Practical Tips to Successfully Write in American Academic English
General Overview

- Follow faculty expectations
- Write in a linear structure
- Develop arguments with evidence and analysis
- Cite sources
- Use clear, concise language
- Spend time on revision and proofreading
- Use Writing Center resources
Follow Faculty Expectations

- Approach with questions
- Ask for models and samples
- Follow the grading rubric to be sure you have all the required parts of the assignment

Expectations may differ from what you are used to because of varying educational backgrounds
Follow Faculty Expectations

A Couple Writing Center Resources:

- Podcast: WriteCast Episode 11: "Doesn't Meet Requirements" -- Strategies for Following Your Assignment Instructions
- Webinar: Walden Writing Prompts: Learn the Writing Requirements
Write in a Linear Structure

Linear versus circular

Expectations for the reader versus the writer
Write in a Linear Structure

A Few Writing Center Resources:

• Paragraph page on website (paragraph structure, topic sentences, transitions)
• Blogposts about paragraph organization
• Podcast: WriteCast Episode 3: Creating a Successful Paragraph
• Webinar: Writing Effective Academic Paragraphs
Develop Your Arguments With Evidence and Your Own Analysis

Expectations may differ from what you are used to because of varying educational backgrounds

- Beyond summary
- Expected to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize
Develop Your Arguments With Evidence and Your Own Analysis

A Few Writing Center Resources:

- Synthesis webpage
- Blogposts about using evidence
- Webinar: Beyond Summary: Adding Analysis & Synthesis to Your Writing
- Webinar: Synthesis and Thesis Development
Another component of doctoral writing evidenced in this dissertation was the author’s use of summary or paraphrase, demonstrating her ability to critically assess the material from several sources and make a unique contribution by synthesizing the material in her own voice. Instead of directly quoting sources, Hackshaw (2012) summarized the literature, citing only one page number, indicating a paraphrased passage. The absence of direct quotes contributes to the paper’s flow and readability because there is consistency in the author’s voice as opposed to multiple voices from direct quotes. Specifically, Hackshaw used paraphrase and summary to directly relate relevant aspects of other works to her own study, rather than use direct quotes followed by explanation or analyses. In this way, the author explained and contextualized her research using her own voice.
Hewett (2013) reported that 45% of writing centers are connecting with students via social media, as compared to the 10% Kubista (2007) reported from her 2006 survey. This large increase may be due to the increasing familiarity both students and writing center staff have with social media. Additionally, Kallman (2014) noted that writing center directors described their writing centers offering a variety of seven kinds of services, including workshops, course development, and websites. In conclusion, Hewett and Kallman’s findings show writing centers not only offering other services besides tutoring, but a wide diversity in services. Writing centers are beginning to offer students more than one-on-one tutoring services.
(5) Writing centers are beginning to offer students more than one-on-one tutoring services. (1) Hewett (2013) reported that 45% of writing centers are connecting with students via social media, as compared to the 10% Kubista (2007) reported from her 2006 survey. (3) Additionally, Kallman (2014) noted that writing center directors described their writing centers offering a variety of seven kinds of services, including workshops, course development, and websites. (2) This large increase may be due to the increasing familiarity both students and writing center staff have with social media. (4) In conclusion, Hewett and Kallman’s findings show writing centers not only offering other services besides tutoring, but a wide diversity in services.
Cite All Ideas That Come From Other Sources

Collective versus individual approach to writing

In APA, use paraphrasing instead of direct quotes whenever possible
Original: “Participants expected the school district to provide a quality education to their children, while reinforcing the conservative beliefs and values of their parents and grandparents; they also expected small class size, close student-teacher relationships, and strong sports programs” (Baade, 2016, p. 99).

Revision: Participants expected the school district to provide a quality education to their children, while reinforcing the conservative beliefs and values of their parents and grandparents; they also expected small class size, close student-teacher relationships, and strong sports programs (Baade, 2016).
Original: “Participants expected the school district to provide a quality education to their children, while reinforcing the conservative beliefs and values of their parents and grandparents; they also expected small class size, close student-teacher relationships, and strong sports programs” (Baade, 2016, p. 99).

Revision: Participants wanted the school district to provide their children education, while reinforcing conservative beliefs. They also expected small classes, close student-teacher relationships, and good sports programs.
Original: “Participants expected the school district to provide a quality education to their children, while reinforcing the conservative beliefs and values of their parents and grandparents; they also expected small class size, close student-teacher relationships, and strong sports programs” (Baade, 2016, p. 99).

Revision: Participants expected their schools to keep small class sizes, provide sports, and maintain good student-teacher relationships, while also supporting their conservative values (Baade, 2016).
Cite All Ideas That Come From Other Sources

A Few Writing Center Resources:

- Citations webpage
- Plagiarism Prevention Modules
- Blogposts about citations
- Webinar: Paraphrasing Source Information
- Video: Paraphrasing Strategies
Write Using Clear, Concise Language

Eliminate empty phrases

- **Example**: Regardless of the fact that he just graduated, he is quite skilled.
- **More concise**: Although he just graduated, he is quite skilled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wordy</th>
<th>Concise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a matter of fact</td>
<td>in fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At all times</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to the fact that</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the purpose of</td>
<td>for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the reason that</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the event that</td>
<td>if</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Write Using Clear, Concise Language

Replace nominalizations and long phrases with strong verbs

- **Example**: The registrar’s note *is a clarification* of the school’s policies.
- **More concise**: The registrar’s note *clarifies* the school’s policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wordy</th>
<th>Concise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To give examples</td>
<td>to exemplify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To give consideration to</td>
<td>to consider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have an understanding of</td>
<td>to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To put emphasis on</td>
<td>to emphasize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make an analysis</td>
<td>to analyze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To conduct an interview</td>
<td>to interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Write Using Clear, Concise Language

Replace “there is” or “it is” with the real subject

• **Example:** *There are* many people *who* believe...
• **More concise:** *Many believe*...

