

Elements of Writing (Part I)

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Generalisations

It is an element of writing to introduce a powerful statement about a topic at the beginning of paragraphs in a simple and direct way.

Example:

The majority of nerves in the dental pulp are sensory fibers. **Or**

Approximately 90% of the total pulp innervation are mainly sensory.

Although the second sentence is more specific, the first one is easier to be remembered.

Therefore, the writer must understand when accuracy is necessary and when generalisation is acceptable.

However, avoid absolute phrases in generalization, Eg:

Nerves in the dental pulp are sensory fibers.

This is not scientifically acceptable. It is better to use caution or hedging in the introductory statement to be scientifically acceptable, such as:

Nerves in the dental pulp are commonly sensory fibers.

Or

Most of the pulp innervation are sensory fibers.

Structure of sentence in generalisation :

a) Most commonly used in plural:

Antibiotics have transformed the way of medicine.

b) Singular + definitive article (more formal):

The antibiotic has transformed the way of medicine.

Examples:

- Stainless steel wires/ orthodontic treatment

Stainless steel wires are the basic element in orthodontic treatment.

- Acrylic/ denture base

The acrylic resin is the major material used in denture base.

- Titanium/ dental implant.

Titanium alloy development improves dental implant.

Building on generalisation:

There is a basic rule in writing an essay is moving from general to specific. Giving the generalised statements in the beginning of the paragraph then moving to more specific ideas to support the topic.

Generalisation	Support	Development > Specific
Since the mid-twentieth century there has been a remarkable increase in international trade.	The reasons for this are a combination of international agreements such as GATT, better transport and improved communications.	China has played a significant part in this process, with its international trade growing by 16 times in just 20 years, while its GDP increased by nearly 10 per cent per year.

The use of examples in Writing

Examples provide support for the reader to underpin points and ideas that strengthen the argument.

Using examples

When topics are usually introduced through generalisation:

The majority of nerves in the dental pulp are proprioceptive fibres.

Examples have strengthened the expressed idea:

The majority of nerves in the dental pulp are proprioceptive fibres such as C and A fibres.

Phrases to introduce examples in academic writing a) for instance, for example (with commas)

NSAID drugs, for example aspirin, are used to decrease tooth PA pain.

b) such as, e.g.

Many rotary files such as protaper, profile and light speed files are widely available in the market.

b) particularly, especially (to give a focus)

Certain bacteria, especially Gram positive, can be isolated from root canal infection.

b) a case in point (for single examples)

Some old dental materials are not in use nowadays. A case in point is silicate cement.

Don't use 'like', 'look like' because these words are informal and should not be used in the academic writing.

Restatement:

There is a group of phrases used to rewrite a sentence in other words to give more clarification. These phrases also can be used when there is only one example (bracket may also be used for this purpose)

in other words namely that is (to say) i.e. viz (very formal)

E.g.

-The most popular posterior restoration namely amalgam has superior compressive strength.

-The survival rate of the most common type of cancer i.e. breast cancer are improving.

Problems and solutions

- Each academic work has a problem to be solved or a question to be answered. Your duty as a researcher to solve this problem or answer this question.
- Problems can be discussed by starting with; what is the problem, then what could be the solution or solutions, and the arguments behind those.
- The argument and discussion elements in discussing problems and solutions.

1.1

HOW CAN ROAD CONGESTION BE REDUCED?

Currently, roads are often congested, which is expensive in terms of delays to the movement of people and freight. It is commonly suggested that building more roads, or widening existing ones, would ease the traffic jams. But not only is the cost of such work high, but the construction process adds to the congestion, while the resulting extra road space may encourage extra traffic. Therefore constructing more roads is unlikely to solve the problem, and other remedies, such as road pricing or greater use of public transport, should be examined.

(a) Problem	Currently, roads are often congested, which is . . .
(b) Solution A	It is commonly suggested that building more roads, or widening . . .
(c) Arguments against solution A	But not only is the cost of such work high, but . . .
(d) Solutions B and C	. . . other remedies, such as road pricing or greater use . . .

