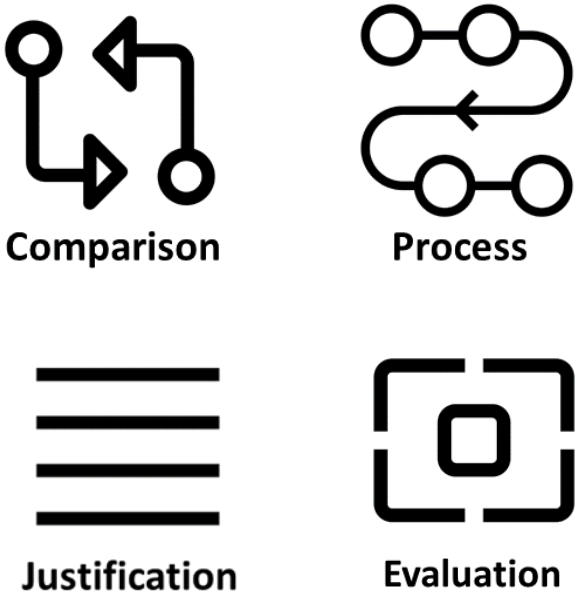
Academic Writing in English



STUDY*Smarter*

UWA's Academic Skills Centre

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

This resource is intended for UWA students
who are seeking to improve their English language skills
in academic and professional contexts.

The Academic Writing in English program was developed by Dr Sanna Peden and Dr Adam Nicol from STUDY*Smarter*, the academic skills centre at UWA.

If you have any comments on or questions about the workbook please contact us at studysmarter@uwa.edu.au

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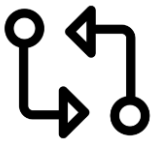

Comparison

Comparing, ranking and linking are all essential components of academic and professional writing. This module focuses on the most important grammar points and vocabulary when discussing qualities, quantities and connections.

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Comparison

Comparative adjectives

We use **comparative** and **superlative** forms of **adjectives** to compare qualities and characteristics. While some adjectives are irregular, most follow very clear patterns:

Basic form (short)	Comparative (+er)	Superlative (+est)
new	newer	newest
great	greater	greatest

Basic form (short, ends in e)	Comparative (+r)	Superlative (+st)
simple	simpler	simplest
large	larger	largest

Basic form (short, ends in consonant-vowel-consonant)	Comparative (double consonant +er)	Superlative (double consonant +est)
hot	hotter	hottest
flat	flatter	flattest

Basic form (ends in y)	Comparative (-y, +ier)	Superlative (-y, +iest)
healthy	healthier	healthiest
risky	riskier	riskiest

Basic form (>2 syllables)	Comparative (more/less +)	Superlative (most/least +)
challenging	less challenging	least challenging
confident	more confident	most confident

Basic form	Comparative (irregular)	Superlative (irregular)
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst

n.b. Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns (*I* am *confident* I can solve this problem). If you want to modify a verb you can often **add -ly** to the end of an adjective to form an **adverb** (I *confidently predict* I can solve this problem).

Comparison

Qualities and characteristics

There are many ways to use these basic, comparative and superlative forms to compare **qualities** and **characteristics**:

<u>similarity and difference:</u> (no) (comparative) than (no) more/less (basic form) than (basic form) not so much (basic form) as (basic form) (not) as (basic form) as (not) (number) as (basic form) as	This semester was **shorter than** the last. The solution is **no clearer than** before. The book was **less expensive than** I expected. The species is **more common** in mountainous **than** in coastal areas. The practice is **no less popular** now **than** in the 18th century. The methodology is **not so much rare as redundant**. Her plan is **as complex as** the previous one. The report was **not as short as** I was hoping. The article was **nowhere near as helpful as** you suggested. The consultation period ended up being **twice as long as** planned. The workshop was**n't half as informative as** promised.

<u>link and relationship:</u> the (comparative) + the (comparative) (not) so (basic form) that (not) too (basic form) for/to (not) (basic form) enough for/to	**The older** the patient, **the higher** the risk of injury. The **more limited** the project scope, **the less funding** will be required. The treatment was **so effective (that)** we halved the dose. The equipment was **not so expensive (that)** we couldn't purchase it. The manuscript was **too long (for the researchers) to** translate in time. His handwriting was **not too difficult (for us) to** decipher The policy was **questionable enough (for it) to** be challenged in court. It was**n't early enough (for them) to** participate in the study.

<u>rank and order:</u> so (basic form) as to the (superlative) pronoun (superlative) the/pronoun (number) (superlative)	The analyses were **so unique as to** be ground breaking. We skipped **the hardest** question**.** **My earliest** availability is next week. **The third largest** research centre is situated in Switzerland. Our article is **the second most cited** one in the issue**.** **The three youngest** PhD students won the prize.

Comparison

Quantities

Comparing and ranking **quantities** is also important, and there are a few key patterns to follow:

countable nouns	
as many as	We have published **as many** papers this year **as** last year.
	At one point we had **as many as** five research assistants.
as few as	We told them to limit the number of case studies to **as few as** three.
	I taught **fewer** tutorials this year **than** last.
fewer than	There are **fewer than** four possible explanations.
more than	We conducted **more** interviews **than** was necessary.

uncountable nouns	
as much as	Setting up the experiment took **as much** time **as** running it.
	The intention was to use **as little** water **as** possible.
as little as	I did **less** research on this essay (**than** the previous one).
less than	We will have the results back in **less time than** before.
more than	There was **more** participation **than** usual.

We also use various **linking words** to compare and connect **ideas**:

additional information	**In addition**, the political environment has changed since the Cold War.
	Moreover, the timing of the conference coincides with the school holidays.
cause and effect	The office will close at 3pm **due to** a scheduled power outage.
	As a result of the earlier set back, the team was cautious about proceeding.
example	**For example**, the not-for-profit sector had not been consulted.
	Some species, **such as** the bandicoot, are studied more regularly.
chronology	We decided, **first**, to seek legal advice.
	Finally, we recommend conducting a full audit of payroll practices.
alternative	**Alternatively**, it is possible to apply the Norwegian model in this context.
	On the other hand, similar proposals were made even after the recession.
concession	**While** the film was marketed as a drama, it had many comedic elements.
	Admittedly we only considered literature published after 1997.
opposition	**However**, the terminology used in the study is not clear.
	By contrast, the earlier study was much more cost effective.

