THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Centre for Open Learning

English Language Education

Academic Writing for Postgraduates

Part 1

1 Reading

2 Sources & Referencing

3 Writing

Pause for Thought

What makes academic
writing ... *academic*?
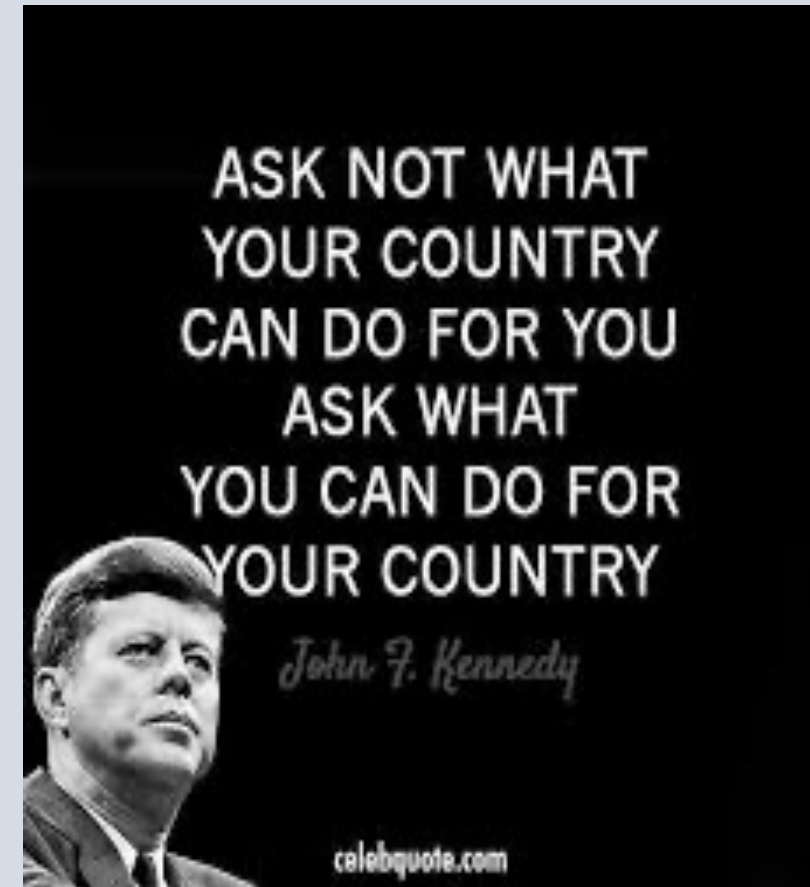
Remember YOUR VOICE

1. Make your unattributed assertion at the start of paragraphs
followed by evidence, findings, arguments from your sources.

2. Explicitly tell your reader what the connections are between
sources.

3. Explicitly tell your reader what the connections are between those
sources and your main assertion.

4. Show your strong agreement/disagreement/cautious
agreement/etc. with the sources.

5. Include "so what" summary sentences (evaluative sentences) at
the end of paragraphs.

Taken by Andy Morffew
https://www.flickr.com/photos/andymorffew

Slightly adapted from:
https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/14011/writing/106/academic_writing

Ask yourself the right question

- Ask *"What does my* **reader** *need to hear about?"* (not "What should I write about?")

- A good "story" has characters and a plot.
  - The phenomena or variables you're focusing on
  - The methods you applied to your characters and the results you got

- It raises and answers an interesting question.

- A clear central question gives your written work a single, obvious & strong direction.

- Can you state that question and its answer in a sentence or two?

