

ES1103

English for Academic Purposes



TUTORIAL 7 (PART A)

Centre for English Language Communication

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Evaluating, Recommending and Concluding

Tutorial Learning Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, you should be better able to:

- use Toolkit 4 to make evaluations and recommendations in academic writing
- recognise the components of a conclusion
- use strategies to write an effective conclusion

Introduction

In academic papers, it is important to make fair evaluations of the information and arguments presented, and it is essential to offer reasonable recommendations that lead to a well-informed and logical conclusion.

To conclude well, you need to leave a strong impression on your reader. This does not mean that you simply repeat ideas, summarise what you have written, or make a hyperbolic or sweeping statement. Rather, a well-written conclusion should convince the reader that your stance or your thesis is logical, reasonable and justifiable in light of the evidence you have provided.

Evaluating and Recommending

The focus in this tutorial is on the key features of Toolkit 4. You might recall using some of these features for synthesising sources.

Toolkit 4



Purpose

To present views persuasively; to show caution and tentativeness when presenting arguments or discussing results; to express a critical stance on external sources used in the text

Features

Hedging and Modality

- Modals (may, might, could)
- Adverbs (perhaps, probably)
- Quantifiers (some, many)
- Verbs (appear to + v, seems to + v, tend to + v)
- Other expressions (is likely to + v)

Reporting structures (The study concludes, As X argues, According to Y)

Endorsing and distancing

- Evaluative reporting verbs (claim, suggest, demonstrate)
- Intensifying and limiting adverbs (clearly, unambiguously, strongly/somewhat, to a certain extent)
- Concessive clauses (although, while)

This is the toolkit to critically evaluate the concepts, to present results and discussions, and to persuade the reader.

The evaluation part of an academic paper provides you with an opportunity to show your reader **what sense you make of the ideas and information** you have presented. Therefore, you must articulate persuasively the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence through **careful use of appropriate language** for **reporting, hedging and endorsing**.

In Tutorial 2 (Part A), we saw how important hedging and modality are for expressing stance and avoiding absolute statements.

Useful language for expressing modality	
Modal verbs	<i>can, could, must, ought to, shall, should, may, might</i>
Verbs which convey meanings of obligation, necessity, inclination or probability	<i>require, permit, want to, wish to, would like to, seem to, appear to, tend to</i>
adverbs and adjectives indicating probability or ability	<i>surely, certainly, potentially, often, rarely, usually, capable, possible, probable</i>
nouns indicating probability, certainty, obligation or ability	<i>likelihood, possibility, capability, necessity, requirement, potential</i>

Let's review some aspects of hedging and modality by completing the task on the next page.

Task 1

Read the paragraph below and identify any examples of hedging.

Text 1

The following are possible suggestions that could be implemented for the Maoris to aid them in both regulating inappropriate usage of the haka and allowing them to reap the financial benefits. Firstly, a more transparent means for consultation of haka could be implemented to minimise instances of cultural appropriation. While Maoris are not averse to the external uses of Maori culture, they would prefer to be consulted before such usage. When Lego inappropriately used some Maori words for their Bionicle products, the Maoris responded that Lego could have consulted them so that the culturally inappropriate words could have been replaced, while still evoking the imagery that Lego was pursuing (Frankel, 2008). If a similar solution were to be established for haka, it would benefit both the Maoris and the users. The Maoris would be able to regulate the usage of haka in culturally appropriate settings and the users would have a more authentic representation of haka; not just the seemingly aggressive and uncouth front. Secondly, to enforce such consultation and for the Maoris to be able to reap the financial benefits of their culture, intellectual property rights of the haka should be granted to the Maoris. In fact, the Ngati Toa tribe of the Maoris have previously tried to trademark the Ka Mate Haka but the claim was overruled on the basis that the haka is widely recognised as representing New Zealand (Lai, 2010). By granting trademark rights to the Maoris, they might then regulate the use of the haka since they have control on who they license their trademark to. Financial gains from licensing are likely to also assist the Maoris with their financial plight.

As we can see in Text 1, when making suggestions and recommendations based on the evidence presented, the modal verbs needed are 'should' and 'could'. Also, you must remember that **a recommendation is hypothetical**, so when you evaluate its potential impact, you need to indicate this clearly with 'would' or a hedge like 'might'.

A common error in student writing is the over-statement of suggestions and over-confidence in the efficacy and strength of recommendations. In an academic paper, even when there is strong evidence to support suggestions and recommendations, it is **better to hedge the claim rather than to boost it**.



Task 2

Read Texts 2-6 on the following pages.

- Correct the texts with modality appropriate for the recommendation and evaluation.

Text 2

As aforementioned, youths spend a great deal of their time online, the bulk of which is on social media. Given this situation, it is apparent that employing the use of social media will be very beneficial. The Central Narcotics Bureau could tap on this medium for communication as doing so will not only allow them to reach a wider audience, but will also be cost-effective.

