Academic Writing
Vocabulary and Grammar

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Vocabulary and grammar are ingredients to present your written academic piece correctly and appropriately, and thus should be mastered well.

Samira T. Saeed

PART 1
Vocabulary

Rules of thumb

- Use formal words and expressions
- Avoid slang and colloquial words and expressions
- Be consistent as to English spellings, either British or American.
- Use appropriate transition words/ not to over use
- Avoid redundancy
- Avoid vague language
- Do not use a word unless you know its meaning and uses.
- Avoid complicated words (expedited to vs sent to)

Academic Vocabulary
Formal vs Informal

Avoid	Use
a bit	a little, slightly, somewhat
a couple	two, a pair
a lot, a lot of, lots of	several, many, multiple
anyhow	in any case, in any event, nevertheless, nonetheless
anyway	although, thus, however
ask for	request
come after	follow
in recent years	recently
get through it	survive, penetrate
of course	surely, clearly, indeed, naturally
very, so	undoubtedly, genuinely, extremely, remarkably, consequently
stuff	goods, substance, possessions

Academic Vocabulary
Simple vs Complex: decide wisely

complex	simple
commence	begin, start
leverage	use
facilitate	ease, help
commensurate	equal
advantageous	helpful
ameliorate	improve
erroneous	wrong
implement	carry out, conduct
proficiencies	skills
optimize	perfect
regarding	about
expeditious	fast
promulgate	issue, publish

British vs American Spellings

British	American
colour	color
endeavour	endeavor
favour	favor
behaviour	behavior
labour	labor
mould	mold
humour	humor
honour	honor
neighbour	neighbor
criticise	criticize

British vs American Spellings, cont.

British	American
centre	Center
fibre	Fiber
theatre	theater
licence	License
defence	defense
recognise	Recognize
analyse	analyze
travelling	Traveling
fuelling	fueling
manoeuvre	maneuver
Analogue	Analog/analogue

Transition words

- They connect two sentences.
- They are useful for connecting ideas.
- They are used to keep the work well-structured.
- They are used to make ideas and sentences flow logically.

Transition words

Examples:

➢ to start – *first, first of all, to begin with*
➢ to add another idea – *in addition, furthermore, also, moreover, what's more*
➢ to add a more important idea – *more importantly, what's worse, what's more*
➢ to add your last idea – *finally, most of all, most importantly*
➢ to contrast with the previous idea – *however, nevertheless, on the other hand*
➢ to show the result of the previous idea – *therefore, thus, consequently, as a result*
➢ to emphasize an idea – *in fact, in particular, importantly, indeed*
➢ to give an example of the previous idea – *for instance, for example, to illustrate*
➢ to show a time relationship between ideas – *first, second, then, next, finally*

Transition words: **format**

1- Transition words appear after a full stop (.) or semi-colon (;)

* The law does not stop teenagers from drinking therefore it is ineffective.

* The law does not stop teenagers from drinking, therefore it is ineffective.

✓ The law does not stop teenagers from drinking; therefore, it is ineffective.

✓ The law does not stop teenagers from drinking. Therefore, it is ineffective.

Transition words: **format**

2- Transitions must also be followed by a comma and a complete sentence:

* Many organizations use English, for example, the UN, the EU, and NATO.

* Many organizations use English. For example, the UN, the EU, and NATO.

✓ Many organizations use English. For example, it is one of the official languages of the UN, the EU, and NATO.

Collocation

Words that go together

- *say a joke   tell a joke or make a joke
- *do an effort   make an effort
- *bitterly successful   bitterly ashamed/ disappointed
- *highly grateful   highly successful/ accomplished
- *deeply developed   deeply divided/ grateful
- *powerful coffee   strong coffee
- *relax room   relaxing room
- *achieve money   make money
- *focus in   focus on

Exercise #1 (3 min)

- Addiction to internet can develop some unhealthy habits.
- Addiction to internet can have some unhealthy habits.

➢ Before introduction of a vaccine it was a major public health threat.
➢ Prior to the introduction of a vaccine it was a major public health threat.

❖ The solution to problem is still under discussion.
❖ The solution of problem is still under discussion.

o This player got heavy injury last year.
o This player got bad injury last year.