Vocabularies to be used as synonyms for problems and solutions

Problem	Solution
Complications	Remedy
Difficulty	Answer
Issue	Resolution
Concern	Proposal
Challenge	Suggestion
Question	Rectify
Worry	Result
Dilemma	Key, key point
Obstacle	Fixing
Trouble	Solving
Chaos	Clarification

Styles

- The academic writing should have a formal style which is different to other writing styles such as in newspaper, stories or magazines.
- Generally, the language should be scientific, impersonal and objective. This language is suitable for academic audience.

Guidelines

- (a) Do not use idiomatic or colloquial vocabulary: *kids, boss*. Instead use standard English: *children, manager*.
- (b) Use vocabulary accurately. There is a difference between *rule* and *law*, or *weather* and *climate*, which you are expected to know if you study these subjects.
- (c) Be as precise as possible when dealing with facts or figures. Avoid phrases such as *about a hundred* or *hundreds of years ago*. If it is necessary to estimate numbers use *approximately* rather than *about*.
- (d) Conclusions should use tentative language. Avoid absolute statements such as *unemployment causes crime*. Instead use cautious phrases: *unemployment may cause crime* or *tends to cause crime*.

- (e) Avoid adverbs that show your personal attitude: *luckily, remarkably, surprisingly*.
- (f) Do not contract verb forms: *don't, can't*. Use the full form: *Do not, cannot*.
- (g) Although academic English tends to use the passive more than standard English, it should not be over-used. Both are needed. Compare:

Galileo discovered the moons of Jupiter.

The moons of Jupiter were discovered by Galileo.

In the first case, the focus is on Galileo, in the second (passive) on the moons.

(h) Avoid the following:

- *like* for introducing examples. Use *such as* or *for instance*.
- *thing* and combinations *nothing* or *something*. Use *factor*, *issue* or *topic*.
- *lots of*. Use *a significant / considerable number*.
- *little / big*. Use *small / large*.
- ‘get’ phrases such as *get better / worse*. Use *improve* and *deteriorate*.
- *good / bad* are simplistic. Use *positive / negative*, e.g. *the changes had several positive aspects*.

- (i) Do not use question forms such as *Why did war break out in 1914?* Instead use statements: *There were three reasons for the outbreak of war . . .*
- (j) Avoid numbering sections of your text, except in reports and long essays. Use conjunctions and signposting expressions to introduce new sections (*Turning to the question of detecting cancer . . .*).
- (k) When writing lists, avoid using *etc* or *and so on*. Insert *and* before the last item:

The main products were pharmaceuticals, electronic goods and confectionery.

- (l) Avoid using two-word verbs such as *go on* or *bring up* if there is a suitable synonym. Use *continue* or *raise*.

(m). Avoid personal pronouns: 'I' and 'we'. Always use third person, passive voice and other impersonal structures.

Writing in a first-person style can be only acceptable in the literature review when you want to cite an old work done by yourself or your team group.

production as well as cell proliferation. Even if these data brought significant information, no culture system is able to fully re-create the human pulp/dentin complex in its entirety and to study the ability of pulp tissue to respond to these kinds of inductive signals.

Therefore, we have cultured thick slices from human teeth as described previously (Magloire *et al.*, 1996). TGF β -1 was diffused through the dentinal tubules to the nearest pulp horn

(n). Avoid complicated and long sentences, use short, focused and direct sentences instead.

The basic structure of the English sentence is subject-verb-object unit. These components have to be in close proximity together to prevent ambiguity.

Dunleavy (2003) put a guide that the sentence should not exceed 40 words, with an ideal sentence length around 20 words.

Note: Avoid translation from Arabic to English in your writing because this will increase the ambiguity of your sentence. Instead, think in Arabic, translate in your mind, write notes in English to what you want to express in your sentence, then try to build-up correct English sentences.

Thank you