

STUDENT
SUCCESS

The Science of Academic Writing

A Guide for Postgraduates

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Enhancing Academic Writing

This chapter provides an overview of the crucial issues to consider while writing one's thesis. First, the chapter explicitly covers the grammatical accuracy needed in **academic writing**. It emphasises sentence structure, conciseness, linking, and continuity. Next, the chapter considers the paragraph structure and, finally, it looks at coherence and flow between chapters.

Scientists use academic writing to communicate highly scientific information from their research to others. In addition, academic writing is used in scholarly publications and at universities. For example, a university student uses academic writing in essays, research papers, research proposals, and theses or dissertations. All these documents should be well structured and written in language that communicates clearly.

Research from different contexts and across various universities, both at home and abroad, shows that students face challenges in producing academic writing, especially in English, which may not be their first language but which has emerged as the lingua franca for most academic discourse. This challenge starts from the proposal writing stage and persists to thesis writing (Ali Al-Khairi, 2013; Cumming, Lai, & Cho, 2016; Hei & David, 2015; Komba, 2015; Manchishi, Ndhlovu, & Mwanza, 2015; Qasem & Zayid, 2019; Yeh, 2010). The problem of low English proficiency, such as poor grammar and an inadequate vocabulary, has been shown to negatively affect student writing. While the abundance of software that is available to assist in this issue might indicate that this is not a significant issue, it does not lessen the critical challenge of developing confidence in conveying an academic voice and the difficulty in organising and expressing ideas.

The empirical literature suggests that traditional academic writing techniques may not adequately address postgraduate needs in research writing. Students are rarely offered systematic instruction in high-level academic writing, which is the most pressing need during thesis writing. Courses designed for assisting in academic writing were shown to be inadequate, and students are left to grope around for ways to survive the research writing task (Yeh, 2010). Furthermore, many books that could supplement universities' efforts in this area focus on English writing and include complicated terminologies, English jargon, colloquialism, and conversational language that is difficult to comprehend, especially for students whose native language is not English (Qasem & Zayid, 2019). In the remainder of this chapter, we will cover some of the basics that are needed in good academic writing.

Grammatical accuracy

Word-level grammar

Grammar is the way words are arranged to construct proper sentences. This section explicitly covers the grammatical accuracy needed in academic writing, especially in writing a thesis and academic papers. The writing should be error-free in terms of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. In other words, it should be grammatically accurate to influence the readers' impression of the thesis. Sloppy presentation, poor spelling, and grammatical errors distract the examiner's concentration on the actual content, questioning the student's competence and the quality of the thesis.

Word-level grammar explains how to use verbs and tenses (both passive and active voice), adverbs, nouns, and first-person pronouns, while sentence-level grammar covers words, phrases, and clauses.

Active and passive verbs

In academic writing, you use your voice to show the reader what you are thinking, your views, and how you have engaged critically with the topic being discussed.

The subject acts in sentences written in the active voice, while in a sentence written in the passive voice, the subject receives the action. In other words, passive voice emphasises the action rather than the actor. Active verbs are recommended over passive verbs in academic writing as active verbs are more direct and less wordy. If you want to emphasise what is occurring or the action rather than who is doing it, you can use the passive voice.

The voice used in academic writing depends on the university department or disciplinary area. Some traditions (such as the more positivist methodologies) value writing that is more objective, where the student's voice does not stand out. In contrast, other disciplines, such as anthropology, demand a writing style that is more expressive and allows more room for individual observations.

Example: Active and passive voice

Active: Researchers showed that high blood cholesterol could cause heart attacks.

Passive: It was established that heart attacks could be caused by high blood cholesterol.

The subject–verb agreement

The subject and the verb need to agree because subject–verb agreement unites a sentence. The subject and verb should be placed close together at the beginning of the sentence to make it easier for readers to follow the ideas. Do not insert extra words or phrases to describe the subject between the subject and verb.

Example: Subject–verb agreement

Subject–verb disagreement: The patient's blood sugar levels [subject/the actor] taken six hours after the insulin injection [extra words] decreased [verb] by 50%.

