

Writing Course

Check-in

- Some groups met or checked in by email in-between

Paragraph – building blocks – mortar = transition

- 1 idea per paragraph
- Condense each paragraph to one sentence.
- Put them in order, do they flow, are they logical, skeleton of paper
- Some people do outline
- Results – heading each paragraph
- Verb tense – be kind to your reader and be consistent
- **How long?** Keep to one idea, and as a rule of thumb, one screen long [you should see at least one paragraph break on screen]

Sentences

- Avoid run on sentences
- Active voice
- First sentence sets up problem
- Subject is close to verb
- Manageable amount of info
- The stress position = where you emphasize new things – at the end.
- Semi-colon ideally constructed to join 2 sentences that can stand alone. but two parts should be related
- Vary your sentence structure, size.
- **Dejargon**
- **Write with nouns & verbs;** write with a dictionary not a thesaurus

Words

Pet peeve	DO or principle
Colloquial	Use scientific languages
Of course; obviously	Don't talk down to the reader
This & these avoid;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restate the noun; • This/these forces the reader to have to reread prior sentences for meaning • Do not have this or these refer to >1 object in a paragraph
Vague terms or expressions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous, multiple, several • Small bird 	More specific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say the number; in the literature there is a trend; • Hummingbird
Puffing or overstating prior literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 studies have shown • Virtually all studies have shown • There is a controversy 	State the facts and cite them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If plural, give several citations • Well actually 20 studies have shown, but there was a contrary study in the cardiology journal of Botswana, written in Swahili, but the abstract says it shows the opposite
Overhyping one's work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting, exciting • For the first time, unique 	Let the work present itself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present, and let the reader decide • Claims of priority encourage the reviewer to scour the literature to show you up.
Longer words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize • Approximately 	Shorter words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use • about
Overly precious words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elucidate • explicate 	Strive for clear simple easy to read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use simpler words • Reader can read when tired • Reader can read and not feel stupid
Repetition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different words to describe verb
Abbreviations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zillions • Nonstandard 	Avoid abbreviations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule of thumb no more than 5 abbreviations per paper • Use standard abbreviations • The abbreviation shouldn't have a standard other meaning e.g. SBP=systolic blood pressure
Jargon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a PhD in the same sub sub sub discipline can understand 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flourishes 	Pay attention to nouns and verbs