Comparison

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Identify the correct comparative and superlative forms for the following adjectives:

basic form	comparative	superlative
alert	more alert	most alert
brief		
black		
cold		
dependent		
discreet		
discrete		
effective		
hard		
helpful		
inconclusive		
judicious		
keen		
light		
rare		
redundant		
shaky		
sad		
tall		
typical		
unaccountable		
onerous		

Comparison

EXERCISE 2

The descriptions in the boxes below compare the same three academic papers (A, B and C) to each other. Rank the three papers according to the different criteria:

The methodology outlined in C is less relevant for our purposes than that described in B, while the applicability of the procedure proposed in A is, for our purposes, negligible.	How relevant are the three papers? Most ⇒ Least
A is nowhere near as obsolete as B, though that, too, must be considered outdated by comparison to the much more recent C.	How up to date are the three papers? Most ⇒ Least
While all three papers are well written, there were clear stylistic differences directly related to the era of writing: the older the paper, the clearer the argument.	How clear are the three papers? Most ⇒ Least
A had twice the response rate of B and C combined, with the latter having both the least number of participants and the lowest level of engagement in the study.	How high are the three sets of response rates? Highest ⇒ Lowest
C had as many conflicting results as B, though the discrepancies identified in the former were of a greater scale. There were no such differences in A.	How consistent are the three sets of results? Most ⇒ Least

Comparison

EXERCISE 3

Highlight or underline the comparisons (qualities and quantities) in the abstract below:

Going with the Grain of Cognition:
Applying Insights from Psychology to Build Support for Childhood Vaccination[1]

Childhood vaccination is widely considered to be one of the most successful public health interventions. Yet, the effective delivery of vaccination depends upon public willingness to vaccinate. Recently, many countries have faced problems with vaccine hesitancy, where a growing number of parents perceive vaccination to be unsafe or unnecessary, leading some to delay or refuse vaccines for their children. Effective intervention strategies for countering this problem are currently sorely lacking, however. Here, we propose that this may be because existing strategies are grounded more in intuition than insights from psychology. Consequently, such strategies are sometimes at variance with basic psychological principles and assumptions. By going against the grain of cognition, such strategies potentially run the risk of undermining persuasive efforts to reduce vaccine hesitancy. We demonstrate this by drawing on key insights from cognitive and social psychology to show how various known features of human psychology can lead many intuitively appealing intervention strategies to backfire, yielding unintended and undesirable repercussions. We conclude with a summary of potential avenues of investigation that may be more effective in addressing vaccine hesitancy. Our key message is that intervention strategies must be crafted that go with the grain of cognition by incorporating key insights from the psychological sciences.

Keywords: backfire effect, information-deficit-model, intervention development, vaccination, vaccine hesitancy, vaccine confidence

What alternative phrases and structures could you use to make those same comparisons?

[1] Isabel Rossen, Mark J. Hurlstone and Carmen Lawrence (2016) "Going with the Grain of Cognition: Applying Insights from Psychology to Build Support for Childhood Vaccination" in *Frontiers in Psychology* 7:1483. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01483

Comparison

EXERCISE 4

Correct the highlighted sections below.[2] Pay attention to both grammar and formality.

Research in cognitive psychology shows that because of various biases of human memory, simply refuting vaccination myths and communicating scientific facts can backfire. For example, in order to debunk a myth, it seems logical to expose people to the myth so they know what you are referring to. Indeed, one of **the commonest strategy** for highlighting false information is to present myths juxtaposed with relevant facts. In one study examining the efficacy of such an approach, people were presented with a flyer displaying both myths and facts about the flu vaccine. Immediately after presentation, people could **more accurate** separate the myths from the facts. Yet, 30 min later, **lots of** people had difficulties determining which of the statements about the flu vaccine were myths or facts (Skurnik et al., 2005). It seems that exposure to the myth can actually increase familiarity with the misinformation, making it more likely for people to assume it to be true (Lewandowsky et al., 2012).

Another **really great** example of how the mere mention of a vaccine myth can undermine informational interventions was reported by Nyhan et al. (2014). In their study, parents were presented with information correcting the widespread myth that the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine causes autism. Although myth-debunking reduced belief in the false claims, it also paradoxically decreased vaccination intent amongst those **less favourablest** toward vaccination. It is also possible to elicit the *overkill backfire effect* when attempting to correct misinformation. While it may seem intuitive to present many counterarguments to debunk a myth, processing many arguments is more cognitively taxing than processing **less**, which renders it likely that the information will be integrated into individuals' mental models, especially when compared to a simple and compelling myth (Schwarz et al., 2007; Cook and Lewandowsky, 2011; Lewandowsky et al., 2012).

[2] Adapted from Rossen et al.

Comparison

EXERCISE 5

Describe and compare (qualities, quantities, ideas) the three organisations:

(A) Aardvark Inc	(B) Bilby Analytics	(C) Civet Foundation
not-for-profit	not-for-profit	not-for-profit
founded in 1975	founded in 1938	founded in 2016
community outreach	policy analysis and advice	research organisation
25 staff members	12 staff members	3 staff members
over 100 volunteers	external consultants	offices in 12 other countries
government funding	government funding	government and private funding

A, B and C are all not-for-profit organisations...