Subject–verb agreement: The patient's blood sugar levels [subject/the actor] had decreased [verb] by 50% six hours after the insulin injection [extra words].

Use of tenses in academic writing in chapters

This section explains how tenses are explicitly used in thesis chapters. You should be consistent in the use of tenses. For example, use the same tense within the same paragraph or in adjacent paragraphs of a document. Furthermore, past tense is used to recount past events, such as the study's purpose, literature review, methodology chapters, and the results chapter.

Example: Past tense

Our study aimed to test approaches that can be used to improve ARV medication adherence by persons living with HIV/AIDS. [purpose] Studies conducted by Demartoto & Adriani (2016) showed a relationship between the perceived seriousness of the disease and compliance with medication. [literature review] We used an analytical research design to collect data from 36 randomly selected patients in a health facility. [methodology] These results indicated a significant negative correlation between the perception of the seriousness of the disease and antiretroviral therapy adherence. [results]

The present tense states the research objectives, discusses the results' implications, and presents conclusions.

Example: Present tense

This study investigates perceptions about the severity of disease progression and its influence on adherence to antiretroviral (ARV) medication. [objective] The results support Safri, Sukartini, and Ulfiana's (2013) study, which showed that perceived seriousness significantly affects compliance to take medication. [implications] Therefore, perception of the seriousness of the disease is an influential factor in medication adherence. [conclusion]

The present perfect tense describes something that began in the past and continues to the present, and is appropriate for literature reviews and descriptions of a procedure if the discussion is on past events.

Example: Present perfect tense

Several cohort studies conducted over several years have confirmed the benefits of medication in improving the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS (Del Romero et al., 2010; Musicco et al., 1994).

The future tense describes how you intend to accomplish your research in the future. It is used in the proposals and methodology chapter.

Example: Future tense

Using random sampling, we shall enrol HIV/AIDs patients attending a comprehensive care unit at the health facility who were over 18 years and not critically ill. [proposal stage]

Pronouns

Pronouns are words that stand in for nouns and can refer to specific people and things (e.g., I, you, it, him, their, this) or to non-specific people and things (e.g., anybody, one, some, each). First-person pronouns (I, we) may be used in academic writing, depending on your field, but second-person pronouns are best avoided. You can avoid using second-person pronouns (you, yours) in your academic writing by using 'one' instead of 'you' and 'one's' instead of 'yours'. For example: 'You should use your medicines as directed' is stated as 'One should use one's medication as directed.'

Avoid pronouns such as 'this', 'that', 'these', and 'those' when referring to someone or something in the previous sentence. Instead, repeat the noun, such as 'this test', 'that trial', 'these participants', and 'those reports'. This approach avoids introducing ambiguity in your text. Likewise, avoid ambiguity by using a personal pronoun rather than the third person. For example, instead of saying 'the literature being reviewed', replace it with 'the authors reviewing the literature'.

Avoid using too many prepositional phrases, such as 'there is ...' and 'there are ...', because they obscure the main subject and action in a sentence.

In addition to following grammar rules, it is important to consistently apply conventions regarding writing numbers, introducing abbreviations, capitalising terms and headings, and spelling and punctuation used in UK and US English.

Sentence-level structure

This section focuses on the sentence (grammar and sentence structure) as the basic unit of academic writing. A sentence can be either a simple, compound, or complex sentence. Simple sentences have three parts, usually in this order: a subject (someone or something acting, a noun or a pronoun), a verb (an action word or a state-of-being word, such as 'to be' or 'to feel'), and words to complete the thought.

Example: Simple sentence

The evidence in this study [subject] indicates [verb] a shortage of drugs in the facility [completes the thought].

A compound sentence has two connected thoughts of equal importance. Each clause has equal weight in terms of ideas, which are equally important. A comma and a linking word, such as 'and', 'but', or 'or' (conjunctions), join the clauses to form the sentence.

Example: Compound sentence

The evidence [subject] of this study indicates [verb] a shortage of drugs in the facility, but [a comma and a linking word] the findings were insufficient to conclude that policy reform is needed [complete the thought].