ASK NOT WHAT YOUR COUNTRY CAN DO FOR YOU ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR COUNTRY

John F. Kennedy

celebquote.com
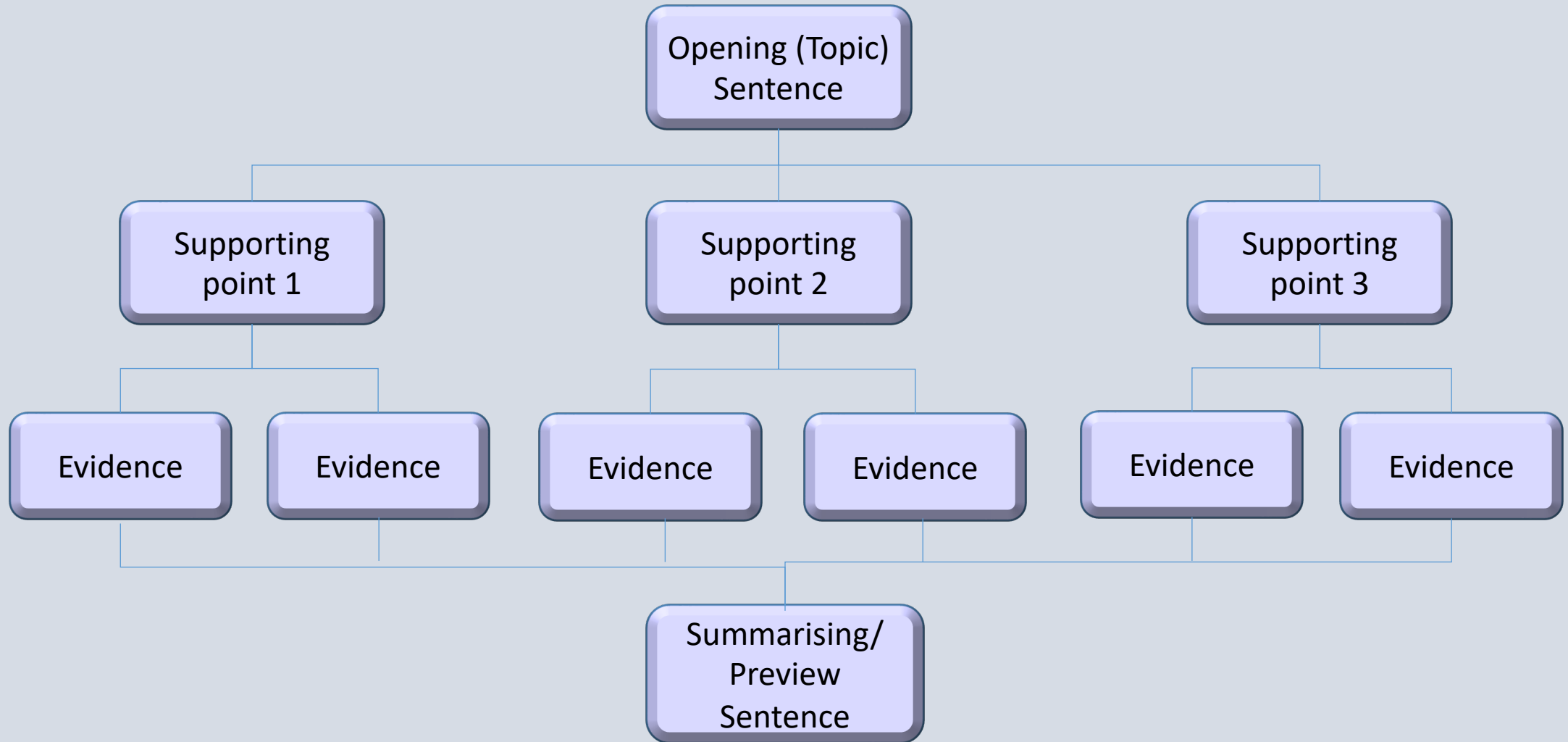
Technological innovations, which have seen cars become increasingly connected, have facilitated the creation and ecosystem for new services to exist. Services such as on demand transportation and greater emphasis on in-car-infotainment[1] require new business models to be developed to accompany them (Athanasopoulou, et al, 2019). While these services currently exist within a halfway-house solution, in order to be exploited to their full potential, a shift to an as-a-service model is necessary. Santos et al. (2009) defines business model innovation as the "reconfiguration of activities in the existing business model of a firm that is new to the product/service market in which [they] operate." This definition is important in relation to Chesbrough and Rosenbloom's (2002) work which states the need for new innovations to have an accompanying competent business model. For businesses to be successful, there needs to be a substantial reconfiguration of the business model to compete sufficiently and fully exploit technological developments, which are currently just seen as features of the overall product and not unique services in their own right.