❑ Schools should add an appropriate amount of vivid colors in students' textbook.
❑ Schools should add appropriate numbers of vivid colors in students' textbook.

Confusing words

Polysemy: *a word with a set of different meanings*
They went to the <u>bank</u>.
Bank: financial building, edge of a river

Homonymy: *words that have the same spelling, but different pronunciations and meanings (homographs), or same sounds but different spelling and meanings (homophones).*

present (n)	*vs*	*present (v)*	*homograph*
close (v)	*vs*	*close (Adj)*	*homograph*
knight	*vs*	*night*	*homophone*
read (past)	*vs*	*red*	*homophone*

Exercise #2 (5 min)
Show the difference

- accept, expect, except
- ad, add
- aids, aides, ades
- advice, advise
- affect, effect
- allowed, aloud
- all ready, already
- awl, all
- altar, alter
- bare, bear
- bases, basis
- beech, beach
- because, since
- every day, everyday

See (Straus 2008: 16-51)

Useful links

- **Academic Phrasebank**

http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/

- **Transition words**

http://www.smart-words.org/linking-words/transition-words.html

https://www.gallaudet.edu/tutorial-and-instructional-programs/english-center/the-process-and-type-of-writing-/guide-to-transition-words-and-sentence-samples

PART 2
Grammar

Definition

- Grammar: "the rule system of a language … [and] a resource for expressing meaning."

(Lynch and Anderson 2013: 4)

These rules deal with:

- The structure of sentences   **Syntax**
- The word structure   **Morphology**

English Grammar

- It is made up of morphemes, words, phrases, clauses and sentences.
- It has 8 parts of speech: **noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction** and **interjection**.
- Word order: **Subject-Verb-Object**
- Grammatical functions:
  - ❑ Subject and Object (nouns and pronouns),
  - ❑ Verb (verbs),
  - ❑ Complement (nouns, adjectives and adverbs)
  - ❑ Modifier (adjectives)
  - ❑ Adverbial (adverbs)

Adverbials

- The adverb *late*, the phrase *in a hurry* and the clause *because I was cold*

- All function as adverbials in these sentences:

✓ The show started late.
✓ We did everything in a hurry.
✓ I put a coat on because I was cold.

Cohesion

Cohesion: "the set of possibilities that exist in the language for making text hang together." (Halliday and Hassan 1976: 18)

It is a way to link all parts of a text together to flow logically. This applies to:

- Function words (pronouns, prepositions, auxiliary verbs, modals, conjunctions)

- Transition words (firstly, lastly, furthermore)

- Temporal words (days, months, years)

APPLY COHESION TO GUARANTEE COHERENCE.

Tenses in English

	Simple	Progressive	Perfect	Perfect progressive
Present	I do/ she studies	I am doing/ she is studying	I have done/ she has studied	I have been doing/ she has been studying
Past	I did/ she studied	I was doing/ she was studying	I had done/ she had studied	I had been doing/ she had been studying
Future	I will/shall/am going	I will be doing	I will have done	I will have been doing

Common Tenses in Academic Writing

- Present simple

[theory, general principle, claim, fact, results of an experiment, an opinion]

- Past simple

[previous experience, outdated ideas and beliefs, past events]

- Present perfect

[things that have changed over time, recent researches with present impact]

Common Tenses in Academic Writing

Present tense:

- A general principle
Talent shows usually allow people to demonstrate their creative abilities.
- Someone's opinion
Professor Graham Arian thinks that talent shows are important.
- The results of an experiment
The judges' scores show that X is the clear winner.
- A habitual action in the present
People nearly always feel nervous before they perform on stage.
- A theory
Bobby Dylan's theory about talent contests is that one should not judge by appearances.
- A claim
Bobby Dylan claims that talent shows are the best way for people to become famous.
- A fact
Talent shows are exciting.

Common Tenses in Academic Writing

Past tense:

- What happened
There were two acts. Prince Wolfgang won the competition.

- What happened in the past but is different now
In the past, shows were simpler.

- Ideas that were held in the past but are no longer held
People thought that talent contests were bad.

Common Tenses in Academic Writing

Present perfect:

- Something that has changed over time
Recently, talent contests have become bigger and more glamorous.