A complex sentence has a complete base but adds additional information, which can be placed in brackets or separated with other punctuation, such as commas. In a complex sentence, the different elements of the sentence cannot stand alone.

Example: Complex sentence

The evidence [subject] of this study (which was quantitative) [additional information] indicates [verb] the shortage of drugs was insufficient to conclude that policy reform is needed [complete the thought].

The average number of words per sentence can range from 8 for a very easy and simple sentence to 20 for a complex or compound sentence. However, these thresholds are guidelines, not set limits. Sentences with more than 30 words are often difficult to follow and confuse the reader. Therefore, break long sentences into multiple sentences to ensure readability and comprehension. A mix of short and long sentences maintains interest and comprehension; thus, long sentences may be

necessary occasionally. Long sentences also help to avoid monotony. Short sentences (not more than 25 words) are easier to comprehend than long ones. Therefore, vary sentence lengths to help readers maintain interest and comprehension. Direct, declarative sentences with simple, common words are usually the best.

Conciseness

Conciseness is essential in academic writing. Conciseness, which is the opposite of wordiness, helps to clarify sentences. Make sentences concise by eliminating redundant words (wordiness), overuse of the passive voice, and combining too many ideas into one long sentence. Use a new sentence for each new idea. Jargon or specialist language makes writing more concise and accurate but generally targets an academic audience that is familiar with the terminology. Also, avoid inflated phrases that use several words where just one or two are sufficient. For example, 'Age appears to have a consequence [inflated] on adherence to medication' can be simply expressed as 'Age appears to affect adherence to medication'. Avoid redundancies, which occur when the same idea is expressed twice, and use only essential words to convey meaning. For example, avoid saying 'compete with each other' instead of 'competing', 'due to the fact that' instead of 'because' or 'since', and 'in connection with' instead of 'about'.

Wordiness uses too many words to make a point, obscures main points, and impedes a grasp of ideas.

Examples: Wordiness

Wordy sentence: I will now begin this section by making a number of observations concerning antiretroviral medication issues.

Concise sentence: I begin by making several observations about antiretroviral medication.

Most writing software can give alternative words or phrases to prevent wordiness.

Punctuation and transitioning

This section illustrates how punctuation marks and transitional words contribute to continuity and showing the relationship between ideas.

For good academic writing, you should be fully aware of how punctuation is used in sentences.

Punctuation

Punctuation primarily indicates pauses in thought and emphasises specific ideas or thoughts, making writing straightforward and understandable for readers. In addition, punctuation marks show continuity in the presentation of ideas, and they help to strengthen arguments made in the text. Punctuation marks include abbreviations, apostrophes, brackets, capital letters, colons, commas, dashes, ellipses, exclamation marks, hyphens, italics, underlining, parentheses, quotation marks, and semi-colons. The most common punctuation marks are the period, comma, and semi-colon.

Commas [,] mark pauses between clauses within a sentence or are used to separate three or more items in a list. Commas are placed around subordinate clauses that add extra information to a sentence. For example:

Jansen, a nutritionist, was a great scientist.

More books, journals, and student theses need to be stocked in the library.

Semi-colons [;] represent a pause and are more distinctive than a comma. The semi-colon is used to separate the independent clauses of a compound sentence. It uses coordinating conjunction, such as 'and', 'or', 'for', 'so', and 'yet'. The clause before and after the semi-colon should be independent. In other words, a semi-colon connects extra independent parts of a sentence. For example:

The health research conference is top-rated; researchers from all over the globe attend it each year.

A semi-colon is also used in lists that already have commas. For example:

Next, the reader presents the author's purpose, rationale and context for the study; the research methodology and data-gathering procedures; and the findings of the research.

Colons [:] introduce elements of lists. The colon is used when two related clauses follow a sequence of thought. For example:

There are three types of Rhetorical appeals: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos.

A colon can also be used to connect two sentences when the second sentence summarises, improves, or explains the first. Both sentences should be complete. Colons should not be used this way too frequently as they can interrupt the flow of the writing. For example:

The study focused on four demographic variables: age, sex, marital status, and occupation.

