Academic writing

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University Library
February 18, 2020
★ Research question
★ Structure
★ Academic language
★ Using sources

That thing you are still supposed to be writing. From “Piled higher and deeper,” by J. Cham, 2015 (http://phdcomics.com/comics/archive.php?comicid=1832).
What makes a text easy to read?
Research question
From topic to final text

Choose a topic
Find/read relevant literature
Thesis statement/research question
Outline/structure
Data collection & analysis
Write a first draft
Feedback
Edit
Proofread

Planning
Production
Revision
Research question

- helps you to narrow the topic and keep your focus (road map for your paper)
- can be formulated as:
  - a question (which cannot be answered with yes or no)
  - a claim/argument/hypothesis that will for example be investigated, proven or discussed
  - a purpose
- precise
- feasible
Topic

narrow

Research question

What?
Who?
When?
Where?
Which?
Why?
Write a cohesive text (not bullet-points). Construct the text in a logical coherent way (e.g. introduction, discussion, conclusion).
Structure warm-up
What should be included in the various parts of the text?

Write a cohesive text (not bullet-points). Construct the text in a logical coherent way (e.g. introduction, discussion, conclusion).
What do You Want to do?

Present the problem you will study

Indicate the structure of your paper (optional)

Present your research question/ purpose statement

Present the country or area you have chosen

Introduction

Present the chosen element: Welfare policies, democratic accountability, state capacity.

Explain the choices you make concerning delimitations of the text/answer.

About 300-400 words
What do I Base my Discussion on?

- Theory
  - Definitions
  - Relevant concepts
  - Theoretical background (What conversation are you joining?)

- Welfare policies
- State capacity
- Democratic accountability

“The first part of the essay should be descriptive”

“a specific case or a specific area”
Your Analysis

Discussion

Claim

Argument

Counterargument

[...]discuss how political challenges affect social work and/or social welfare.

“I say - They say”
Summing up

No new ideas/arguments

Conclusion

Have you reached a conclusion?

Summary

About 300-400 words
Introduction

What am I going to do?

Theory

What do I base my discussion on

Discussion

Claim, argument, counterargument

Conclusion

Summary of my main points
“I say”

The writer:
- Your reflections
- Comment on your findings
- Statement
- Argument/counterargument
- Tying together the various parts

Your voice

“I/they say”

Empircism:
- What are your thoughts?
- Your/others observations
- Your/others data
- Your results

Your/others research/observation

“They say”

Theoretical background:
- What do other people say?
- Relevant theories
- Previous research within this field

Background theories and concepts →
Describe [...] how political challenges affect social work and/or social welfare.

“Welfare policies
Democratic accountability
State capacity”

“They say”

Theoretical background:
What do other people say?
Relevant theories
Previous research within this field

Background theories and concepts

Describe…
Explain…
What is…

How it should be
"I say"

The writer:
Your reflections
Comment on your findings
Statement
Argument/counterargument
Tying together the various parts

Your voice

Combine theory and reality
What has happened?
Why has it happened?
What are consequences?

Personal reflections are expected. However, make it clear in the text when you are presenting your own arguments.

[...] the last part should contain analysis or a discussion of the challenges.
“They say”

Empiricism:
What are your thoughts?
Your/others observations
Your/others data
Your results

Your/others research/observation

Scientific articles

How it actually is
The Nordic welfare model is the best framework to reduce poverty, ensure equal access to essential services and promote equality. Therefore, other countries should use this model to guide their efforts in improving citizen welfare.

The Nordic welfare model is a fair system where every tax paying individual pays tax according to their means. It serves as a safety net. Citizens receive equal provision of assistance in a crisis despite their financial resources and insurance status. It could be argued that the Nordic welfare model allows those not paying taxes to have access to the same benefits as those who do. Furthermore, those who earn the most must pay the most. However, as the positive aspects of the model outweigh the negative aspects, the model should still be considered the most fair solution.
Should I use “I”?