B159992

Academic writing is …

- concise
- precise
- clear
- coherent

Academic writing is CONCISE

Good writing is simple and direct.

Avoiding wordiness

- Omit needless words (ineffectual phrases, excessive hedging)

E.G.

- *It is necessary to remember...*

- *This might possibly be because...*

- Opt for simple words. Bigger words don't make your writing more academic.

For example, what could you write instead of...?

most

can

whether

agree

before

after

now

because

if

an initiative

Do NOT inflate your sentence length and complexity to sound academic!

Example:

Epigenetic events contribute to the etiology of diabetes; however, the lack of epigenomic analysis has limited the elucidation of the mechanistic basis for this link.

Can you simplify this?

How about?

- *How do epigenetic problems cause diabetes?*

- *You can find many more example of overly complex sentences on the excellent Duke University site:*

https://cgi.duke.edu/web/sciwriting/index.php?action=lesson3#examples.

Academic writing is PRECISE

- Which of the following terms can you use in your academic writing?

- *People*
- *Scientists*
- *Researchers*
- *The literature*

Academic writing is CLEAR

- *Tutors often complain that writing is 'unclear'*

- International students often worry about their grammar and vocabulary, but this is usually not the main issue in making sure your message can be understood.

- Writing styles are culturally variable. This means there is a possible mismatch between your own expectations of academic writing and those of academic readers in the UK.

English is ...

... *a writer- responsible language*.

- This means it is **your** job to make your meaning clear.

- This means **you** need to provide explicit transition

  - *between ideas within paragraphs* and
  - *between each paragraph.*

Academic writing is CLEAR

To make your writing clear, you need to focus on...

- Explicitness

- Text structure

- Cohesion

- Logical information flow

Being clear 1: EXPLICITNESS

- Explain <u>all</u> links between ideas clearly. Be specific about **reasons**. Make careful use of appropriate linking words and phrases.

- Write down each stage in your **reasoning** as clearly as possible. Don't rely on implication or suggestion – these may not be understood.

- Use concrete, practical **examples** to illustrate general or abstract points. If you don't, your ideas may seem too vague.

- Remember that it is more important to be **clear** than to use impressive language. In academic writing your task is to present clear arguments and report information accurately; your work will not be assessed on its artistic merit!

Follow conventional paragraph patterns

- Must every paragraph have a 'topic sentence'?

- How should I structure my paragraphs?

- How can I link paragraphs?

Must every paragraph have a 'topic sentence'?

- You start a new paragraph when you move on to a new (sub)topic / point, so you need to make the change of topic <u>clear</u> to your reader.

- An effective way to do this is to begin the new paragraph with a sentence announcing the new topic / point.

Productive and receptive control of routine formulae is highly beneficial to L2 learners. First and foremost, it eases communication with other language users. Use of an expression like 'Do you have the time?' is immediately comprehensible to an interlocutor as a request for the current time, whereas 'Declare the hour and the minute, please' is not. Furthermore, knowing how to express meanings quickly and efficiently and knowing what other people will say in certain situations reduces processing load, which is an important advantage, particularly to learners at lower levels of proficiency for whom routine formulae can constitute 'islands of reliability' (House op.cit.). Finally, target-like use of routine formulae makes it easier for learners to 'fit in' (as Wong-Fillmore op.cit. showed) at least to the degree that they choose to do so.

(Roever,C. 2012 What learners get for free: learning of routine formulae in ESL and EFL environments. *ELT Journal.* Volume 66/1)

Linking paragraphs

Transitions are usually one or several sentences that "transition" from one idea to the next. Transitions can and should be used at the end of most paragraphs to help the paragraphs flow one into the next.