Capital letters are used to start a sentence. They are also used when the previous sentence ends with a question mark or an exclamation mark, or if the sentence ends with a clause in parentheses (brackets).

Exclamation marks [!] show surprise or excitement at the end of a sentence. The use of exclamation marks is not recommended in academic writing.

Periods, or full stops [.] are used to indicate the end of a sentence. They are placed at the end of an abbreviated word (e.g., Prof.), or after certain abbreviations of time (e.g., 5:00 p.m.). The most used abbreviation forms in science are ‘et al.’, and ‘etc.’, which stands for ‘et cetera’. Three periods in a row are called an ellipsis, which indicates that entire words or complete subordinate clauses have been cut out of a quote.

Question marks [?] are used at the end of a sentence to show a direct question. For example:

What is the topic of your thesis?

Apostrophes ['] are used to show ownership of something. If the ‘owning’ noun is singular, the apostrophe comes before the ‘s’ (e.g., ‘the researcher’s findings’), but if there is more than one ‘owning’ subject, such as several researchers, the apostrophe is placed after the ‘s’ (e.g., ‘the researchers’ findings’). An apostrophe is also used to show that letters have been left out of a word (e.g., ‘can’t’ instead of ‘cannot’). These are called contractions. It is best to avoid contractions in academic writing.

Brackets [()], also called parentheses, add information to a sentence when the sentence can still make sense without the added information. The added information brings something extra or interesting to the sentence. For example:

Students should (intentionally) avoid grammatical errors in their essays.

Dashes [–] are also an indicator of additional information. A dash can indicate a pause, especially for effect at the end of a sentence. They can

also be used instead of brackets. A dash used before a phrase summarises the idea of a sentence. For example:

Beliefs and motivation – these are concepts used to define perceived behavioural control.

Subjective dashes used before and after a phrase or list add extra information in the middle of a sentence. For example:

Conceptual frameworks define the concepts – building blocks – of a theory.

Hyphens [-] are used to join two words that together form one idea (e.g., ‘health-related’ or ‘self-confidence’). They are also used to join prefixes to terms (e.g., ‘non-controlled environment’), and when writing compound numbers (e.g., ‘one-eighth’).

Quotation marks [‘...’] are used to mark the beginning and end of a phrase to show that the text is taken from another source and you are repeating the exact words used by the original writer. Punctuation is placed after the closing quotation mark if it is not part of the quoted matter. For example:

Alison defined critical review as ‘developing an argument designed to convince a particular audience’. She found that ‘The level of sugar intake is not related to hyperactivity in children’.

Example: Full stops, commas, semi-colons, and colons

A patient needs to adhere to medication; [semi-colon] otherwise, [comma] they risk developing complications. To collect information on adherence and complication, we used a questionnaire that consisted of three parts: [colon] prescriptions, clinical conditions, and blood screening [commas marking a list].

Transitioning

Apart from using punctuation, another way to achieve continuity is through transition words that show the relationships between ideas. Transition words usually appear at the start of a new sentence or clause (followed by a comma). They express how this sentence or clause relates to the previous one. However, transition words can also appear in the middle of a clause.

Transition words and phrases link or connect different ideas in the sentences. To ensure continuity, present ideas through transition words which maintain the flow of thought and link together different ideas in the text to help the reader understand the logic of the thesis. You need to choose a word or phrase to match the logic of the relationship or connection you are making. For example, a *logical relationship* uses words such as ‘but’, ‘consequently’, ‘conversely’, ‘even so’, ‘however’, ‘nevertheless’, ‘therefore’, and ‘thus’. Words such as ‘next’, ‘after’, ‘while’, and ‘since’ are used for time links. Words used for cause and effect are: ‘therefore’, ‘similarly’, and ‘moreover’. If you want to give another example to make the same point, you can use words that imply emphasis or similarity, for example, ‘nevertheless’, ‘furthermore’, ‘indeed’, and ‘also’.