- Assertiveness
  - to show choices made
  - to make claims, arguments
- Clarity
  - to avoid awkward/lengthy sentences & vagueness
  - to show who did what
- Positioning yourself in the paper
  - to show how your research/ideas builds on or departs from earlier research

Examples:
★ I attempt to demonstrate . . .
★ I chose to limit . . .
★ I replicated this . . .
★ Based on these observations, I propose . . .
★ To address this possibility, I examined . . .

https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/should-i-use-i/

Den gode oppgaven: Håndbok i oppgaveskriving på universitet og høyskole (Rienecker & Jørgensen, 2013)
Academic language

- Precise!
- Clear and direct
- Concise sentences
- Avoid conversational language such as similes and metaphors
- Avoid contractions (e.g., use do not instead of don’t, it is instead of it’s, etc.)

Do not use too long sentences. It is often better to break long sentences into several shorter sentences.

Avoid spelling mistakes.
Transitional words and phrases

Accordingly
Conversely
Finally
Furthermore
Hence
Moreover
Nevertheless
Next
Now
Otherwise
Second/secondly
Similarly
Specifically
Then
Therefore
After all
As a result
At the same time
For example
For instance
For that reason
In addition
In conclusion
In fact
On the contrary
On the one hand
On the other hand
To clarify
To illustrate
To summarize
Using sources
“All researchers and students are obliged to follow good citation practice. This is a prerequisite for critical examination and important for enabling further research” (p. 28).

When do you need to cite

- Direct quotations (exact wording)
- Indirect quotations/ paraphrases (your own wording)
- Summaries
Plagiarism

Examples:

- Failing to cite sources
- Failing to use quotation marks for direct quotations
- Failing to properly put indirect quotations into your own words
- Self-plagiarism

“Plagiarism is unacceptable and constitutes a serious breach of recognised norms of research ethics” (p. 29).


Academic dishonesty

Section 5-1. Cheating
1. Cheating or attempted cheating during tests is considered to include:
   a) Having illegal aids available during the test
   b) Presenting the work of others as one’s own
   c) Quoting sources in an assignment without using quotation marks, italics or other methods to indicate that the text is a quotation
   d) Quoting or otherwise utilising one's own previously submitted work without sufficient reference.
   e) Using sources in written work without adequate references
   f) Unauthorised collaboration between exam candidates or groups
   g) Acting in violation of applicable regulations or guidelines that apply to the test.

Reference style?
http://kildekompasset.no/english

The Citation Compass
Avoid plagiarism

References
- APA 6th
- APA 6th for footnotes
- Chicago 16 A
- IEEE

Source evaluation
- Books
- Scientific articles
- Webpages
- Works of reference
- Public documents
- Newspapers

Legislation
- Use of archive records
- Copyright
- Design
- Patent
- Trademark
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anon. newspaper article</td>
<td>Author with several publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author with several</td>
<td>publications same year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog entry</td>
<td>Book with editor</td>
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<td>Book with one author</td>
<td>Conference paper - abstract</td>
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<td>five authors</td>
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<td>authors</td>
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<td>Norwegian laws and regulations</td>
<td>Conference paper - abstract</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master's thesis</td>
<td>Conference paper - abstract</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter in edited book

In the text

Author, year; pages

(Peduzzi, 2016, p. 74)

In the reference list


In EndNote

Add as "Book section".

Fill out the fields Author, Year, Title, Editor, Book title, Place published, Publisher, Pages.

Psst! Our Q&A answers most questions  Sist oppdatert: 7/26/2017
Direct quotations
(exact wording)

- Exact wording (whatever the length) must be acknowledged
- Enclose the copied text with quotation marks (or indent as a block quotation)
- In-text citations & reference list
“Whether policies are good or not cannot merely be a reflection of what they set out to do, but also of what they achieve” (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2011, p. 23).

