

## **WRITING UP YOUR PROJECT**

These notes have been designed to answer, briefly, many of the questions, which you may have. Much of the information is advisory, but some sections (introduced by a heading in capital letters) are mandatory and failure to observe them may result in the project being rejected.

The Examiners pay special attention not only to the content of the reports but also to their presentation. In this connection, it is important that each student ensures that the material in the report is presented in grammatically correct English and is free from spelling, typographical and other errors. The Examiners may, in appropriate cases, require the student to carry out amendments to the presentation (i.e. to correct the above-mentioned errors) within a period of one month after the Examiners' meeting.

### **Order of Presentation**

Your report structure depends on the application that motivates your project, thus there will be many different layouts. Please note that projects must **not be written in powerpoint** presentation format, as these do not clearly show calculation, analysis or discussion details and they will not be marked.

All reports should conform to the following basic structure:

1. Title page with ID and project title and word count
2. Project Specification, 1 page max
3. Table of contents\*
4. Main body of report (3,000 words)
5. References
6. Appendices (optional).

\* The table of contents should also include any formal declarations, such as confidentiality clauses (where applicable).

N.B. Pages must be numbered with page 1 on the first page through to the end.

### **WORD COUNT**

The word limit is 3,000 for the **main body of the report**, excluding tables, table/image titles, captions and list of contents, acknowledgements, references, appendices and bibliography. Depending on layout, typically this will result in some 7 to 10 pages for the main body.

Projects where the main output is software or other non-textual material may have a substantially lower word count than 3,000.

Note that a maximum of 10% allowance on the word count is permissible; if you exceed the 3,000 limit, you must insert a footnote on the Table of Contents page, explaining why this was necessary (this footnote will not be included in the word count).

The word limit is set to be fair to students and to indicate the scale of the assignment. For this reason, the markers will stop marking when the word limit is reached.

**Software Projects - Code**

Where the project is a software report, the code should be included as an Appendix to the main report.

**Report Writing**

Remember that the examiners attach a lot of importance to presentation. If you feel that you do not write clear English, you should read one or two of the following. The little book by Strunk and White is particularly helpful.

EWING, DW, 1985: Writing for Results in Business, Government, the Sciences and the Professions. 2nd ed. Wiley, New York.

GOWERS, E, 1986: The Complete Plain Words. Penguin, Harmondsworth.

STRUNK & WHITE, 1982: The Elements of Style. 3rd ed., Macmillan, New York.

TURABIAN, KL, 1982: A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations. Heinemann, London.

TURK CHRISTOPHER, 1989: Effective Writing. 2nd Edition, Spon, London

**Referencing**

A full guide to the Harvard Referencing system, including clear, helpful examples for each different type of source materials, is available at:

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/library/public/harvard.pdf>

## APPENDIX 1 – Paraphrasing

Imperial College  
London**the Library**  
www.imperial.ac.uk/library

# Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is the skill of using your own words to demonstrate an understanding of the work and ideas of others. This does not mean merely removing a couple of words from the source material, swapping a few words for new ones, or switching words around. To paraphrase is to succinctly summarise and highlight the key points of a concept, using your own unique voice.

Paraphrasing is different from direct quoting. A direct quote uses the exact same words as the source material and puts these words inside quotation marks. You also need to provide the page number of the quote e.g.

‘A small industry faces a horizontal labour supply curve at the appropriate wage. Paying the going rate, it can hire as many workers as it wants.’ (Begg, 2006: p.135)

Paraphrasing is essential when writing up your work. It shows that you can critically evaluate the material you are reading, and can engage with the literature in an analytical way, rather than simply regurgitating the work of others using an endless stream of quotations.

Let’s take this quotation as our source material.

‘Human capital can be accumulated after people get a job. Firm-specific skills raise a worker’s productivity only in that particular firm. A worker knows how that factory works and what makes these particular teams of workers function effectively. These skills may be worthless in another firm. In contrast, general skills, such as knowing how to use Windows or Excel, can be transferred to work in another firm.’ [original emphasis]

**Source:** Begg, D. (2006) Foundations of Economics. Salisbury, MCS Publishing Services Ltd.

N.B. Writing [original emphasis] is good practice where you have italics, bold or another form of emphasis in a quote, and similarly if you add your own emphasis to a quote (which is perfectly acceptable), you’d write [own emphasis].

**And now, some attempts at paraphrasing:**

1. Human capital can be accumulated after getting a job. Skills related to a particular firm raise a worker’s productivity only in that particular firm. A worker knows how that factory works and what makes these particular teams of workers function effectively. These skills may be worthless in another firm. However, general skills, such as knowing how to use PowerPoint or Excel, can be transferred to work in another firm (Begg, 2006).

**Is this paraphrasing?:** No. This is an example of word switch. The source material has been copied nearly exactly, with just a few words changed. Although the original author has been cited, this example has not been adequately rephrased in the writer's own words. Even the author's original emphasis has been re-produced.

**2.** Skills can be divided into two types. Skills that relate specifically to how a particular firm operates may not be useful in other workplaces, while some skills are more general in nature and more readily transferable between workplaces.

**Is this paraphrasing?:** Yes and No. The source material has been condensed and paraphrased well, however the original author has not been attributed. When you paraphrase the words or ideas of another, you still have to provide attribution.

**3.** Begg (2006) advances the theory that work skills can be divided into two types: - General skills which can be readily transferred between workplaces, and specific skills which are directly related to a particular workplace and cannot be easily transferred.

**Is this paraphrasing?:** Yes. Key points from the source material have been selected and written in the writer's own words, the concepts have been condensed and the author of the source material has been attributed.

*Tip.* Turabian (2003) provides a good technique to use when paraphrasing. Read your source material, then turn away, think about it, and rewrite it without referring back to what you have read. This way you will begin to learn how to condense the key points of a concept into your own words. When you look back at the original, check that your version is sufficiently different in order to constitute paraphrasing.

## References

Begg, D. (2006) Foundations of Economics. Salisbury, MCS Publishing Services Ltd.

Turabian, K. (2003) A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.