple went on holiday to the UK, and they introduced themselves and said, "this is my lover", and British people say, oh my God, Chinese people are so open in mind, they travel around with their lover.



"Delicious", another good example. Again, the strength here, I think when you're a very small primary school student, they teach you that if you want to say "好吃", you say "delicious", right? Is that a good translation? No, "delicious" in English is very strong. It's not a word I normally use. I might use it if I was complimenting someone, like "thank you for cooking me dinner, it was delicious". You know, I'm trying to be nice. 😊 But to say like "I had a delicious meal in the dining hall today", it sounds really weird, right? Because he wouldn't normally call the dining hall delicious. I think you normally see the word delicious in advertising, "come to McDonald's and try our delicious new hamburger", right? Because they're trying to promote themselves, but it's so weird to say delicious fruit or something. I think I mentioned this one when we talked about booze a couple of weeks ago. In Chinese you're thinking "酒" and so you think the English word is "wine", but wine means what kind of drink? Yeah, "葡萄酒". But don't say grape wine, that's an extraneous word, because wine is always grape wine. In English, you would just be specific, you would say, drink beer, drink whiskey, drink cocktail, you wouldn't say drink alcohol, that sounds very formal, it's like you wouldn't say that to your friends.

I've had students before who said to me, "after I passed the test, I was high". I said, I hope not. What does "high" mean? High means you're probably taking drugs, not happy, be very careful there. You could get yourself in a lot of trouble with that, you know. If you go to America and the police officer asked you, "why are you smiling, sir?", "I'm high", "put your hands behind your back, now!"

Anyway, here's a few more examples of problematic grammar and word usage. Let's see if you can identify the problem, what word is used wrongly in these sentences and how would you fix it? So we're going back to high school for a few minutes here.

- ① **"She has recently born a baby"**, which word is used wrongly? Yeah, "born" is the problem. How would you fix it? Yeah, "given birth to a baby" is fine, but it's pretty high register, right? If you're talking to a courtroom and said, you know, recently, she has given birth to a child, that's fine. I would just say "she recently had a baby". A few times, I've heard students correct this and say she has recently delivered a baby. Why is that wrong? Who

delivers a baby? Yes, the nurse does, that's the person saying, "push, push", right, not the person actually having the baby.

- ② **"For many people nowadays, even you work hard, you won't become rich."** which word is used wrongly? Yeah, "even" is the problem. If I say, "even you know that", it's like, you know, I didn't think you would, right? It's like the opposite of "especially", like "everybody should know that, especially you". "Even if" means, I guess in Chinese, "即使" —— despite something.
- ③ **"For students who major in chemicals, one career choice is a drug seller."** Word form is very important. I often say like "physical" instead of "physics", right? Students say I study physical and it sounds like they study PE, you know, they're working out, or students say I study computers instead of computer science. In this example, "drug seller" should be "pharmacist" or in British English, we would say "chemist". Should you choose British or American English? How do you say "烈酒" in English? In British English, that's "spirit", and in American English, "liquor". Which one would you pick? I would honestly say American English is probably the better choice, just because I think, you know, British people can usually understand American English, but Americans often don't speak British English.
- ④ **"For many, the workload is too high and they feel stressful and boring."** "Stressful" and "boring" should be changed to "stressed" and "bored". I would always have students who say "teacher, I am very boring" and I would say, "yes you are", or "I am very stressful" and I say "I know". If you are stressful, you make me stressed.
- ⑤ **"Fudan is lack of teachers."** Yeah, "lack" is the problem. You should just say "Fudan lacks teachers" or "there's a lack of teachers in Fudan". I think "even" and "even if" and "lack" and "lack of" are the two mistakes I see most often.
- ⑥ **"We can go now if you are convenient."** I would say we can go now if you are ready, or if it's convenient of you. I guess the problem here is that sometimes you think the Chinese sentence and then just translate directly into English, so avoid doing that. You've all heard the old joke about the foreign student who comes to China and he goes to the dining hall and the boy says, would you "方便一下". He says "方便是什么意思?" and the other boy says "方便就是上厕所的意思". And then later his classmate says to him, "明天我们方便的时候一起吃个饭吗?", he says "what——". "方便用筷子吗?", he says "Whaaaat——". So there's a lot of meaning in Chinese there, I guess that doesn't carry in English, right?