- Recent research and its present impact
Recently, research has shown that such talent contests can make people nervous.

Active vs Passive Voice

> A group of students conducted an experiment.   Active
> An experiment was conducted by a group of students.   Passive

In academic writing use active voice whenever possible. It helps to create a cohesive text that is easy to understand. Use passive to avoid personal pronouns.

❖ This paper deals with the current theories of the origin of language.
❖ *The current theories of the origin of language is dealt with in this paper.
❏ For this study a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to 100 university teachers.
❏ !For this study I prepared a questionnaire and distributed it to 100 university teachers.

Noun phrases

- Pre-modifiers

[Determiners, quantifiers and modifiers come in a fixed order before the noun.]

my three brothers, the old clocks, *a blue* van

- Nouns

cup, democracy, game, driver, Chicago

- Post-modifiers

the man in the brown suit, information about the course, that sign there

Articles: *a/an/the*

- *a/an is the indefinite article, and the is the definite article.*
- *a* is used before a consonant sound and *an* before a vowel sound. **a** *visitor,* **a** *U-turn,* **an** *hour,* **an** *exhibition*
- *a/an* are used only with a singular noun, but *the* with singular and plural noun. **the** *exhibition,* **the** *visitors*

Basic rules:

- First mention*: a/an*   *an exhibition*
- Second mention*: the*   *the exhibition*
- *a/an* to describe and classify   *This is a nice place.*
- *the* to indicate uniqueness   *the captain*
- *a/an* are not used with uncountable nouns   **furniture*

Prepositions

- Prepositions of place

    in the office, under my chair, across the road

- Prepositions of time

  at six o'clock, on Monday, in 2018, before dark, for three weeks

- Prepositions: other meanings (e.g. possession, manner, transport, exception)

  a present for my sister, a man with a beard, by car, except him

- Idiomatic phrases with prepositions

    for sale, in a hurry, by mistake

Modal Verbs

- Ability: can, could and be able to
  Most people can swim.
- Unreal situations: would
  Six weeks' holiday would be nice.
- Habits: will, would and used to
  People will leave litter everywhere.

- The verb dare
  I dare not go up on the roof.
- Certainty: will, must and cannot
  Mandy will be in London now.
- Probability: should and ought to
  The rain should stop soon.
- Possibility: may, might, can and could
  The keys may be in my coat pocket.

- Necessity: must, have (got) to, need not and must not
  I must go to the bank.

- Obligation and advice: should, ought to
  You should answer the letter.

- Permission: can, could, may, might and be allowed to
  We can leave our luggage at the hotel.

Formal Phrasal Verbs [verb + preposition]

- *consist of*
- *carry out*
- *devoted to*
- *point out*
- *put forward*
- *refer to*
- *build on*
- *expand on*
- *accounted for*
- *adhere to*
- *appertain to*
- *ascribe to*
- *disabuse of*
- *emanate from/to*
- *depart from*
- *engage in*
- *arrive at*
- *narrow down*
- *enlarge on/upon*
- *enter on/upon*
- *offend against*
- *attributed to*
- *permit of*
- *pertain to*
- *provide against*
- *set forth*

Clauses

"A clause: a group of words that … may form part of a sentence or it may be a complete sentence in itself."

Types:

- Main clause: a clause that can stand independently.

  A ride on a London bus is the best way to see the city.

- Co-ordinate clause: a clause joined to another by 'and', 'but', 'or'

  I chose the colors red and green, and blue was his first choice.

- Subordinate clause: a clause that is dependent on another clause, such as a relative clause beginning with 'who', 'which', 'that'.

  We know a lot of people who live abroad.

  If you need a ticket, I'll get you one.

Exercise #3

Identify the clauses types

Neural networks can be divided into supervised and unsupervised. Supervised networks, such as the multilayer perceptron trained with backpropagation on a sum-of-squares error function, are useful for representing how some properties of the environment co-vary with others (function approximation), but are biologically dubious. Unsupervised networks, such as the Self-organizing Map, are often more biologically plausible, but are used almost exclusively to represent the resting state of the environment (density estimation). In this talk I will argue that, for a common class of problem, it is wrong to use unsupervised nets. I will go on to describe some unsupervised models that do the same job better, and then try to motivate them from a computational and biological perspective. There will be some maths but more pictures.

