

- WRITING A GOOD ENGLISH PAPER -

THE STYLE

The processes of writing a research paper, an article or a blog are a little different, but in general, if you follow those guidelines regarding style and structure, I think you will end up with a better text.

Outline

Create an outline of your text before starting to write. Clearly identify the different ideas and points, and establish the order of things. Writing a first draft of the introduction and conclusion may help you clarify your thoughts.

Introduction

- State the nature and scope of the topic.
- Describe the structure of the text: how ideas will be organized and discussed.
- Mention the purpose/goal of the text.
- Especially if writing a news article or blog, the first paragraph should include the following information: What? Who? When? Where? Why? (the 5 Ws)

Paragraphs

- Use TRANSITIONS in between each paragraph. The transition can link the ideas of the two paragraphs, or rather announce that one idea is finished and another one will start.
- Not too short, not too long. If a paragraph is longer than 15 lines, consider splitting it into two.
- Don't write long sentences or many pages just to impress: you will probably end up repeating yourself and lose your reader. Once you have made your point clear, go to the next one.

Proof-read

Again, PROOF-READ. When you reread your text, put yourself in the shoes of the future reader. Is it clear enough for someone to understand your thoughts, or is it repetitive? Will your ideas stand on their own without you having to explain further?

It's also a good idea to let someone else read and/or check your work and get their opinion.

A FEW TIPS

Here is a checklist to avoid unnecessary mistakes. Go over it while writing **and** once you are done writing. It will help you avoid little mistakes and make the reading process a lot smoother.

1. Be consistent in the use of CAPITAL letters.
Ex: Don't use VOICE and Voice in the same document. Pick one.
2. Do not start any sentence with BUT or AND. Restructure your idea if needed.
3. Give the full version of ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS the first time they are used at the beginning of the document.
4. Be consistent in the use of CURRENCIES and NUMBERS.
Ex: Do not mix lakhs and millions, dollars and takas.
5. Prove every idea that you put forward with REFERENCES or QUOTES. They can be in footnotes or at the end of the document/chapter.
6. Make sure all singular nouns have ARTICLES (the, a, an).
Ex: VOICE published article on World Bank. *SHOULD BE*: VOICE published **an** article on **the** World Bank.
The can be avoided in some situations, for example:
 - In front of "noncount" words. Ex: I spilled **milk** all over the floor.
 - In front of some names. Ex: I visited Canada. I visited **the** Netherlands.
7. If you use the "SYNONYMS" (Thesaurus) tool in Word, make sure you are certain of the meaning of the word before you use it. Look it up in the dictionary if necessary: never take for granted that synonyms can all be used in the same situations.
8. For each sentence, do you have a verb and a subject? Does the verb correspond with its subject? Does the verb make sense with its object(s)?
9. When you enumerate, each element of the list should be of the same nature (i.e. verb, noun, adjective) and follow the same pattern. For example:
(Incorrect) I like to eat cookies and watching movies.
(Correct) I like to eat cookies and watch movies OR I like eating cookies and watching movies.
10. PROOF-READ!!!!!!!!!!!!!! It is normal to spend more time on proof-reading and editing than you spend on writing the first draft.
11. Visit <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> for more English grammar rules. You should have a look at the "English as a Second Language (ESL)" section.

CITING SOURCES AND USING QUOTATIONS

Citing sources

There are a few different ways of citing sources. The two most commonly used are **footnotes** and **endnotes**. Use whichever feels more comfortable to you. You should also use a “**Reference**” section at the end of a research paper to cite all the works that have been consulted and cited.

There are many opinions on how citations and ideas should be cited, but the important thing to remember is to **always cite the original author** when using an idea that is not your own, and to be **consistent** in the way you do it.

For details on how to use footnotes, endnotes and for other citation rules, visit:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Using Quotations (and alternatives)¹

There are three different ways to integrate the ideas of an author in your own text. You can quote, paraphrase, or summarize his ideas. In each case, however, you have to attribute the idea to the original author.

Quotations must be identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source. They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author.

They come inside “**quotation marks**” and are followed by a **note**¹ that directs the reader to the source where he/she can find the original statement.

Example: In his speech on November 11th, Dr. Piash Karim mentioned that because foreign aid only represents a small portion of the budget, “Bangladesh should be able to become self-sufficient and free of tied aid”².

Paraphrasing involves putting a passage from source material into **your own words**. You cannot repeat the same words as the original author; but you must still attribute the idea to the original source by the use of notes (i.e. footnotes).

Example: Dr. Piash Karim mentioned that Bangladesh has the potential to become a self-sufficient country and get rid of conditionalities imposed by donors, as foreign aid only represents a small portion of the country’s budget³.

Summarizing involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

¹ Section inspired by the Purdue website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/01/>

² Example

³ Example