Example: Transition words in a paragraph

Studies conducted in France (a developed country) indicated a correlation between medication adherence and barriers to accessing treatment. Conversely, [link] we conducted a comparable study in Kenya (a developing country). However, our study showed no correlation between medication adherence and barriers to treatment. Therefore, evidence on the perception of barriers and adherence remains inconclusive.

Paragraphing

This section focuses on developing a paragraph structure. A paragraph comprises a group of connected sentences that support one main idea or a ‘controlling idea’, irrespective of its length. Information in each paragraph is connected to the ideas before and after a paragraph. Internal paragraph transition means moving from one sentence to the next within paragraphs. Words can indicate the relationship between different sentences; for example, ‘because’ indicates a reason is coming next, while ‘for example’ indicates that an example will follow.

There are no set rules for the length of paragraphs, but the general guideline is that a paragraph should have a minimum of two or three sentences and a maximum of five or six sentences, and be between 100 and 200 words long, but should not exceed 500 words. A paragraph cannot consist of only one sentence. Readers are more responsive to shorter paragraphs and will understand the document better if paragraphs are concise. Conversely, paragraphs that are too long are likely

to distract the reader's attention. Long paragraphs can be split into two or more paragraphs, each with only one main idea, using a logical place to break them.

If a paragraph shifts to a different aspect of the same subject, use transition words to connect the paragraphs. Highlight differences or conflicts using words such as 'in contrast', 'however', 'yet', and 'on the other hand'. Expand on ideas in the previous paragraph using words like 'in addition' and 'furthermore'

A paragraph starts with an opening, also called the topic sentence(s), which indicates the contents of the paragraph and ends with a concluding sentence. A good topic sentence should be specific enough to give a clear sense of what to expect from each paragraph's content. The topic sentence leads to a few sentences that further develop and support it. All sentences following the topic sentence expand or explain the topic sentence with a statistic or example(s). Make sure every sentence refers to or reinforces the topic sentence. After expanding the main idea, you can then present supporting evidence that supports the main point.

Although topic sentences are usually placed at the start of a paragraph, they can sometimes come later, for instance, when indicating a change of direction in the paragraph's argument. Topic sentences are also used to transition smoothly between paragraphs to show the connections between ideas. Sometimes topic sentences are used to introduce several paragraphs. In this case, start with a transition sentence summarising the paragraphs.

The concluding sentence in a paragraph draws together or wraps up the paragraph by summarising the information that elaborates the main idea. You can restate words or phrases from the topic sentence using different sentence structures. End the paragraph with a transitional hook that ties to the following paragraph or section. Repeat this process for all the other paragraphs until all the evidence is covered. A new paragraph starts when a new idea is introduced. In a thesis, paragraphs are arranged logically around thematic or sub-thematic section headings or sub-headings.

Example: A paragraph

Adherence to ARV medication of $\geq 95\%$ 'suppresses the replication of HIV and prevents the infection's progression to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). [topic sentence] HIV/AIDS is a lifelong condition that requires strict adherence requirements. These requirements mean taking all the medicines

as prescribed, in the correct dose and quantity, at the right time through the correct route while observing dietary restrictions (Sahay et al., 2011). [explanation] Poor medication adherence has been associated with less effective viral suppression, drug resistance and reduced survival (Bangsberg et al. 2006; Nachega et al. 2007). [evidence] However, although complex, and many patients find it challenging to achieve the recommended adherence levels. [summary and transition into the next paragraph] Medication adherence effectively delays the progression of HIV/AIDS.

Connecting chapters

Students face challenges connecting chapters and maintaining a coherent common thread while writing theses. This section illustrates how to connect chapters to achieve a coherent and logical flow. A logical flow helps the reader to move from one sentence to the next, one paragraph to another, and one chapter to the next. Thus, cohesion should begin from the sentences in the paragraphs that make up the chapters. Examiners look for a well-structured, coherently written, and logically arranged thesis that follows a ‘common theme’. They scrutinise whether the thesis is written as a coherent whole or is merely a collection of chapters.