Of course, these are accumulations at the group level and there is variation for individual learners: for each formula, there were learners at each level of residence, even in the non-residence group, who knew them. None of the non-residence learners scored zero on this section, but also none scored 100 per cent, whereas among the learners with residence, the lowest score was 42 per cent and several achieved a perfect score. **Residence is not a pre-condition or a guarantee for knowledge of routine formulae but it is clearly facilitative**.

This facilitative effect is further supported by considering total scores on the routines section. Figure 1 demonstrates that scores leap upwards even with very little residence, which is followed by a slower increase, stagnation, and another slow climb.

There are 4 main types of links used in academic texts:

- reference
- substitution & ellipsis
- conjunction
- lexical cohesion

There are 4 main types of links used in academic texts:

- **reference**
  pronouns such as *s/he*, *her/him*, *it*, *this*, *that*, *these*, *those* and adverbs *here* & *there*

- **substitution** & **ellipsis**
  phrases such as *(not) doing so* ; e.g. *people*/*majority*

All work should be referenced appropriately. Failure ***to do so*** will result in a grade of zero for the assignment.
234 patients were surveyed about their clinical experience. ***The majority*** expressed total satisfaction with the service they received.

Being clear 2: PARAGRAPHING and COHESION

There are 4 main types of links used in academic texts:

- conjunction
  However, *for example*, *as a consequence of*, *firstly*, *furthermore*, *in spite of*

- lexical cohesion
  e.g. *economy*, *economic*, *economically*, *economies*, *economists*, *uneconomical*

Anaphoric nouns:

Reports of original work, headed often by the names of many joint authors, became too full of jargon to be understood even by trained scientists who were not working in the particular field. This situation persists today, though strong movements towards interdisciplinary research help to avoid total fragmentation of scientific understanding.

http://www.uefap.net/writing/writing-paragraphs/writing-paragraphs-cohesion

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Cataphoric referencing: *as follows* ; *the example below*

Which of these two texts is more cohesive?

Text A

Attracting customers to buy your products and services needs a great deal of research and planning to ensure the money you invest in gaining customers pays off. This is normally achieved through market research and involves finding more about the people you hope to sell to. Armed with this information you can then formulate an effective plan of action based on your evidence. Once you are aware of the needs of your potential customers you need to examine your product in detail, fix a suitable price which will help your product sell, ensure you choose the correct method of distribution and select an appropriate promotion to attract your audience. This is known as the marketing mix and can help your business to spend money wisely with the best results.

Text B

Attracting customers to buy your products and services needs a great deal of research and planning to ensure the money you invest in gaining customers pays off. Firstly, there is market research and involves finding more about the people you hope to sell to. Secondly, formulate an effective plan of action based on your fix a suitable price which will help your product sell, ensure you choose the correct method of distribution and select an appropriate promotion to attract your audience. So this is known as the marketing mix and in summary it can help your business to spend money wisely with the best results.

Which of these two texts is more cohesive?

Text A
Attracting customers to buy your **products** and services needs a great deal of **research** and planning to ensure the money you invest in gaining customers pays off. This is normally achieved through **market research** and involves finding more about the people you hope to sell to. Armed with **this information** you can then formulate an effective plan of action based on your **evidence**. Once you are aware of the **needs** of your potential customers you need to examine your **product** in detail, fix a suitable price which will help your **product** sell, ensure you choose the correct method of distribution and select an appropriate promotion to attract your audience. **This** is known as the marketing mix and can help your business to spend money wisely with the best results.

Text B
Attracting customers to buy your products and services needs a great deal of research and planning to ensure the money you invest in gaining customers pays off. **Firstly**, there is market research and involves finding more about the people you hope to sell to. **Secondly**, formulate an effective plan of action based on your fix a suitable price which will help your product sell, ensure you choose the correct method of distribution and select an appropriate promotion to attract your audience. **So** this is known as the marketing mix and **in summary** it can help your business to spend money wisely with the best results.

Adapted from http://www.dcielts.com/ielts-writing/cohesion-introduction/

Pause for Thought

What is information flow and how is it managed in English?