Punctuation marks

Uses:

- To separate parts of a text, such as sentences, clauses and words.

- To enable readers more easily to seize the meaning of a text.

- To prevent ambiguity.

- To mark the pauses made in speaking.

Punctuation marks

Full Stop	.	Exclamation mark	!
Comma	,	Question mark	?
Colon	:	Ellipsis dots	…
Semi-colon	;	Hyphen	-
Quotation mark	" "	Dash	—
Parentheses	( )	Forward slash	/
Square brackets	[ ]	Backward slash	\
Braces	{ }	Apostrophe	'
Asterisk	*		

See (Straus 2008: 52-69)

Punctuation marks explained

- Full stop: to end a sentence
- Comma: to separate two independent clauses connected with conjunctions (*we went to X, and then we went to Y*) or separate a list of words.
- Semi-colon: to connect independent clauses (it shows a closer relation between them than a period would do).

  John was hurt; he knew she only said it to upset him.

- Colon: after a complete sentence to introduce a list of items.

  I want the following items: butter, sugar, and flour.

- Exclamation points: to show emphasis or surprise. *I'm truly shocked by your behavior!*
- Parentheses: to enclose words or figures that clarify or are used as an aside. *I expect five hundred dollars ($500), (see xxxxxx)*

Punctuation marks explained

- **Apostrophe:** to show possession and with contraction. *It's Ali's house.*

- **Hyphens** are used with compound nouns (*can-opener*), compound verbs (*air-condition*), compound adjectives (*well-structured, friendly-looking*), or words with prefixes (*re-write, un-American, self-respect, ex-wife*).

- **Dash (en N-long, em M-long):** to separate periods of time (*2017-2018*), or to create a strong break, give a summary, show an emphasis. Usually em dash is used in informal writing, e.g. *he studied hard, and worked hard, he …… — he never gives up.*

- Use **ellipsis dots** when omitting a word, phrase, line, paragraph, or more from a quoted passage.

- **Braces** are used to group statements and declarations. In MLA and APA they have limited uses.

- **Square brackets** are used to insert something within a quoted text.

- **Slashes** are used to separate letters, words, numbers, the forward slash is more common and used to replace 'and' or 'or', e.g. *he/she.*

Exercise #4 (5 min)
Punctuate the following paragraph

The university of Edinburgh unlike other Scottish universities is composed of colleges there are three of them sciences and engineering humanities and social sciences and medicine and veterinary medicine each college covers both undergraduate and graduate programmes of study although students are generally admitted to one college only they may have the opportunity to study subjects of another undergraduate programmess generally last three years or four for honours there is an extensive variety of postgraduate programmes of study including a 9 month diploma a 12 month masters and doctoral research programmes lasting at least 36 months

Exercise #4, cont.
Punctuate the following paragraph

Non-native English speakers find that rules governing the use of articles are particularly tough to negotiate in technical contexts a common error that an editor may encounter in medical papers is omission of articles before the names of body parts the rule is simple and easy to follow the definite article the should precede the names of body parts such as the heart or the lungs when the names of body parts are provided in a list however an article is necessary only after the first name such as in the heart lungs and brain

Appropriate capitalization for terms that have been derived from proper nouns is a controversial topic editors are unsure whether to capitalize Petri dish and Gram stain the popular rationale is that terms derived from proper nouns should be in lower case the adjectival form whereas terms should be capitalized for the proper noun itself thus Gram stain vs. gram positive bacteria and parkinsonian gait graafian follicle and luciferase we do capitalize Southern blotting the technique discovered by Edward Southern who was born ironically in northwest England northern and western blots are in lower case being based merely on the naming of the Southern blot

Spacing

- Leave one space between words (e.g. academic writing)
- Leave a space after punctuation marks except hyphens (e.g. We study academic writing. This forms part of our master taught program.)
- Do not leave a space between a word and following punctuation mark (e.g. five-minute seminar).
- There are no spaces before or after hyphens and dashes (e.g. 2017–2018).
- For indentation: leave about an inch (five spaces)

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