

# Effective Academic Writing

Institution: [UOW Learning Platform](#)

Site: ECTE250 (DB25) Engineering Design  
and Management 2

Book: Effective Academic Writing

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## Description

This is the book module for Effective Academic Writing

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## 1. Assignment 1

# Assignment 1

To successfully complete the first assignment in this subject you need to be able to:

- Answer the question
- Write your response in a simple report format
- Use appropriate paragraph structure
- Use appropriate sentence structure (no dot points)

## 1.1. Answer the question

# Answer the question

1. **Check** the **number of parts** to a question. You need to answer all parts of the question. Remember that you are writing one assignment so all parts need to connect together in the whole assignment.

To take a question apart you can look for:

The Topic	This tells you the general area you need to write about.
The Focus	This tells you the particular aspect of the general area you need to write about.
The Questioning Word/s	This tells you how to approach the topic eg to analyse, describe, discuss etc.

Here is a question that is **VERY SIMILAR** to the one you will be given in class:

The topic is highlighted in red

The focus is highlighted in green

The questioning words are highlighted in pink

Write one page which describes your proposal for creating an Environmentally Friendly "Green" Office. Explain why this particular proposal is an effective way of creating the "Green" Office

2. **Check the presentation requirements:** For example: Write **one** page using **report** format.

3. **Check the marking criteria** that will be used to mark this assignment and make sure that your assignment will pass all of these criteria.

[Click here](#) for more information about the meaning of questioning or instructional words like discuss, argue, critically analyse.

## 1.2. Write your response in a simple report format

# Write your response in a simple report format.

For deliverable 1, the report format needed is a very simple one. Use **headings** to differentiate the **different sections** of your response to the question.

More information will be placed onto your WebCT site for later assessment tasks that require a more formal report format.

### 1.3. Use appropriate paragraph structure

## Use appropriate paragraph structure

**The function of the paragraph** is to distinguish one main idea from another. Paragraphs form the building blocks of an assignment.

- A paragraph is a group of **sentences** which develops **ONE** main idea or point.
- The main idea is usually stated in the topic sentence.
- The topic sentence is often (but not always) the first sentence in the paragraph.
- All the other sentences in the paragraph (supporting sentences) must relate to the topic sentence.
- The supporting sentences may develop the topic sentence by providing further explanation, examples, ideas from other writers either as quotes or paraphrases.

The table below contains an adapted extract from an INFO202 project report for 2001.

In this extract, the students demonstrate good use of paragraphing to explain and justify their approach to the reader.

The design of a [navigation menu](#) for the broad areas of the web site is an important consideration, according to a number of researchers ([Flick, 2000](#); [Lee, 2001](#)). After careful consideration, the project team formulated [a list of the broad areas](#) that users of our web site would be visiting. This list became the basis for navigation menu. The navigation menu was designed to allow [easy access](#) to all parts of the web page, so the team decided that apart from the splash page, the menu would be kept on the left side of the screen at all times. This would allow [new users](#), or [any users that were lost](#), to easily find their way back to the topic that they were looking for, while still allowing [power users](#) to navigate the site with ease.

[The first sentence](#) (the topic sentence) gives the reader the main idea: – the [need to design a navigation menu](#). Also, the first sentence [contains references to research done by Flick and Lee](#).

Here the students refer to this research in order to [justify](#) the time taken by the project team to consider the best design for a navigation menu.

The following sentences all relate to the topic sentence. They list the factors that influenced the design of the navigation menu:

- [Listing areas](#) which users would want to visit
- [Ease of access](#) to all parts of web page
- The need for both [new and advanced users](#) to navigate with ease

- [Click here](#) for more information on writing good paragraphs
- [Click here](#) for more information on linking paragraphs

- [Click here](#) for more information on connective words



## 1.4. Use appropriate sentence structure

Use appropriate sentence structure (no dot points)

Sentences also need to be well written. The following information on common sentence errors is adapted from the University of Wollongong's UniLearning website:

- Sentence fragments and punctuation
- Run-on sentences and punctuation
- Lack of subject-verb agreement

## 1.5. Lack of subject-verb agreement

# Lack of subject-verb agreement

To be a fully grammatical sentence, the subject and the verb in the sentence need to agree in number and person.