Comparison

EXERCISE 6

Collocations are sets of words that are typically used together – alternatives are not necessarily wrong in terms of grammar or meaning, but they just don't sound right. For example, while 'shifting', 'varying and 'changeable' mean approximately the same thing, only 'varying' fits naturally with 'degree':

~~shifting~~
varying
~~changeable~~
→ degree

Identify the correct collocations often used in comparisons:

roughly
coarsely
just about
→ equivalent

major →
alternative
difference
deviance

large
great
high
→ correlation

draw →
(a) difference
(a) distinction
(a) contrast

comparative
qualified
relative
→ merits

mutually →
exclusive
limited
constrained

Some other collocations for Comparison:

inextricably linked	vary considerably	entirely different
stark contrast	considerable variation	behave differently
marked contrast	differ considerably	significant reduction
sharp contrast	similar pattern	equally important

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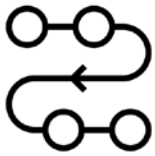

Process

Being able to clearly and accurately describe processes that you have undertaken in an experiment or project is an important skill in academic writing. In this module, we will explore how to write processes using the passive voice, the simple past/present, and how to sequence actions precisely using time connectors.

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Process

A **process** is a series of actions or steps undertaken in order to achieve a particular outcome. In academic writing, processes are commonly written in methods sections of reports, or in procedures manuals for guiding future research or practice.

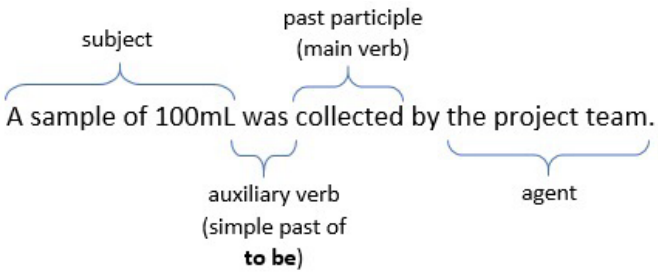
Passive voice

It is often appropriate when recounting a process to use **passive voice**. We use this voice when the 'doer' (sometimes called the **agent**) of the action is either unimportant or unknown. Despite use of active voice becoming more common in scientific writing in recent years, use of the passive voice is effective when the agent who performed a particular action is unimportant, as the action can usually be replicated without *that specific person or people* being involved. The passive voice can be constructed in most tenses:

example verb: to make

Tense	Active voice	Passive voice
Present simple	makes / make	is made / are made
Present continuous	Is making / are making	Is being made / are being made
Past simple	made	was made / were made
Past continuous	was making / were making	was being made / were being made
Present perfect simple	has made / have made	has been made / have been made
Can	can make	can be made
Will	will make	will be made

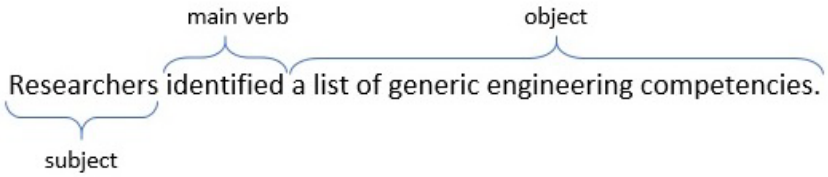
Usually, a passive voice construction in a written process is made from a **subject**, an **auxiliary verb** (a version of the verb *to be*) and a **past participle.** The agent of the action can be added after the past participle.



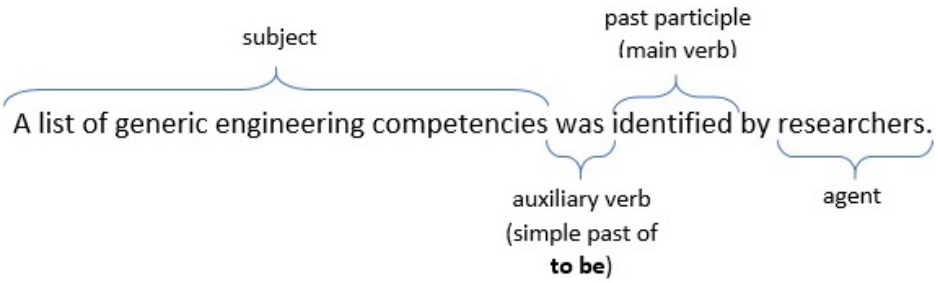
Process

When converting active to passive, remember that the **object** of an **active sentence** becomes the **subject** of a **passive sentence** and **the subject of the original sentence** becomes **the agent.** It is not always necessary to include the agent.

Active



Passive



Past/present simple tense

Processes can be written as a report of completed actions, as in a lab report, or as a sequence of actions that can be performed in the future, as in a procedures manual. To describe a specific, completed process undertaken in the past, we use **past simple** tense**.** To describe a general process that can be used in the future, we use **present simple** tense**.**

Past simple:	The solution **was** made by combining 15.0mL of 17.5M acetic acid with 8.25g of sodium acetate
Present simple	The solution **is** made by combining 15.0mL of 17.5M acetic acid with 8.25g of sodium acetate

Process

Sequencing actions

In a process, it is important to sequence individual actions or events precisely. To do this you must pay attention to words and phrases that describe time. These are words such as *next*, *after*, *following, before, once, then*. They are often called **time connectors.**

First	**First**, it was established that equilibrium had been achieved.
	The **first** step was to cordon off the site.
Once	**Once** the solution had cooled to 60 degrees, it was added to the beaker.
	Survey collection was ended **once** the response rate met 50%.
Next	**Next**, several samples were collected from the three areas.
	For the **next** step, 40 mL was drawn and pipetted.
Before	**Before** the temperature reached 60 degrees, the parameters were checked again.
	Before the quantity could be calculated, a sample had to be taken.
Following	**Following** this, 1200 grams were yielded.
	Following the error, it was decided to halt the collection.
Then	The sequence was **then** reinitialised.
	Then, once it had hardened, the material was put in place.
After	**After** 72 hours, the material was removed and put on ice.
	After this, the crop was reseeded.
Finally	**Finally**, the temperature was reduced by four degrees.
	The survey responses were anonymised, clustered and **finally** coded.

Process

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Rewrite the process sentences below in the passive form, and decide whether it would be necessary to include the agent in a research report.

ACTIVE	We recorded this value.
PASSIVE	This value was recorded (by us – agent not necessary).