“The Nordic type of welfare state is not an altruistic luxury item established to take care of ‘the poor’ and should thus not be evaluated by only comparing efficiency cost with gains in the form of increased quality,” suggests Rothstein (2000, p. 230).

Esping-Andersen (2009) explains that “the highly educated homogamous couples embrace more egalitarianism while the low educated remain loyal to conventional gender norms” (p. 47).

As pointed out by Kymlicka (2002), “Multiculturalism is Janus faced: it has both a forward-looking or progressive side and a backward-looking or conservative side” (p. 368).
According to Rose (2009):

Bringing the state back into the analysis avoids the reductionist assumption that political participation and elections are all that is needed to create a democratic regime. The fundamental problem of an incomplete electoral democracy is not due to deficiencies in the electoral system but that it is not governed by the rule of law. (p. 13)
Omitting & inserting

- Use an ellipsis (three spaced periods) to condense a passage
- Use a period plus an ellipsis to leave out a sentence
- Use \textit{sic} to indicate an error
- Use brackets [ ] to insert your own words

“What it \textit{poetry} offers is to keep open a path to the mysterious silence we came from: the realm of awakening and discovery” (Husabø, 2013, p. 55).
As Lipson (2004) warns, “When you paraphrase an author’s sentence, don’t veer too close to her words. That’s plagiarism, even if it’s unintentional and even if you cite the author” (p. 43).

Lipson (2004) notes that to avoid plagiarism, proper paraphrasing entails more than citing the source. It is critical to use wording that is truly different from the original (p. 43).
Paraphrase 1: It is plagiarism, intentional or not, to use someone else's ideas or words without giving credit to that person. Even if you give credit to the author, it is plagiarism to use his exact words without so indicating with quotation marks or block indentation. It is also plagiarism to use words so close to the original that if someone put your work next to the source, it would be clear that you couldn't have written what you did unless you had the original there with you. (Booth, Colomb, and Williams, 1995, p. 167)

Paraphrase 2: Booth et al. (1995) warn against three types of plagiarism: 1) using the "words or ideas" of a source without identifying it; 2) giving credit to a source but copying its language, in whole or in part, without benefit of quotation marks; or 3) echoing the sentence structure and phrasing of the original so closely that anyone can see the writer was depending on it heavily as he wrote (167).

You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone else's words or ideas but fail to credit that person. You plagiarize even when you do credit the author but use his exact words without so indicating with quotation marks or block indentation. You also plagiarize when you use words so close to those in your source, that if your work were placed next to the source, it would be obvious that you could not have written what you did without the source at your elbow.

(Source: The Craft of Research: Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 1995, p. 167)

It is plagiarism, intentional or not, to use someone else's ideas or words without giving credit to that person. Even if you give credit to the author, it is plagiarism to use his exact words without quotation marks or block indentation. It is also plagiarism to use words so close to the original that if someone put your work next to it, it would be clear that you couldn't have written what you did unless you had the original there with you. (Booth, Colomb, and Williams, 1995, p. 167)
Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step towards political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the exclusive concern of professional writers. (Source: Collected Essays: Orwell, 1961, p. 353.)

Paraphrase 1: Orwell (1961) was concerned with what he considered a dangerous link between careless language use, fuzzy thinking, and governance. He therefore appealed to his audience to view the thoughtful use of language as a universal civic responsibility (p. 353).

Paraphrase 2: As Orwell (1961) puts it, contemporary English, particularly that which is written, is replete with poor habits which get spread when one writer imitates another. He points out that this can be prevented if a person is determined to make the necessary effort. If a person can shed such habits he or she will become a clearer thinker, and thinking more clearly is a crucial initial move towards political rebirth. Therefore, the battle with poor English is not petty nor is it the sole responsibility of those who write for a living (p. 353).

Retrieved from https://www.mun.ca/writingcentre/plagiarism/examples/paraphrasing.php
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We do not yet understand all the ways in which brain chemicals are related to emotions and thoughts, but the salient point is that our state of mind has an immediate and direct effect on our state of body.