Sentence	Problem
<b>Incorrect version</b>  The next major task were the graphics we were going to use.	The singular subject of this sentence, "task" requires the 3rd person singular verb 'was' if the subject and the verb are to be in agreement.
<b>Corrected version</b>  The next major task was the graphics we were going to use.	<b>Hint</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Try to find the verbs in your sentence, then ask who or what is related to each particular verb. Check to see that a singular verb matches a singular subject and a plural verb matches a plural subject.</li></ul>

- [Click here](#) for more information on subject verb agreement
- [Click here](#) for more information on editing your assignments (including sentence structure, grammar and technical requirements)

## 1.6. Run on sentences

# Run on Sentences

A run on sentence is a sentence which includes more than one complete idea. It is actually a series of sentences run together that are joined by commas instead of full stops. A rough guide to check for run on sentences is to read your sentence out loud. If your sentence runs on, you will probably find that you run out of breath.

### Sentence

#### Incorrect version

Analagous estimating is also called top down estimating, it means using the actual cost of a previous project to estimate the cost of the current project.

#### Corrected version

Analagous estimating is also called top down estimating. The term means using the actual cost of a previous project to estimate the cost of the current project.

### Problem

The two parts of this single sentence should be separated by a full stop to make two complete sentences or should be joined by a semi-colon instead of a comma.

- [Click here](#) for more information and practice to correct this type of sentence error

## 1.7. Sentence fragments

# Sentence fragments and punctuation

Sentence fragments lack some vital component of a sentence. Sentences need to have a verb or doing, being or sensing word. An example of a doing word is **"run"**. An example of a being word is **"is"**. An example of a sensing word is **"cry"**. A sentence also needs a subject ie something or someone who is doing being or sensing. Most sentences also need an object

Subject	Verb	Object
The dog	barked	
The table	identifies	a trend

It is fairly easy to write grammatical sentences that are as simple as the ones above. The difficulty comes when you are trying to express more complex ideas and need a more complex sentence structure.

The next example is a more complex sentence. This sentence is ungrammatical because of a punctuation error.

Sentence	Problem
<b>Incorrect Version</b>  The year 2001 has proven to be eventful not only for the www.technologies team. But also for the Australian travel industry on the whole.	The second sentence cannot stand on its own because it is a dependent clause. It depends on the first sentence to make sense. It should be joined to it by a comma, not separated by a full stop.
<b>Correct Version</b>  The year 2001 has proven to be eventful not only for the www.technologies team, but also for the Australian travel industry on the whole.	<b>Hint</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Try reading your sentences out loud. Pause when you have written a full stop. Listen to see if the sentence you have read out makes sense on its own.</li><li>• If you have a sentence beginning with one of the FANBBOYS words ( ie. for, and, nor, but, because, or, so) check whether it needs to be joined to the sentence before it rather than separated from it.</li></ul>

- [Click here](#) for more information and practice on correcting sentence errors
- [Click here](#) for more information on punctuation

## 1.8. Plagiarism

### Plagiarism and how to avoid it!



*"Dear Mr. Trent: Since you only pretended to write this paper, I only pretended to grade it!"*

Where did this picture come from?

Harris, G. R. (2001) The plagiarism handbook, L.A: Pyrczak Press.

What is plagiarism?

Definitions vary across disciplines, according to authorship conventions and traditions. It may include:

1. Cheating in an exam through copying of another student or unauthorised use of notes or other materials
2. Submitting, as one's own, an assignment that another person has completed
3. Downloading information, text, computer code, artwork, graphics or other material from the internet and presenting it as one's own without acknowledgment
4. Quoting or paraphrasing material without acknowledgment
5. Preparing a correctly cited and referenced assignment from individual research and then handing part or all of that work in twice for separate subjects/marks
6. Copying from other members while working in a group
7. Contributing less, little or nothing to a group assignment and then claiming an equal share of the marks

Reference: Centre For The Study For Higher Education for the Australian Universities Teaching Commission (2002) Responding to Plagiarism (power point presentation), University of Melbourne.



'Plagiarism?' But my roommate gave me permission to use his paper and said I didn't have to cite him.

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#### THE PLAGIARISM HANDBOOK:

Strategies for Preventing, Detecting, and Dealing with Plagiarism

by Robert A. Harris

2001 by Pyczak Publishing, Los Angeles

Originally printed in *The Los Angeles Telegraph*, 13 April 1998

## Is plagiarism really so serious: A matter of life or death?

*Consider the British Government's 2003 Dossier on Iraq: a Cambridge professor recognised that parts of it had been copied wholesale from a graduate thesis written 12 years earlier, complete with mistakes in sentence structure and punctuation. The most substantial change made was in paraphrasing 'opposition groups' with 'terrorism'.*

Colin Powell used this as evidence before the UN to justify America's invasion of Iraq.