The first paragraph at the beginning of each chapter’s introduction is a recap of the previous chapter. It is followed by introducing the current chapter’s critical message or purpose. The chapter ends with a brief concluding paragraph that summarises the chapter’s primary information or points. In other words, it pulls the chapter’s key points together and shows the chapter’s contribution to the thesis. Finally, the last sentence of the concluding paragraph has a transitional hook that ties into the subsequent chapter.

Professor Pat Thomson of the University of Nottingham, UK (Thomson, 2014), gives a valuable guide on connecting chapter introductions through a simple **link, focus, and overview frame**. The frame enables the reader to see coherence and flow between chapters by linking the previous chapter’s contents to the current chapter.

The next example demonstrates how to connect chapters using Professor Thomson’s frame. The first paragraph of the chapter recaps the previous chapter. The second paragraph focuses on the content and significance of the current chapter. The third paragraph outlines how one will achieve the aim in the previous paragraph. It is a statement of

the contents of the chapter in the order that the reader will encounter them, not simply stated as topics but demonstrating how they build the internal chapter.

Example: Connecting chapters

In the previous chapter, I focused on the general characteristics of academic writing. I provided skills to improve academic writing, including grammatical accuracy, organisation, and ideas. [link]

This chapter further discusses argumentation, which is the most critical aspect of academic writing in thesis writing. Finally, the chapter offers practical suggestions and explanations for developing arguments and explains how the argument runs through chapters. [focus]

I begin by presenting different writing genres in chapters and offer practical suggestions and explanations for developing the Rogerian and Toulmin arguments. I go further to explain how these arguments run through the chapters. Finally, I demonstrate how to write a persuasive thesis statement. [overview]

Plagiarism and research integrity in academic writing

Plagiarism is a misdemeanour in academic writing that involves copying sections of text from a source without indicating it is a quotation or supplying a proper citation. Plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty and a publishing crime. It presents another author's original work, words or ideas, language, thoughts, or expressions as your own work without acknowledgement. Copying other people's work is regarded as a breach of ethical standards regardless of the source of published or unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed, or electronic form. Universities and lecturers treat plagiarism cases seriously. To avoid plagiarism, you must acquaint yourself with the policies, guidelines, and code of conduct relating to plagiarism and research integrity that apply to your discipline and institution.

This section presents some critical forms of plagiarism that are often committed by students when writing theses. These types include direct plagiarism, copying and pasting, paraphrasing, and source-based plagiarism.

Direct plagiarism is the most typical form of plagiarism, when words, sentences, phrases, whole essays, entire research papers, or other students' work or theses are directly copied without citations or crediting the source. Other direct plagiarism includes reprinting diagrams, illustrations, charts, pictures, or other visual materials, including reusing or reposting any electronically available media, such as images, audio, or video, without attributing the source. Penalties for direct plagiarism can be severe and include dismissal from an institution.

The second form of plagiarism is copying and pasting sections of other people's writing without citing them as the source or improperly citing the source, which is considered content theft. If you do want to reproduce an author's exact words in your text, signal it as a direct quote by using double ("...") or single ('...') quote marks around the quotation. If you insert your own words into a direct quotation or change anything in that quotation, indicate this by placing square brackets [] around the word(s) you have inserted or changed. If, for example, words are misspelt in the text, place [sic] after the misspelt or otherwise seemingly incorrect word or expression. 'Sic' communicates that 'this is how it appeared in the source'. Cite the author and publication year next to the quotation, and include the full reference entry in your references section.

A third common form of plagiarism is when a researcher paraphrases other people's work without proper citation. Grey areas in plagiarism include using the words of a source too closely when paraphrasing (where you should have used quotation marks), using someone's ideas without citing them, or changing only a few words from the source when summarising or paraphrasing. Furthermore, changing the sentence structure or using synonyms is still plagiarism. It is advised that you use the original quote and quotation marks instead of paraphrasing too closely. Reproducing your own writing by summarising or reporting on past work instead of writing new text on the same topic is referred to as self-plagiarism, and, whether intentional or not, is just as detrimental as stealing from others. The rule is always to rewrite.