ACTIVE	We randomly selected eight sites throughout the Peel region.
PASSIVE	

ACTIVE	The project team collected 125 responses, twelve of which were invalid.
PASSIVE	

ACTIVE	We gave the samples 12 hours to cure, then subjected them to 40 degrees of heat overnight.
PASSIVE	

ACTIVE	During the first sequence, I measured the parameters every 90 seconds. Thereafter, I measured every 120 seconds.
PASSIVE	

ACTIVE	Despite the low uptake, we decided to continue with the study.
PASSIVE	

ACTIVE	A severe weather event impeded the progress of the study.
PASSIVE	

Process

EXERCISE 2

Read the process below and complete the sentences using the verbs in the box. Ensure the verb is in the correct form. [1]

collect	**discard**	**isolate**
~~prepare~~	**warm**	**repeat**
store		**switch**

Briefly, microbubbles were prepared by sonicating a lipid suspension (DSPC:PEG40S = 9:1 molar ratio) in the presence of PFB gas. The microbubble liquid _____ in 60-mL syringes and concentrated into a cake by centrifuging the suspension at 300 relative centrifugal force (RCF) for 5 min using a bucket-rotor centrifuge. The microbubble cake was saved and the excess liquid _____. Size populations of 1–2 and 4–5 µm diameter _____ from the microbubble suspension using the methods described by Feshitan et al. (2009). All microbubbles _____ at 4 °C. Although the size-selected microbubbles are stable upon storage for at least 2 weeks (Feshitan et al. 2009), we used them on the same day that they were made for experimental consistency. […] In this procedure, 2 mL of the lipid solution in sterile-filtered PBS (2 mg/mL) _____ from 4°C to 60°C in a sealed 3-mL glass serum vial (Wheaton, Millville, NJ, USA) and briefly bath sonicated to disperse the lipid. The position of the valve _____ to close the vacuum line and immediately flood the headspace with PFB gas. This procedure _____ five times to ensure complete gas exchange.

[1] Adapted from Shashank Sirsi, Jameel Feshitan, James Kwan, Shunichi Homma and Mark Borden (2010) "Effect of Microbubble Size on Fundamental Mode High Frequency Ultrasound Imaging in Mice" *Ultrasound in Medicine & Biology*, 36: 6, 935-948.

Process

EXERCISE 3

In the extract from Exercise 2, one sentence is written in the active voice, rather than the passive. Underline that sentence, and suggest in your own words why the authors have chosen to write this element of the process in the active voice rather than the passive.

EXERCISE 4

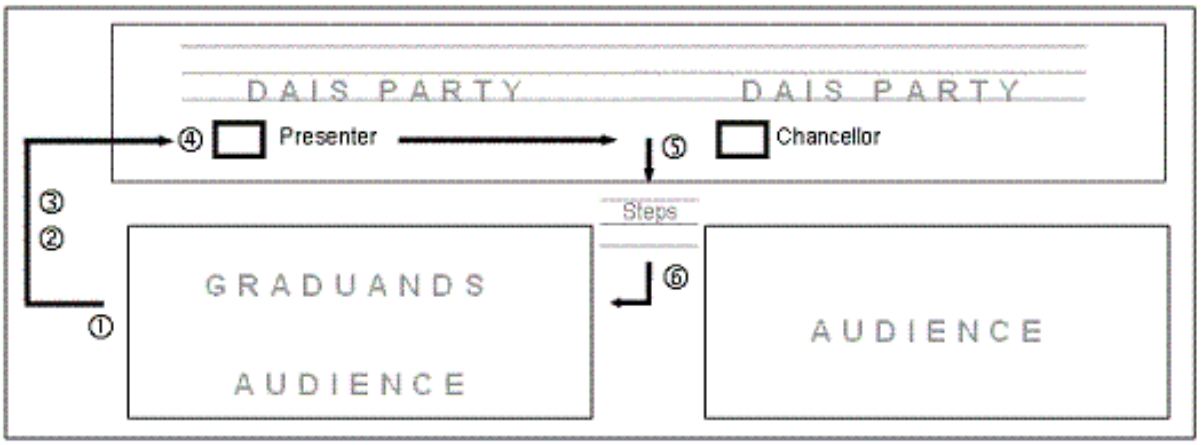
Using the time connectors as a guide, place the sentences below in the correct order to create a complete, sequenced process.

Step description	Order
With only the ripe and perfect ones remaining, the cherries were pulped and fermented.	
The entire process, from planting to serving, took 38 months.	
Once dried, the cherries were hulled and shined in preparation for roasting.	
Finally, It was ground, brewed and served.	
Following harvesting, the cherries were sorted, with the unripe or imperfect cherries removed.	
After several years of growth, the plants bore a bright red fruit, known as a coffee cherry, which was then harvested.	
The fermented cherries were then dried and stored for eight months.	
Following this process, the now-roasted coffee was rested for six days.	
They were roasted at a temperature of 210°C for fifteen minutes.	
First, coffee seeds were planted in a soil field approximately half an acre in size.	1

Process

EXERCISE 5

The images below illustrate a graduation process at UWA in Winthrop Hall. Summarise this information into a written description of at least 150 words.



Process

EXERCISE 6

Based on the information in the last exercise, how does Winthrop Hall have to be set up for the ceremony to run smoothly? How do staff, graduands and the Chancellor need to be informed?

Process

EXERCISE 7

Collocations are sets of words that are typically used together – alternatives are not necessarily wrong in terms of grammar or meaning, but they just don't sound right. For example, while 'unplanned', 'random' and 'chance' mean approximately the same thing, only 'random' fits naturally with 'sample':

~~unplanned~~
random
~~chance~~
→ sample

Identify the correct collocations often used in describing processes:

extant
present
current
→ status

introductory
→ manuscript
book
text

remain
stay
continue
→ stable

follow
→ (a) process
(a) method
(a) technique

cause
trigger
bring about
→ consequences

previous
→ practice
skill
experience

Some other collocations for Process:

qualitative approach	subsequent development	collect data
quantitative method	final stage	recent survey
initial phase	on closer examination	technical expertise
methodological problem	raw data	practical difficulties

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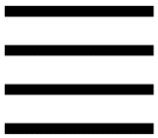

Justification

It is important to justify the choices you make in your academic writing, for example to explain why you chose to use a particular method, theory or process in your research; or to make a recommendation based on your evaluation of data. This module focuses on the most common grammatical points used to justify.