Text 3

With a proper and convenient communication channel in place, youths will not only be able to obtain an accurate response on marijuana, they can also check with trusted authorities and receive a quick response on whether a particular news on marijuana that they found is true or false.

Text 4

Hence, to tackle this issue, there should be a greater emphasis on educating the public on digital literacy and better regulate social media giants as they are responsible for disseminating news to millions of people. Firstly, as the complexity of the media industry increases, we should have the responsibility to ascertain the credibility of a news source ourselves. Both students and adults should be made to get through lessons on digital media literacy. They can learn from Singapore where there are cyber-awareness classes for children as young as primary school (Lee, 2018). The students are taught to distinguish fake news from reliable ones by cross-referencing with other sources and to assess the author of the articles.

Text 5

Next, an integrated system where human touch complements technology can be implemented for social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Text 6

Another suggestion to help businesses lessen the damage against fake news is to empower users to fight against fake news. By getting the public to play a part to stop rumours and fake news, it gives time for the organization to investigate the case and provide accurate information to the public for updates. Also, by tapping on the public, it helps the company to gather key information that leads to the defamation.

The reader needs to see clearly how you assess and interpret the evidence, and how that interpretation leads to appropriate recommendations that have merit. Therefore, it is **not advisable to be overly certain or absolute in the recommendations you make.**

**More important than the
quest for certainty is the
quest for clarity.**

Francois Gautier

Concluding

As you draw to the end of your paper, your readers should be familiar with your arguments, points or claims, and the support for these that you have found from the sources. In particular, experienced readers of academic papers will have specific expectations of a good conclusion, and **you must meet these expectations if your conclusion is to be successful.**

However, unfortunately, many students do not recognise the importance of crafting a conclusion that brings the writing to a meaningful and satisfactory end. It is for this reason that we now focus on how to develop an effective conclusion.

The Structure of a Conclusion

There are **four essential components** needed for an effective conclusion.



You must include a **restatement of the focus** of the paper (overview).



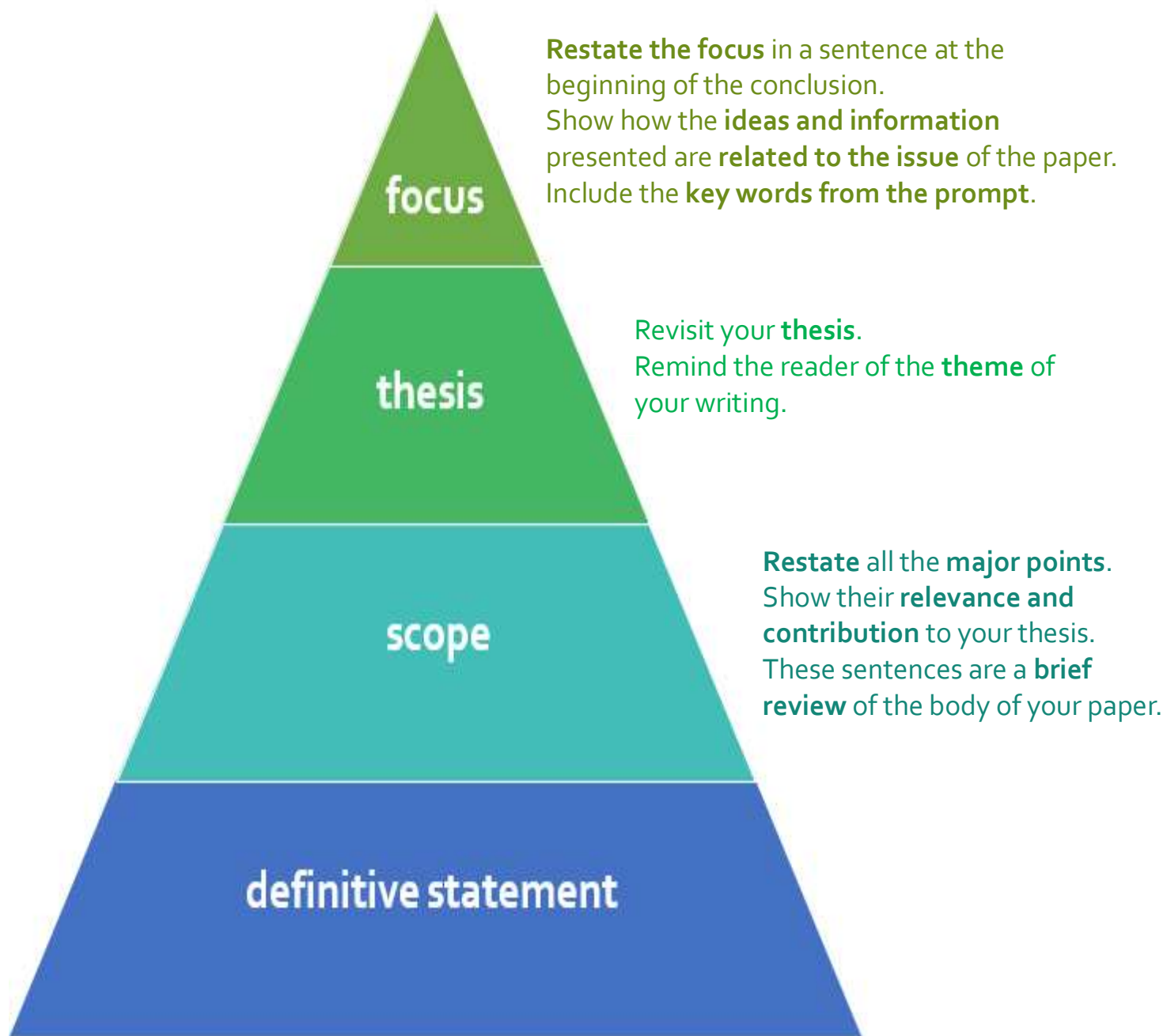
The restatement of the focus should be followed by **reiteration of the thesis.**