Be careful if you're writing out the number, put commas, if you're writing the unit, be very careful. I get students who say things like Shanghai has a population of 240 million when they mean 24 million or Shanghai has a population of 2.4 million, and they mean 24 million. Be careful with the unit. if you use the unit, be sure you're using the right unit. and if you're using the number, put commas in the number.

If you use an acronym, like CDC (the Center for Disease Control), for example, don't assume I know the acronym, write it out the first time. If I have to look up the acronym on Google, that's a bad thing, right? If it's a very well-known acronym, you don't need to say the United States of America, you can just say the USA or the UK, but if it's not a very well-known acronym, write it out the first time, and then the second time you can use the acronym. When it comes to the name of people, full name, the first time. second time, use the family name. It sounds very informal if you use the first name. I get students who write the third essay and they say Nick Bostrom argues this, Nick argues that. Okay, if you call him Nick, it sounds really weird, it sounds like you're his friend or something, so full name the first time and then the family name, obviously in Chinese the family name goes first and in English the family name goes last, I think that's the cause of the problem. But this drives me crazy in the third essay, probably a third of students will make this mistake in

the third essay. They're disagreeing with the author and they write "Andy says this" and "Andy says that". It's not Andy, it's you know, his family name.

Don't use contractions. You know an apostrophe (撇号)? Don't use it to join words together, don't say "don't" or "wouldn't" or "couldn't" or "shouldn't", say "could not", "would not", "should not". When do you use an apostrophe in writing? For possession (所有格), right? For example, the teacher's pen, the student's desk. Okay, use it to indicate who owns something, don't use it to contract words together.

If you want to emphasize stuff, use italics (斜体). Well, nothing else really you should use, don't bold, don't underline, maybe underline the title that's fine. Don't use capital letters. If you use capital letters, it looks weird and it kind of sounds like you're angry. It's also a good point that exclamation marks (感叹号) don't really need to go in an essay either, I don't think it seems formal.

Spell check doesn't necessarily catch every error, a really common one I see is people writing "collage students". Obviously collage is a word, right? What is a collage? A collage (拼贴画), if I go on holiday and I take lots of pictures of different things, and I want to put all those pictures together to show my friends like a collage with all my photos. So it is a word in English. But students will often say "collage students" that don't because spell check might not catch that. ChatGPT would do a better job.

Last things, please no graphs, charts or pictures okay, don't try and make your essay look beautiful by putting a lovely picture at the top. Put spaces between paragraphs and leave margins. I don't have a specific requirement. I'm not saying you must have a 2 inches margin, but don't put margin to margin text, because I need to be able to write stuff in the margins. When you write paragraphs, a lot of students will finish the paragraph and then begin the next paragraph and just leave a little space here. Don't do that, okay? 🙄 Finish writing the first paragraph, then leave a space and begin the next paragraph like that, so I can write stuff there, like comments and things like that.

Have a title. It doesn't matter the title is not part of the grade. Just try and have one for all your essays. If you really can't think of a title, just call it my first essay or whatever, just have some title. For every essay, including the final exam, try and have a title.

Of course, please remember to put your name at the top. It's incredible to me how many students do not put their name. Please put your student number under the title, and your seating chart name as well. The reason I want your name is, firstly, when I find your student number, I can put your name on my grading spreadsheet, when I give the essays back, I need to call out your name.

My advice is to save it as a PDF, sometimes you save it as a word document, you put your flash drive in the printing computer and it changes all the format and it's a big mess, if you save as a PDF that won't happen. If you have more than one page, please staple them together so they don't fall apart.

Generally speaking, with language, I will mark errors, but as long as I can understand what you're trying to say, I will give you credit. Okay, so little errors like "even" and "even if", for example, they're not big problems, just try and avoid them as best as possible. Any questions? Good.

So it's a small class. I should probably get to see all of your outlines today. Group up the bigger, the better. remember this is a writing class, and so this is your only opportunity to see what other students are writing about. It's not like a speaking class where you get to hear your class arguments. You only get this opportunity, so probably one big group here, and then another big group here, and the more outlines you see, the better, the more people who see your outline the better.

Look for common mistakes, okay? The common mistakes that I'm seeing are the main idea is too undebatable, or the main idea is too common. I'm seeing that one a lot, I've seeing students taking common positions in existing debate. Another common mistake I've been seeing all week is that the values claim is too specific. The students say something like, the government should ban X and then the value claim is government should ban X . That's circular logic. We should ban it because we should ban it and we should ban it because we should ban it, right? There's no logic in that. There should be something bigger in the values claim.