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Justification

Forming **compound sentences** is one of the most significant grammar points in justifying decisions. These sentences consist of two or more clauses linked together with **conjunctions**, **linking words or appropriate punctuation**. Make sure you also review "Comparing and Linking Ideas" in the Comparison module.

Coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions link clauses that contain complete ideas and can also stand independently:

The funding was approved,	**F**OR (result – reason)	the paper was well-written.*
His research is going well,	**A**ND (addition)	his supervisor is happy.
They don't have an office,	**N**OR (negative – negative)	**do they have** a parking spot.**
The essay was submitted on time,	**B**UT (contrast)	the word count was too high.
She will go to Fiji,	**O**R (alternative)	she will stay here to teach.
The workshop was popular,	**Y**ET (unexpected contrast)	it was cancelled.
There was a vacancy,	**S**O (reason – result)	I sent in my application.

*These days 'for' is considered archaic, and most people would use 'because' here instead.

**Note the change in sentence structure following 'nor'. Note also that there is a comma before the coordinating conjunction, unless the sentences are very short (e.g. She teaches French and studies German.)

You cannot link independent clauses with just a comma, but you can with a **semicolon**:

There was a power outage on campus**;** all the lights went out.	I wanted to submit an abstract**;** he didn't.

Justification

Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions combine two clauses where one is dependent on the other and cannot stand on its own. Either clause can come first, but the two must be separated with a comma if the dependent clause is placed first:

independent clause		dependent clause
She will write the introduction	**as long as**	you write up the results.
We chose the research site	**because**	it was the most accessible.

dependent clause		independent clause
As much as	I've enjoyed this semester,	I am looking forward to the break.
Even if	our hypothesis is false,	we can still write about it.

There is a wide range of subordinating conjunctions. For example:

as if	as long as	as much as
before	by the time	even if
in case	in the event that	just as

Correlative conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions work in pairs:

both – and	This policy has been debated at **both** state	**and** federal level.
either – or	We should **either** submit the application now,	**or** hope they extend the deadline.
neither – nor	I **neither** arranged the meeting	**nor** did I send them my notes.
not only – but also	This project is **not only** innovative,	**but also** timely.
whether – or	I'm not sure **whether** I should call her,	**or** wait for her to call me.

Justification

Modal auxiliaries

Modal auxiliaries are often used to form recommendations and advice. Modal auxiliaries give a particular tone or mode to a verb, just as the imperative and subjunctive do. Like the imperative and subjunctive, modal auxiliaries are followed by the basic or infinitive form of the verb without 'to'.

The modal verbs are **can, could, may, might, must, ought to, shall, should, will and would**, with occasional alternative forms to make negatives and past tenses. For example, 'must' can only be used in the present tense, so to indicate necessity in the past we would use 'had to' instead. Note that **could**, **should**, **must** and **ought to** are the most common modal verbs used when making a recommendation.

ability	**permission**
I **can** use Java.	You **can** lead the project.
As a child I **could** speak Greek.	**Could** we discuss the case study?
I **could have** gone to the conference.	You **may** begin.

possibility	**certainty & necessity**
Proof reading **can** be challenging.	We **had to** expect a delay.
This **could** take some time.	We **must** recruit more participants.
The data c**ould have** been deleted.	He **must have** withdrawn his paper.
This **may** take a while.	We **ought to** rehearse the presentation.
The Professor **may have** arrived.	You **should** be ready.
They **might** approve the funding.	The agency **should have** responded by now.
The class **might have** been cancelled.	

advice & suggestions	**requests & offers**
We **could** postpone the field trip.	**Can** I help you?
You **should** rewrite the conclusion.	**Could** you return the laptop?
	May I propose an alternative approach?
	Shall we wait for the results?
	Will you contact the library (please)?
	Would you like an extension?

Justification

Exercises

EXERCISE 1.

Form compound and complex sentences with conjunctions, linking words and/or punctuation. You can change the order of the sentences:

The conference was rescheduled.
We changed our travel plans.

The conference was rescheduled,
so we changed our travel plans.

I am not convinced he wrote this paper.
This paper is not in his area of expertise.

I need new textbooks for this unit.
Textbooks are always very expensive.
I'll check whether the library has any.

We don't get along.
We are doing the same group project.
He will help me with the assignment.

The evidence is unequivocal.
The project is on schedule.
Everything is going according to plan.

Justification

"Understanding Engineering Competencies"[1]

In Australia engineering education programs are accredited by Engineers Australia (EA). The accreditation criteria are significant to the decisions made by people driving change in engineering education programs. It is therefore critical to understand the nature of generic engineering competencies required in Australia.

A list of generic engineering competencies was identified from a review of international and Australian literature. By removing redundancy, the list was reduced to 64 competency items. These competencies were rated for importance by survey participants.

Letters inviting participation were sent to 2542 UWA engineering graduates. The survey was implemented online and approximately 50 responses were removed because participants had fewer than 5 or more than 20 years of experience, or because they missed more than five competency ratings. Three hundred valid responses were received.

Survey results showed that attitudinal, interpersonal, practical and creative competencies were required in addition to technical competencies. Competencies perceived as particularly important related to teamwork, communication and professionalism. Participants also noted that it was important to be familiar with first principles outside an individual's own engineering discipline.

The results of this study will help educators improve engineering education in Australia by aligning the competencies they teach with the competencies required for engineering jobs.

EXERCISE 2.

Read the text on the left and answer the questions below.

What is the purpose of the study?

Why is the study important?

[1] Adapted from Sally Male, Mark Bush & Elaine Chapman (2011), "Understanding Generic Engineering Competencies" in *Australasian Journal of Engineering Education*, 17:3, 147-156.

Justification

EXERCISE 3

Three researchers are each looking to partner with an organisation for a pilot project. You are going to recommend the most suitable organisation for each researcher.