(Source: Love, Medicine and Miracles: Siegel, 1986, p. 69)

Paraphrase 1: Siegel (1986) writes that we still do not know all the ways in which brain chemistry is related to emotions and thoughts, but the important point is that our mental state has an immediate and direct effect on our physical state (p. 69).

Paraphrase 2: Siegel (1986) writes that although the relationship between brain chemistry and thoughts and feelings is not fully understood, we do know that our psychological state affects our physical state (p. 69).

Paraphrase 3: According to Siegel (1986), our mind affects our body quickly and directly, although we do not yet understand every aspect of how brain chemicals relate to emotions and thoughts (p. 69).

Retrieved from [http://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/academic-writing/avoiding-plagiarism-paraphrasing](http://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/academic-writing/avoiding-plagiarism-paraphrasing)
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Retrieved from http://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/academic-writing/avoiding-plagiarism-paraphrasing
Paraphrasing/Summarizing Practice

15 minutes

1. Find a passage you would like to paraphrase/summarize.
2. Reread the passage until you fully understand it
3. Look away or hide the original passage
4. Write the paraphrase/summary & cite the source
5. Practice writing additional paraphrases or summaries if there is remaining time.

If you choose to use the author’s exact wording somewhere in your paraphrase or summary, use quotation marks around the words you borrowed!
Evaluate your paraphrase or summary

1. Was the meaning of the original passage/author’s opinion accurately conveyed?
2. Does the paraphrase or summary use new sentence structure and wording?
3. Was the source cited properly?
Esping-Andersen (2010) explains that “de-commodification occurs when a service is rendered as a matter of right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market” (p. 163).

Try to obtain the original source whenever possible

In-text: name the original source & cite the secondary source

Reference list: provide the secondary source

“There is an inherent paradox here. If change increases the risk of failure, why do organizations ever try to change?” (Haveman, as cited in Dahlin, 2014, p. 67).

“Field method is more like an umbrella of activities beneath which any technique may be used for gaining the desired knowledge,” according to Schatzman and Strauss (as cited in Nordby, 2015, p. 304).
Citing more than one work

Works by the same author(s):  
(Danbolt, 2009, 2011, 2014)

Works by same author(s) with same publication date:  
(Nielsen, 2013a, 2013b)

Works by different authors:  
(Danbolt, 2009; Juell & Norskog, 2006)
Reference list


Remember to check citations for accuracy before including them in your work.
Relevant software

EndNote X9

Zotero
Final suggestions
- Use Oria to find relevant literature.
- Ask the library if you need something we do not have access to.
Common formatting requirements

● 2500 words +/- 10% (including table of contents, list of references)
● Times New Roman, font size 12
● 1.5 spaced
● Numbered pages
● Cover page
  Typically includes: university, faculty/institute, course name/code, semester & year, date, name(s)/candidate number(s), title of assignment/paper, number of words
● Table of contents page
● Headings and subheadings (but not too many!)
● Correct referencing (APA 6)
Revision- one of the keys to a good paper

Levels of revision

I. Focus
What is my main argument/claim?
How can I improve the clarity of my argument/claim?

II. Arrangement of ideas (form)
 Logical division between sections
 Organization of paragraphs within each section
 Overall cohesion

III. Expression of ideas (style)
 Sentences, phrases, choice of words

IV. Mechanical correctness
 Spelling and punctuation
 Reference list, citations, footnotes
 Formatting and layout

Services & useful websites

Study Lab
student.uis.no/library/studylab/

Learning Support Center
student.uis.no/library/lsc/

Citation Compass
kildekompasset.no/english

Search and Write
sokogskriv.no/en/

Viko
ntnu.edu/viko/

Academic Writing Podcasts
akademiskskriving.no/english/
The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.

Mark Twain

https://libguides.uis.no/LSS