The fourth form of plagiarism is source-based plagiarism. It is when the researcher has more than one source of information but only references one source and leaves out the others. Source-based plagiarism also includes quoting non-existent or incorrect sources, fabricating or manufacturing information such as study findings, or presenting misleading statistics.

Fortunately, multiple plagiarism checking tools are available and they can identify if text is plagiarised. These software options include checking for structure, synonyms, and even paraphrasing.

Conclusion

Chapter 1 has addressed the many challenges that students face in writing English and argues that most of the current literature does not adequately address students' needs in academic writing. The development of an **academic argument**, which is the most crucial part of thesis writing, is discussed in Chapter 2.

Exercise: Critiquing a text

Instructions

Discuss to what extent the examiner's comments apply to this text, supporting your argument with examples of words, phrases, or sentences from the text. (Refer to the section on Pedagogical features — 'Discussion-based exercises' — in the Introduction of this book for more details on completing this exercise.)

Text: Treatment of HIV/AIDS

Infection with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) leads to the destruction of immunity, which leads to increased morbidity and mortality rates among People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs suppress the replication of HIV and prevent the progression of the infection to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and death.

Treatment of HIV/AIDS with antiretroviral drugs became available in the early 1990s globally, but most patients developed resistance and became ill or died. A breakthrough occurred with the introduction of effective combination therapy of ARVs drugs, which dramatically improved morbidity, mortality, and quality of life among PLWHA hence transforming HIV from a terminal illness to a manageable chronic disease. Although ARVs are not a cure for HIV, they are very effective in controlling the virus and can even reduce the level of the virus to a point where it is no longer possible to detect any in the blood. Those patients who develop resistance make treatment with ARVs difficult because they may transmit the drug-resistant virus, which requires second-line treatment, which is more expensive, have a range of side effects. The decision to change a person from first-line to second-line remains challenging, especially if viral load testing equipment is not available. If too many patients progress to second-line

therapy, the increased costs involved will limit access to treatment for many people who would have benefited from first-line therapy. Also, Treatment resistance can occur for an entire class of ARV drugs rendering them ineffective, and lastly, the resistant viral strain of HIV can be transmitted to newly infected individuals who will have fewer effective treatment options from the start of their HIV infections.

Therefore, every effort should be made to ensure patients achieve a high level of adherence (>95%) to ARVs treatment to delay the emergence of drug-resistant, ensure cost-effectiveness in ARV access, and enable individuals to be treated for many years with first-line ARVs.

This increases their risk of getting opportunistic infections and developing drug resistance, leading to second-line regimens, which are costly, not readily available, and have more side effects.

Examiner's comments

- There are numerous presentation errors, including grammatical, spelling, formatting, and typographical.
- It is difficult to understand what is being presented as the writing lacks clarity, and sentences are not concise.
- There are too many wordy sentences, and paragraphs are hard to follow as they do not flow logically.
- There are several flow issues, the sentences within the paragraphs are not correctly linked, and there is no transitioning in the paragraphing.
- The text ends abruptly with no attempt to summarise it.
- The text does not match the title of the topic.
- The candidate's style and language are of a high standard, and the presentation is grammatically sound and free from plagiarism.
- The text is well written, with very few clerical errors, and the style and layout are good.

Further reading

Bastola, G. K. (2018). Teaching a five-paragraph essay. *Journal of NELTA*, 23(1–2), 174–178. <https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v23i1-2.23365>

This article helps students to write paragraphs with a beginning, middle, and end. It gives an example of a five-paragraph essay. The first paragraph is an introduction, followed by three paragraphs of the essay's body. Finally, the fifth paragraph is the Conclusion. It also incorporates the importance of the thesis statement.

Bloch, J. (2012). *Plagiarism, Intellectual Property and the Teaching of L2 Writing*. (Series: New perspectives on language and education.) Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

This book discusses the current and historical relationship between plagiarism and intellectual property law and how they can be forthrightly taught in an academic writing classroom.

Davies, P. (1999). Paragraphs. In *70 Activities for Tutor Groups*. Abingdon: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315264080>

This book describes the basic rule of thumb of paragraphing: one idea to one paragraph and transitions to a new idea.