First, identify the factors that are important to each researcher:

Petri Virtanen

I'm operating under a very strict time frame, and I would like to use local resources and materials. Ideally, of course, the project wouldn't be too expensive.

Diana Harris

I have a strict budget, which is a challenge given I want the project to have minimal environmental impact and use innovative design principles.

Bhumika Datta

For me the most important thing is to hire people locally and to source all materials locally as well. I don't want the project to take a lot of time, but it's not urgent.

Then consider the qualities of the four potential partner organisations:

A	B	C	D
uses overseas consultants	award-winning designers	can guarantee fast turnaround time	innovative young staff
award-winning designers	premium cost	local staff	based interstate
low cost	will take a long time	imported products	average price
will not disclose environmental credentials	good relationship with local producers and manufacturers	average price	environmentally conscious

Justification

Write a brief note to each researcher, recommending one of the four organisations, and explain the reasons for your choice. No organisation will be a perfect match, so look through Module 3: Justification again for advice on explaining the reasons behind your recommendation.

Justification

EXERCISE 4.

Collocations are sets of words that are typically used together – alternatives are not necessarily wrong in terms of grammar or meaning, but they just don't sound right. For example, while 'qualified', 'professional' and 'expert' mean approximately the same thing, only 'professional' fits naturally with 'standard':

~~qualified~~
professional
~~expert`

→ standard

Identify the correct collocations often used in justifications:

inflict force impose	restrictions	previously	discussed talked discoursed
limited narrow partial	resources	meaningful	style way method
lead to result in bring about	(the) conclusion	prime	standard specimen example

Some other collocations for Justification:

encounter problems	widely accepted	prove successful
experience difficulties	achieve (an) outcome	legal requirement
key factor	combined effect	regulatory framework
highly sensitive	high probability	external factors

Academic Writing in English

Evaluation

Being able to evaluate ideas and sources is a vital function in academic writing. Precise, informed evaluation demonstrates your ability to think critically and assess the validity of claims and arguments. In this module, we will explore the language and grammar of evaluating written and visual texts.

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Evaluation

We can perform simple but significant acts of evaluation by carefully choosing the tense and meaning of the verbs we use to introduce ideas or refer to sources. These verbs are known as **reporting verbs**. Varying the construction of our reporting verbs allows us to be precise and clear in our writing.

Reporting verbs

There are dozens of reporting verbs that we can draw from in academic English. Each gives a slightly different inflection to the work we are commenting on. It's important to be varied and accurate in our choices. A small selection of examples, with their meanings:

Verb	*The author…*
Argues	presents a wide range of evidence to support a particular position.
Asserts	is confident or forceful in stating their position.
Contends	puts forward a position that is in opposition to another
Demonstrates	shows clearly by example or explanation why their position is true.
Elaborates	adds to or develops in detail a position or idea.
Observes	takes note of something, without being definitive.
Posits	puts forward a theory, which may be subject to further testing.
Recommends	advises a particular position or action be taken .
Suggests	puts forward an idea, but not forcefully.

It's important not to be gimmicky or overly-elaborate when choosing reporting verbs, but think carefully about the additional meaning you are able to convey to your reader.

Tenses for evaluation

Similarly, tense is an important source of meaning when evaluating ideas. Generally, we use the **simple present** tense to indicate to our reader that the idea or source we are introducing is still **current**:

Simple present	
argues	Ali **argues** that public funds should not be used for extreme sport.
contends	Arnesson **contends** that the word was mistranslated.
observes	Cheung **observes** that there no evidence for this assertion.
concludes	Therefore, Kim **concludes** that the plan is actionable.
recommends	Ertz **recommends** that this process be used for all such studies.

Evaluation

By contrast, we can use the **simple past** to indicate that an idea or source is outdated, disproven or part of previous era of academic inquiry:

Simple past	
argued	Lamarck **argued** that organisms can inherit acquired characteristics.
contended	Cheung **contended** that this effect would be limited.
observed	Fitzgerald **observed** that there are no second acts in American lives.
concluded	Stahl **concluded** that rust was caused by phlogiston.
recommended	Ertz **recommended** that this process be used for all such studies.

Further, to add greater nuance to our evaluative language, we can use the **present perfect** to preface an idea that we are going to connect with our own ideas. We do this in order to either dispute, support or add depth to the work of others.

Present perfect	
has argued	As Opan **has argued**, Arabella Donne's entrance to the text is unlike any in English literature.
has contended	Pearson et al **have contended** that this is caused by excess moisture in the system, but our study shows that this is not the case.
has observed	Simran **has observed** that this is not the case.
has concluded	The group **has concluded** that no further study is necessary. We disagree.
has recommended	Ertz **has recommended** that this process be used for all such studies; our work supports such a view.

Sentence patterns

Reporting verbs can fit into various sentence patterns, to suit various evaluative purposes. Some examples are:

Author + reporting verb + that	Pearson contends that… Pearson contended that… Pearson has contended that…
As + author + reporting verb	As Singh argues… As Singh has argued…
Author + reporting verb + noun	Cheung disputes the findings. Cheung disputed the findings. Cheung has disputed the findings.
Author + reporting verb + preposition	Smith agrees with earlier findings. Smith agreed with earlier findings. Smith has agreed with earlier findings.

Evaluation

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Fill in the text below using the most appropriate verb tenses: [1]

Since it **[to be]** _____ published, *The English Class* **[to receive]** _____varied responses. So far it **[to be]** _____better received for its contents than its narrative skills. It **[to not attract]** _____ as much attention as other works by Ouyang. Partly this may be because Australian readers **[to have]** _____limited knowledge of the ample examples of translation in the novel. Partly it may be because the book **[to not focus]** _____strongly on the expected narrative of the Cultural Revolution, even though the first two chapters **[to be]** _____set against that background. Structurally, the text **[to be]** _____divided into two distinct parts. Extended passages in italics **[to indicate]** _____the author's writing process, while nonitalicised passages **[to be]** _____ divided into two sub-parts: before and after the main character Jing **[to arrive]** _____in Australia. Ouyang **[to dramatise]** _____his experience as a student majoring in English into a unique story, illustrating the reality of living in different languages, and in a past and present fabricated by languages.