Adapted by: Ruth Walker from Truss, L. (2003) *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: A Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. London: Profile Books

## Integrating ideas without plagiarism

Intelligent tutoring systems have been used in many areas such as Language Learning (Imlah and du Bouale, 1985; Barchan, Woodmansee and Yazdani, 1985), Electronic trouble shooting (Brown, Burton and de Kleer, 1982) and Computer Programming (Anderson and Reiser, 1985; Johnson and Soloway, 1985).

Text adapted from Chen, Y (2000), *Web- Based Computer Assisted Laboratory Instruction ME(Hons) Thesis*, University of Wollongong

## Direct quotation

- Uses the exact wording of an author of another text.
- Includes quotation marks and reference with page number.

Example: "A democracy needs to be informed and have a right to information." (Barr, 1994:102).

## Indirect quotation

- You present an author's ideas in your own words. This can be done either through paraphrasing or summarising.
- Even though the original has been written in your own words, it is still someone else's idea so you must provide a reference

## What is a paraphrase?

- It is a rewording of the original text.
- It does not have quotation marks.
- It does have a reference immediately after the paraphrase.

## Introductory Phrases for Quotations and Paraphrases

Introductory phrases	Examples
X takes the view that... X claims that... X mistakenly argues that X asserts that X believes that... X agrees that X says that X suggests that... X concludes X argues that...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Here is an example of an introductory phrase used with a <b>direct quotation</b>:  Harrison(1992,p.14) suggests that “<b>children are more receptive to computer assisted learning when graphics don’t overpower the instructional aim</b>”.</li><li>• Here is an example of an introductory quote used with an <b>indirect quotation or a paraphrase</b>:  Harrison (1992) suggests that <b>computer assisted learning is more effective when children are not overly focused on the graphics.</b></li></ul>

More information on indirect and direct quotes is available [here](#).

More information on paraphrasing is available [here](#).

## Remember

- Use quotations (sparingly).
- Use indirect quotations (ie. paraphrase or summarize).
- Use the appropriate referencing system for acknowledging the words or ideas of others.
- Provide a full reference list at the end of your text.

## Try this!

### Original

"The convergence of new communicative technologies confers control, concentrates power, shrinks time, and speeds action to the point where reporting, making, and writing history merge" (Gerbner, 1992, p. 244).

## **Is this plagiarism?**

The coming together of new communicative technologies gives control, centralises power, shrinks time, and hastens action. When this happens reporting, making, and writing history combine.

## **Is this plagiarism?**

Through the use of what Gerbner (1992) has described as "new communicative technologies", we have entered a period of instant history "where [the] reporting, making and writing [of] history merge" (Gerbner, 1992, p. 244).

## **Want to find out more?**

For more information on both direct and indirect quotations (paraphrasing and summarising) try: [here](#) or [here](#).

For more information on referencing and faculty style guides try: [here](#) or [here](#).

For more information on plagiarism try: [here](#).



## 1.9. Plagiarism Scenarios

The following list of scenarios, obtained from the website of [1], describe typical scenarios where plagiarism might occur.

### Possible Plagiarism Scenarios

1. **Uncredited Verbatim Copying of a Full Paper.** The most extreme case of plagiarism is when a full paper is copied and any name of the original author list is replaced with another one. Also, Uncredited Verbatim Copying of a Major Portion (more than 50%) of a Paper. This is an instance where a large section of the original paper is copied without quotation marks, credit notice, reference, and bibliography.
2. **Uncredited Verbatim Copying of a Large Portion (up to 50%) from a Paper.** An instance where a section of the original paper is copied from another paper without quotation marks, credit notice, reference, and bibliography."
3. **Uncredited Verbatim Copying of Individual Elements (Paragraph(s), Sentence(s), Illustration(s), etc.).** An instance could be where portions of original paper are used in another paper without quotation marks, credit notice, reference, and bibliography.
4. **Uncredited Improper Paraphrasing of Pages or Paragraphs.** Instances of improper paraphrasing occur when only a few words and phrases have been changed or when the original sentence order has been rearranged; no credit notice or reference appears with the text.
5. **Credited Verbatim Copying of a Major Portion of a Paper without Clear Delineation.** Instances could include sections of an original paper copied from another paper; credit notice is used but absence of quotation marks or offset text does not clearly reference or identify the specific, copied material.

[1] "Identifying Plagiarism", Website of the IEEE ([www.ieee.org](http://www.ieee.org)), IEEE, 2007, [online].

Available: [http://www.ieee.org/web/publications/rights/ID\\_Plagiarism.html](http://www.ieee.org/web/publications/rights/ID_Plagiarism.html) (Last accessed: 22/3/07)