Evans, D., Gruba, P., & Zobel, J. (2014). *How to Write a Better Thesis*. New York: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04286-2>

The book's emphasis is firmly on a clear and logical structure, which is the key to a good thesis. It gives concrete examples of common structural problems, including ways to avoid them, and offers a checklist to help stay on track.

Gilmore, J., Strickland, D., Timmerman, B., Maher, M., & Feldon, D. (2010). Weeds in the flower garden: An exploration of plagiarism in graduate students' research proposals and its connection to enculturation, ESL, and contextual factors. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 6(1), 13–28. <https://doi.org/10.21913/ijei.v6i1.673>

This study discusses the rates and potential causes of plagiarism and offers solutions to address plagiarism among the ESL population in Master's and doctoral programmes. Participants plagiarised, in part, because they lacked an awareness of the role of primary literature in the research process. The study found that plagiarism was more common among research participants who had English as a Second Language (ESL) .

Glasman-Deal, H. (2009). Unit 4: Writing the Discussion/Conclusion. In *Science Research Writing for Non-Native Speakers of English*. London: Imperial College Press. <https://doi.org/10.1142/p605>

This book provides a step-by-step guide for structuring the various sections or chapters of a research paper or thesis. In addition, it has many useful tables with frequently-used phrases in academic writing.

Gopen, G. D., & Swan, J. A. (1990). The science of scientific writing. *American Scientist*. Retrieved from <https://cseweb.ucsd.edu/~swanson/papers/science-of-writing.pdf>.

This paper presents a methodology for improving the quality of scientific writing by understanding the expectations of readers. It outlines seven structural principles for making scientific writing more comprehensible to readers.

Hyland, K., & Shaw, P. (Eds) (2016). *The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes*. Abingdon: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315657455>

This handbook provides an accessible, comprehensive introduction to English for Academic Purposes (EAP), covering the main theories, concepts, contexts, and applications of applied linguistics and language skills. It is an essential reference for advanced undergraduate and postgraduates.

McGee, I. (2017). Paragraphing beliefs, pedagogy, and practice: Omani TESOL teacher attempts to hold it all together. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 27(2), 383–405. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12136>

This book contains suggestions on paragraphing for the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) community. The author provides pedagogical guidance on paragraphs by investigating the writing and beliefs of Omani teachers.

Swales, J., & Feak, C. (2012). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* (3rd edition). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.2173936>

This textbook is designed to help non-native speakers of English with their academic writing. The book helps students to tailor their writing for their academic genre and target audience.

Sword, H. (2012). *Stylish Academic Writing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sword's analysis of peer-reviewed articles covers a wide range of fields. It explores writing practices in academia and provides tips on how to make writing more accessible to larger audiences.

Thody, A. (2013). *Writing and Presenting Research*. London: Sage.

This book is an invaluable introductory guide on how to report research. It is easy to follow and has checklists, style variations, examples, and reflection points.

Thomson, P. (2014). connecting chapters/chapter introductions. *patter*. <https://patthomson.net/2014/01/16/connecting-chapterschapter-introductions/>

Students' primary challenge when writing a thesis is connecting one chapter to another. Thomson gives a valuable guide on connecting chapter introductions through a simple framework – link, focus, and overview.

University of Chicago (2017). *Chicago Manual of Style* (17th edition). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

This book is a style guide for American English which covers grammar, usage, citations, document preparation, and formatting.

Wallace, M., & Wray, A. (2016). *Critical Reading and Writing for Postgraduates*. London: Sage.

The book focuses on the critical reading process. The authors show postgraduate students and early-career academics how to read and write critically.

Wallwork, A. (2011). *English for Writing Research Papers*. New York: Springer.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-7922-3>

This guide is based on a study of referees of journal editors of papers written by non-native English speakers, based on abstracts by PhD students, and teaching hours of teaching researchers. It gives reasons why articles written by non-native researchers are rejected because of problems with English usage.

Washington University. (2014). Paragraph Development. *Notes*. Available at
<https://faculty.washington.edu/ezent/impd.htm>

This guide provides advice on developing and organising a research paper in the social sciences.