[1] Adapted from Beibei Chen (2018), "Bilingualism and Cultural Translation: On the dilemma of migration in Ouyang Yu's *The English Class*" in *Westerly*, 63:2, 174-184.

Evaluation

EXERCISE 2

Answer the questions with reference to both of the extracts below, using a range of appropriate reporting verbs. Remember to also pay attention to tense:

Morrell: If tales of nuclear catastrophe present parables about technology and the dangerous possibilities of science, climate change offers a different lesson. Climate change is less an indictment of technology than an indictment of industrial capitalism and political economics more broadly considered. Its lessons entail a more thoroughgoing social critique. The aesthetic of nuclear catastrophe is an aesthetic of the technological sublime. Climate change prompts the necessity for a different aesthetic. Climate change, a social problem, necessitates a social solution.[2]

According to Morrell and Neilson, how are perceptions of nuclear disaster and climate change different?

Neilson: Fears of a nuclear apocalypse are of a fundamentally different shape and form to the fears induced by the environmental crises of the Anthropocene. The timescale and sense of duration tied to the dropping of a nuclear bomb is fundamentally very small, and the culpability and sense of agency tied to this threat also lies with who ordains if, when and where the red button is pressed. As individuals we are somewhat powerless in the face of nuclear threat. By contrast, there is a sense of culpability and individualised agency at play in the Anthropocene that was not present in the days when people feared a global nuclear war. Indeed, every disposable coffee cup and every rotation of our car keys in the ignition contributes towards climate change in a hauntingly meaningful sense.[3]

According to Morrell and Neilson, what is the role of the individual in addressing climate change?

[2] Adapted from John V Morrell (2012), *The dialectic of climate change: Apocalypse, utopia and the environmental imagination*. Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Vanderbilt University My 2012, 104-105.

[3] Adapted from Toby Neilson (2019), "Different Death Stars and devastated Earths: Contemporary sf cinema's imagination of disaster in the Anthropocene" in *Science Fiction Film and Television* 12:2, 242-243.

Evaluation

EXERCISE 3

Consider the tone of the bolded verbs in the passages below where four researchers discuss their recent publications, which are each based on the work of a prominent scholar. What are the different authors' views of the Marchesi study?

Dr Emily Wells: "I **commend** the findings by Marchesi (2003), and **note** that the original study has had considerable influence in the field. While I **admit** that an update on the initial study is overdue, I do not **believe** that an adjustment to the original methodology is necessary."

What is Dr Wells' view of the Marchesi study?

generally positive, although they admit it is out of date

Mr Harjot Singh: "I **report** on the findings by Marchesi (2003), **acknowledging** that the original study has had considerable influence in the field. I go on to **state** that an update on the initial study is overdue, and **add** that an adjustment to the original methodology should be considered."

What is Mr Singh's view of the Marchesi study?

Ms Annabel Mayhew: "I **challenge** the findings by Marchesi (2003), though I **concede** that the original study has had considerable influence in the field. I also **argue** that an update on the initial study is overdue, and **stress** that an adjustment to the original methodology should be considered.

What is Ms Mayhew's view of the Marchesi study?

Professor Pieter De Vries: "I **reject** the findings by Marchesi (2003), and I **lament** that the original study had considerable influence in the field. I go on to **support the view** that an update on the initial study is overdue, and **insist** that a replacement to the original methodology be developed."

What is Professor De Vries' view of the Marchesi study?

Evaluation

EXERCISE 4

Considering what you know from the last exercise about the different researchers' views about the 2003 Marchesi study, how do you think each pictured researcher would react to the following announcements, and why?

- Dr Wells receives a large grant to continue Marchesi's work:

- The original Marchesi study is reprinted and receives an award:

- A new study demonstrates serious flaws in Marchesi's research practice:

Evaluation

EXERCISE 5

Collocations are sets of words that are typically used together – alternatives are not necessarily wrong in terms of grammar or meaning, but they just don't sound right. For example, while 'unique', 'distinctive' and 'single' mean approximately the same thing, only 'unique' fits naturally with 'opportunity':

~~distinctive~~
unique
~~single~~
→ opportunity

Identify the correct collocations often used in evaluations:

accurate
true
precise
→ assessment

general
→ bias
→ tendency
→ leaning

decidedly
greatly
highly
→ effective

increased
→ jeopardy
→ gamble
→ risk

basic
plain
straightforward
→ premise

positive
→ link
→ correlation
→ connection

Some other collocations for Evaluation:

compelling argument	ideally suited	well documented
useful information	optimal solution	low priority
clear indication	particularly valuable	little significance
increasingly sophisticated	appropriate level	serious consequences

References and image credits

References

Beibei Chen (2018), "Bilingualism and Cultural Translation: On the dilemma of migration in Ouyang Yu's *The English Class*" in *Westerly*, 63:2, 174-184.

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Appendix: Grammar and collocation

Understanding common grammatical terms will help you complete the exercises in this booklet and improve your academic English. This section contains a glossary or dictionary of grammatical terms, as well as some of the most common collocations used in academic writing.

Grammar Glossary

Complete sentences

Using **complete sentences** is the founding grammatical principle of academic and professional writing. Constructing incomplete sentences is one of the most common mistakes students make in their writing. Knowing the difference between sentence, clause and phrase can help avoid this error:

sentence	Contains a subject and a predicate, and expresses a complete idea. *I don't think waiting for him is wise, because the forecast promises rough winds.*
clause	Contains a subject and a predicate, but is not always a complete sentence. *I don't think waiting for him is wise* (independent clause, complete sentence) *, because the forecast promises rough winds*. (dependent clause, incomplete sentence)
phrase	Words grouped together, without a predicate or subject. I don't think *waiting for him* is wise, because the forecast promises *rough winds*.