I'll be here if you want me to look at your outline, just bring it out and I'll take a look at it. What usually happens in this class is for the first 20 minutes nobody wants me to look at their outline, and then right before lunch, there's 10 students queuing up to see me, okay? if you want me to look at your outline today, please come soon, otherwise I will leave at 11 : 35. I'm hungry. 🍽️ I won't wait here for another 10 minutes.

7.2 Outline

What I need to our outline is simply five sentences.

- The first sentence should be your **main idea**.
Stuff like the hook and the context, those are important, but don't put them in the outline, just the main idea. The goal is that I'm able to look quickly and understand your logic and argument very quickly. Please remember, you must propose your own policy, okay, do not argue in favour of a policy that exists already and make sure it's clear significant original debatable attractive (SODA). Students that have been emailing me their outlines, I think I've probably rejected about 90% so far, and the most common reason is because the idea is not original, okay, it's stuff that I see argued again and again and again and again, so please make sure it's those things. 🙄
- Make sure you have your **impact argument** again, just a single sentence.
What words should you use for the impact argument? "Would".
Try and use the word "would" this policy would give us what benefit.
- Give us your value argument, what word should you use for the **value argument**? "Should".
Again, you don't have to use the word "should", but if you can't, then it's a sign that maybe there's something wrong with your values argument.
- Give us your **concession**.
When you write the essay, make sure your concession uses words like "my opponents would say", "let me address this problem". Remember, the concession must be a strong argument against the main idea, okay? In the essay you rebut the concession, you say "however", but in the outline I just need to see the concession, don't show me the rebuttal as well.
- Give us your **conclusion**, that's one sentence which states the significance, okay?
Why does this matter or people like me, why does this matter generally, what's the bigger picture give the significance.

So I really just need those five sentences, nothing else, okay?

In fact, if you bring or if you add other things like if you add the hook if you add the evidence then it's difficult it's more difficult for me to actually analyze your outline, so please make sure just five simple sentences. Again, 90% of main ideas students have emailed me so far I have rejected, because they are not original or clear or I had one even where the main idea was like four different policies, okay, there's just no way you can do that many policies in one essay, please make sure it's one single clear original debatable, attractive, significant policy. 🙄

If you want the impact argument and the value argument, you could include a **sylllogism**. Probably put the syllogism down at the bottom, so I can look at your outline first and get the idea of your argument and have the syllogism on the bottom part of the page. That is optional. You can do it if you want to, I'm not going to say where's your syllogism, okay, but I will say where is your impact argument, where is your concession. But if you want to you can have a syllogism for the impact claim and a syllogism for the values claim.

It's probably worth mentioning that, you know, do not exceed about 600 words.

I'm not going to count your words. But if you have more than five paragraphs, that's a very big problem, right? If you have more than five paragraphs, I cannot really grade the essay because this is a checkbox activity, like "did you have this, did you have this, did you have this". If you have six paragraphs, it's kind of not fair to other students. So this will absolutely hurt your grade. And of course, if you have four paragraphs, that means you are missing one of these things, right? So make sure you have five paragraphs in the essay. And check out all this stuff in each part the things that I'm looking for.

Plan A

1. Main Idea:

China should challenge the Western demonization of fascism and promote a just interpretation.

2. Value Argument:

We should value truth above Western narratives that condemn fascism while ignoring their own crimes.

3. Impact Argument:

With this moral legitimacy, China can inspire postcolonial nations to reclaim their voices in global justice.

4. Concession:

My opponents might argue that discouraging the demonization of fascism is an attempt to excuse its atrocities.

5. Conclusion:

China must re-examine history and honor the truth.

Mr. Thame:

Okay, definitely very controversial, very interesting. 😊 But why focus on Hitler and not just fascism generally? I feel like with Hitler it's very difficult because like he absolutely did kill a lot of people, right? Maybe you can just do fascism abroad, without centering it on Hitler. So China should discourage Western demonization of fascism, yeah. Again, change Hitler to fascism because I just feel like Hitler is so obviously bad. Like the concession, if you did actually try to promote Hitler, the reaction in the whole world would simply be condemning it, right? I think if you focus on Hitler, it's a bit more like, I don't say this often, but that's probably too debatable. 🤔 So maybe just narrow it down to fascism and then change the concession as well to fascism. All right, very interesting, I'm looking forward to your essay. 😊

The End