• **Example:** *It is imperative that* these guidelines are followed by students.
• **More concise:** Students must follow these guidelines.
Write Using Clear, Concise Language

Eliminate redundancies and unnecessary words

• The work is *basically* done.
• The parking lot *where people park* is always full.
• Marco is now *employed as a violinist in the* Detroit Symphony.
• He was offered a *free* gift.
• Important essentials are ...
Write Using Clear, Concise Language

Replace relative clauses with adjectives or phrases as appropriate

• **Example**: People *who are barely literate* should not graduate from high school.
• **More concise**: Barely literate students should not graduate from high school.

• **Example**: The procedure *that is most common* is....
• **More concise**: The most common procedure is....

Visit this link on [reduced relative clauses](#) for more information and examples.
Avoid pretentious language

- **Example**: Engaging in the profusely exciting intellectual endeavors commenced, perpetuated, and achieved by this highly praised institution of higher learning, its constituents, pursuant of wisdom and insight, are worthy of our most profound sentiments of support—as it is they who ultimately will raise our hopes of ameliorating the miserable and disadvantaged conditions experienced by society’s economically disenfranchised and underprivileged participants.

- **More concise**: The university encourages students to engage in continual intellectual discussions because it is these students who can help achieve fairness and equality in society.
Practice:
Revise this sentence for conciseness.

He dropped out of school on account of the fact that it was necessary for him to help support his family. (21 words)
Write Using Clear, Concise Language

A Couple Writing Center Resources:

- Writing Concisely webpage
- Blog posts on word choice
Spend Time on Revision and Proofreading

- Writing as a process
- Multiple drafts are expected
- Might be most time consuming part of the process
- Revision
Revision Strategies

- Adjust your expectations
- Plan for revision time
- Think big picture
- Think critically about your revisions
- Become a peer reviewer
- Use a Revision Checklist
- Read your writing out loud
- Save each draft as its own separate document
Revise for Scholarly Voice

Revise for Scholarly Voice

- Use the information on the scholarly voice page
- While reading, take note of commonly used phrases in the field of study and of formulaic academic language
- Use the thesaurus in Microsoft Word or in an online dictionary to search for synonyms of less formal words.
- Multilingual writers may find Merriam Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary helpful to provide level-appropriate definitions and information
Revise for Scholarly Voice

- Use a corpus to search and learn about academic phrasing and formulaic phrases and expressions

- Search the Internet to check if a particular phrase is used (i.e., according to Smith (2015), on the other hand, in the same vein, is in agreement with, ...)

- Search Google Scholar to find a certain standard phrase in academic books or articles: www.scholar.google.com

- Use the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA): http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/

- Use this alternative corpus that focuses exclusively on academic writing: www.wordandphrase.info/academic
# Use a Grammar Revision Journal

## Issue: Parallel structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>Rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/10/15</td>
<td>The students were unprepared, poorly behaved, and disrupted the class.</td>
<td>The students were unprepared, poorly behaved, and disruptive.</td>
<td>Use the adjective form for all of these items in the list to keep them parallel in structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/25/15</td>
<td>I am both excited for the internship and I am nervous.</td>
<td>I am both excited and nervous for the internship.</td>
<td>With the “both...and” structure, the subject of the sentence does not need to be repeated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Issue: Incorrect semicolon

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<th>Rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/3/15</td>
<td>Because there were so few participants; Jackson (2010) noted that study’s results were inconclusive.</td>
<td>Because there were so few participants, Jackson (2010) noted that study’s results were inconclusive.</td>
<td>Semicolons are used to separate two independent clauses. In this case, there is a dependent clause followed by an independent clause, so a comma is used instead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proofreading Tips

- Print out a copy of your writing
- Proofread backwards
- Use a ruler/blank sheet of paper
Proofreading Tips

Know your own typical mistakes

Proofread for one type of error at a time

Take a break between writing and proofreading
Proofreading Tips

- Proofread at a specific time of day
- Proofread once aloud
- Be wary of spellcheckers on your computer
Spend Time on Revision and Proofreading

A Few Writing Center Resources:

- Revising webpage
- Proofreading webpage
- Blogposts on revising
- Webinar: Reflecting on and Perfecting Your Writing
- Podcast: What to do with negative feedback on your writing
- Podcast: The 5 Rs of Revision
Use Writing Center Resources

- Quick Answers and the Writing Center Search Tool on the homepage
- For Multilingual Students
- Grammar Tab
- Grammarly
- Paper Reviews
- Doctoral Capstone Preproposal Starter Kit
- Doctoral Capstone Writing
- Email writingsupport@waldenu.edu for general writing and APA questions
- Email editor@waldenu.edu for capstone-related questions
Questions?
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