Grammatical roles

Sentences, clauses and phrases are made up of three key **grammatical roles**: the predicate, subject and object. The predicate and subject are the most important roles, and a sentence cannot be complete without them.

simple predicate	A verb that has a tense and a subject. An essential part of a complete sentence. She *wrote* a letter to us. They *know* the old secret. My concern for Mark *is growing*.
subject	Controls the predicate. An essential part of a complete sentence. *She* wrote a letter to us. *They* know the old secret. *My concern for Mark* is growing.
object	Impacted by the predicate, a preposition or another object. She wrote *a letter* to *us*. They know *the old secret.* My concern for *Mark* is growing.

Grammar Glossary

Parts of speech

Different word categories, also known as **parts of speech**, either fill or complement one of the key grammatical roles in a sentence:

verb	An action or a state of being. If it has tense and a subject it is a **simple predicate**. She *finds* me a very interesting article in the paper every day. I *read* them quickly. (In these examples 'finds' and read' are predicates. However, the basic forms 'to find' and 'to read' do not have tenses or subjects, so are verbs but not predicates.)
noun	A person, place, thing or idea. Can be either the subject or object of a sentence. She finds me a very interesting *article* in the *paper* every *day*. I read them quickly.
pronoun	Stands in for a noun. Can act as either the subject or object of a sentence. *She* finds *me* a very interesting article in the paper every day. *I* read *them* quickly.
adjective	Modifies nouns. She finds me a very *interesting* article in the paper every day. I read them quickly.
adverb	Modifies verbs and adjectives She finds me a *very* interesting article in the paper every day. I read them *quickly*.
article	Indicates whether a noun is definite (the) or indefinite (a, an). She finds me *a* very interesting article in *the* paper every day. I read them quickly.
preposition	Indicates a relationship or link to a noun or pronoun. Call me and the lab technician *on* our mobiles, but not *before* Friday.
conjunction	Joins two or more words or clauses. Call me *and* the lab technician on our mobiles, *but* not before Friday.

Collocations are sets of words that are typically used together – alternatives are not necessarily wrong in terms of grammar or meaning, but they just don't sound right. For example, while 'research', 'study' and 'investigation' mean approximately the same thing, only 'research' fits naturally with 'project':

~~study~~
research
~~investigation~~
} project

Try the exercise below and identify the correct collocations by crossing out the alternatives.

grow
make
develop
} (a) technique

strong
} technique
procedure
evidence

liked
desired
wanted
} outcome

dramatic
} effect
consequence
upshot

conduct
direct
administer
} (an) analysis

internal
} encounter
fight
conflict

The following pages list some collocations commonly used in academic writing, listed according to their typical function. Practise using these terms in your own writing, and keep a record of other collocations you learn during your studies.

Constraints and context

impose restrictions	crucial factor	currently available
professional standard	distinguishing feature	current status
minimum standard	exceptional circumstances	freely available
legal requirement	physical properties	allocate resources
regulatory framework	practical difficulties	limited resources
preferential treatment	global issue	demographic factor
particular emphasis	business sector	geographic(al) distribution
specifically designed	broader context	dependent variable
major challenge	scientific community	external factors

Sources and technologies

additional resources	academic writing	background knowledge
anecdotal evidence	comprehensive overview	become available
academic journal	allocate resources	general consensus
historical data	empirical evidence	technical expertise
source material	supporting evidence	advanced technology
recent survey	theoretical understanding	technological advances
numerical data	theoretical basis	transport system
raw data	multiple sources	renewable energy
written statement	individual experience	artificial intelligence
random sample		

Process

strategic planning	collect data	mainly concerned with
quantitative method	interpret data	draw a distinction
qualitative approach	leading role	make a distinction
initial phase	final stage	make explicit
perform a function	assess the impact of	on closer examination
face difficulties	consider the implications	preliminary findings
methodological problem	take into consideration	subsequent development
	careful analysis	concluding remarks

e.g. The restrictions imposed by the regulatory framework necessitate allocating additional resources to the initial data collection phase of the project.

Participation

reach (an) agreement	make an observation	encounter problems
provide guidance	identify a problem	experience difficulties
resolve a conflict	follow instructions	conduct research
concerted effort	create an environment	thought process
active involvement	create conditions	gain insight
give feedback	give (somebody) an impression	

Quality

relevant factors	basic principle	pivotal role
intrinsic value	basic concept	key factor
naturally occurring	distinct type	central focus
standard format	basic premise	prime example
tightly controlled	key principle	primarily responsible
extremely sensitive	close proximity	widespread use
highly sensitive	previously discussed	widely accepted
general tendency	newly acquired	traditional view
have a tendency	complex process	universally accepted
constant rate	continuous process	meaningful way

Number and amount

large quantities	substantial amount	high percentage
significant proportion	increased level	small percentage
maximum duration	full range	finite number
wide range	narrow range	relatively low
	vast array	

e.g. It is important to create laboratory conditions that reflect the relatively low levels of naturally occurring microbial activity at the research site.

Result

achieve (an) outcome	affect (the) outcome	negative effect
combined effect	statistically significant	potential harm
show a trend	significant effect	increased risk
remain stable	positive correlation	causal link
consistent pattern	direct link	high concentration
radical transformation	direct consequences	prove successful
change rapidly	high probability	positive outcome
greatly reduced	increase (the) likelihood	meet expectations
emotional reaction	likely outcome	key findings
strong reaction	unintended consequences	lead to the conclusion

Comparison

major difference	vary considerably	entirely different
mutually exclusive	considerable variation	behave differently
varying degree	differ considerably	significant reduction
stark contrast	similar pattern	equally important
marked contrast	high correlation	relative merits
sharp contrast	inextricably linked	roughly equivalent

Evaluation and recommendation

well documented	useful information	significant contribution
clear evidence	clear indication	accurate assessment
compelling evidence	increasingly sophisticated	particularly valuable
compelling argument	sufficient detail	appropriate level
ample evidence	rely heavily	further consideration
low priority	great impact	ideally suited
little significance	highly effective	alternative approach
serious consequences	effective implementation	alternative solution
vital importance	unique opportunity	optimal solution

e.g. As childhood obesity rates remained stable throughout the study with no major difference between the effectiveness of either treatment, it is of vital importance to investigate alternative solutions to this health care crisis