Then, you must give a **brief summary of the key points** (scope).



Finally, you should provide a **definitive statement** (rounding off) that brings the writing to a logical close.



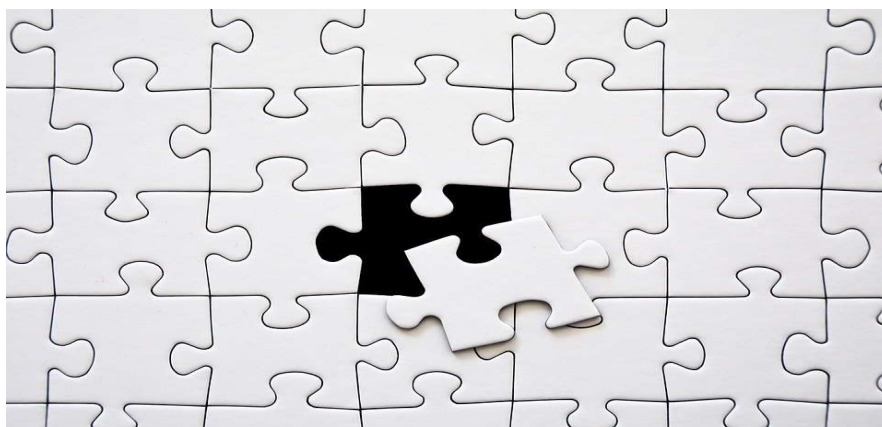
Every part of the conclusion **must relate to earlier parts of the writing**. Therefore, you must consider how the conclusion fits with the overall flow and cohesion of the whole paper.

There should be **no surprises**, last-minute inclusions or afterthoughts in a conclusion.



Your conclusion should be a **reminder of what has been presented** in the previous paragraphs of the paper. Upon reading the conclusion, **the reader should be in no doubt that you have substantiated your thesis** and that the writing draws logically to the definitive statement.

Simply, **the conclusion is the last piece in the puzzle** that completes the picture. If it is missing or does not fit well, the whole image is spoilt.



Relating the Conclusion to the Prompt

An effective conclusion **makes clear reference to the prompt** so the reader can see how closely the prompt has been addressed in the text.

You should **always make full use of the essay or assignment prompt** to guide you in understanding what should be included in your paper. The conclusion is the final opportunity to show the reader that you have **fully addressed all of the key elements in the prompt**.

By addressing the prompt in your conclusion, you will **show your reader how relevant and specific your writing has been** to the task that you have been given.

Task 3

Read the essay prompt below and identify the following items in the prompt

- content words
- scoping words
- instruction words

“The schooling attainment of children in developing countries is affected by four main factors: the number of siblings in the family, the gender composition of the siblings, the child’s gender and the child’s position in the birth order.”

Discuss this statement in relation to at least one developing country.

Task 4

Now read the conclusion to an essay on the prompt given in Task 3 above.

- Identify the following items that address the prompt
 - restatement of the focus
 - reiteration of the thesis
 - summary of key points
 - definitive statement

This essay has examined the impact of gender, birth order and sibling characteristics on the schooling attainment of children in urban and rural areas of Egypt. Based on a thorough analysis of research findings to date, it has been argued that not only do gender and birth order have a strong negative impact on schooling opportunities, but also that the number and sex composition of the children in the family play a large part in determining an individual's access to schooling. Although it is clear from the literature that other factors such as rural or urban location also impact on schooling attainment, it nonetheless appears that sibling number, sex composition of families, birth order and gender are indeed the main factors contributing to inequality of access to schooling opportunities and outcomes for children in developing countries.

In this tutorial, we have considered how to include effective evaluation and meaningful recommendations in academic papers. We have also seen the importance of developing a well-structured conclusion that brings a paper to a logical and satisfactory end.

In the next tutorial, we will re-visit the topic of citation, and will focus on managing sources and compiling a complete and accurate list of References.