

# ENGLISH FOR WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS

This part of the course will focus on the following:

- how to ensure that readers will read your paper
- how to structure a sentence (subject, verb, object)
- why and how to write short sentences and highlight your key results
- why and how to avoid redundancy
- the importance of clarity and how to avoid ambiguity
- key difficulties of writing the Abstract, Introduction and Discussion

I do not plan to give lots of grammar explanations. However, you can download grammar exercises (+ key) from my website ([e4ac.com/courses/downloads/](http://e4ac.com/courses/downloads/)).

**DO NOT DO THE EXERCISES BEFORE THE COURSE BEGINS**

## Further reading

You might find these books interesting, all by Adrian Wallwork and all published by Springer Science. You can buy them on Amazon. Buy the second editions (publ. in 2016).

*English for Writing Research Papers*

*English for Presentations at International Conferences*

*English for Academic Correspondence*

*English for Research: Usage, Style, and Grammar*

## Contact

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## Download the lessons

<http://www.e4ac.com/courses/downloads/>

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Adrian Wallwork

# English for Writing Research Papers

Second Edition

 Springer

## **SEMINAR 1: EMPATHY AND READABILITY**

### **1 In what ways is the writer of this email not showing empathy towards me?**

Good morning

My name is Pinco Pallino and I am enrolled in the first year of the PhD course in Terrestrial Vehicles and Systems of Transport. Since it is only now that I have made my online enrolment to the course "Scientific English", I am not in the list of students of either the first course or the second course of lessons. I would like to know whether, despite my delay in enrolling, I can still participate in the course: if possible I would like to follow the first session. However, for reasons that unfortunately I cannot change, which are related to my activity as a PhD student, I will not be in Pisa in concomitance with the first lesson of the first session.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Dr Pinco Pallino

PS My girlfriend wants to do an online English course, please could you send me recommendations ... and also for a good English grammar (preferably with Italian explanations).

### **2 Write the following email.**

You submitted / uploaded your paper for publication in a journal several months ago. The editor has never replied even though you have written her two emails.

- Think of a subject line.
- Explain the situation and find out whether your paper has been accepted or not.
- Use appropriate salutations at the beginning and end.

### **3 Which version do you prefer? A or B.**

**a)** Human memory can be subdivided into sensory memory (by which we see a film as a continuous scene rather than a series of still images), short-term memory (as used for example when you mentally calculate  $3 \times 7 \times 4$ ), declarative-learning long-term memory (i.e. conscious recollection, for example of last week's English class), and procedural-learning long-term memory (of how to do something, for example play the piano).

**b)** There are four main types of human memory. First, sensory memory, for example we see a film as a continuous scene rather than a series of still images. Second, short-term memory, this helps for example when you mentally calculate  $3 \times 7 \times 4$ . Third, we have declarative-learning long-term memory. This means conscious recollection, for example, of last week's English class. Finally, procedural-learning long-term memory reminds us how to do something, for example play the piano.

#### 4 Decide if the following statements are True (T) or False (F)

1. Latin had more than 10 ways to say *you*.
  2. Italian has 4 ways to say *you*.
  3. Korean has 13 ways.
  4. English originally had 15 ways and now just has one way.
  5. English *you* is in fact *voi* not *tu*.
- 

#### 5 Read the text below. What can you conclude?

According to a researcher at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be at the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without problem. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole.

*According to a researcher at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be at the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without problem. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself but the word as a whole.*

---

#### 6 What is the problem with this sentence?

English, which owes its origins to the Anglo Saxons (a tribe who lived in what is now Denmark and

Northern Germany) and is the international language of communication, in part due to the importance

of the USA, rather than the Queen of England, is now studied by 1.1 billion people.

---

7 Look at the sentence in Ex 6. **THINK** (don't write) about how you could divide it into four shorter sentences.

**8 The sentence below is from an Abstract. Is it easy to read without much mental effort?**

The aim of our study was firstly to assess changes in the level of tolerance of natives of one country towards immigrants over the course of a 50-year period in order to be able to advise governmental agencies on how to develop strategies based on those countries that have been more successful in reducing racism as already investigated in previous studies, but not in such a systematic way, and secondly to establish correlations with data from the USA, which until now have been reported only sporadically.

*Now look at the four short sentences below, which have been extracted from the long sentence above. Put them in the most logical order.*

1. The main aim was to be able to advise governmental agencies on how to develop strategies based on those countries that have been more successful in reducing racism.
2. The second aim was to establish correlations with data from the USA, which until now have been reported only sporadically.
3. This aspect has already been investigated in previous studies, but not in such a systematic way.
4. We assessed changes in the level of tolerance of natives of one country towards immigrants over the course of a 50-year period.

**9 Can you immediately understand this sentence without punctuation? Is the sentence easy to read aloud? Does it sound natural?**

Using four different methodologies previously used in the literature in separate contexts each of which gave contradictory results in this study the meaning of life as seen through the perspective of a typical inhabitant of western Europe was investigated confirming previous research indicating that as a general rule we understand absolutely nothing.

**10 Make the sentence below more readable by dividing it up into shorter sentences.**

Using four different methodologies, previously used in the literature in separate contexts (i.e. anthropology, biology, physics and soil sciences), each of which gave contradictory results, in this study, the meaning of life, as seen through the perspective of a typical inhabitant of western Europe, was investigated, confirming previous research (Smith et al, 2013) indicating that, as a general rule, we understand absolutely nothing.

We investigated the meaning of life, as seen through the perspective of a typical inhabitant of western Europe. We used four different methodologies, previously used in the literature in separate contexts (i.e. anthropology, biology, physics and soil sciences), each of which gave contradictory results. Our findings confirmed previous research (Smith et al, 2013) indicating that, as a general rule, we understand absolutely nothing.

**SEMINAR 2: WORD ORDER**

**11 Answer the questions.**

1) At their first reading, how many people can understand a sentence of:

- 8 words a) 90% b) 100%
- 27 words a) 27% b) 4%
- 32 words a) 25% c) 2%

2) True or false? You will lose more readers in the first 50 words than in the following 250 words.

**12 How difficult is this text to understand?**

Different writers have different methods of organizing their reports, and some seem to have no discernible method at all. Most of the better writers, however, appear to be in remarkably close agreement as to the general approach to organization. This approach consists of stating the problem, describing the method of attack, developing the results, discussing the results, and summarizing the conclusions. You may feel that this type of organization is obvious, logical, and natural. Nevertheless, it is not universally accepted. For example, many writers present results and conclusions near the beginning, and describe the derivation of these results in subsequent sections.

**13 Find at least two significant differences in these two versions of the same story.**

Tony Blair was hit between the shoulders by a ball of purple powder thrown by protestors during prime minister's questions today - forcing the Commons chamber to be abandoned.

Paura rientrata alla Camera dei Comuni. Dalle poltrone riservate al pubblico due persone hanno lanciato un palloncino pieno di polvere viola che ha colpito il premier Tony Blair mentre stava rispondendo ...

**14 Rewrite the sentence below by putting the subject at the beginning.**

We have mentioned a number of different factors that can improve one's writing of scientific papers, however there is one factor that is even more important than the others (i.e. conciseness, sentence length, blah blah and blah blah, using verbs instead of nouns) and this factor is rarely taken into consideration by writers although it is absolutely fundamental; that factor is, of course, putting the subject at the beginning of the sentence.

Putting the subject at the beginning of the sentence is fundamental in improving one's writing of scientific papers. But unlike the other factors (ie conciseness, sentence length, using verbs instead of nouns) it is rarely taken into consideration by writers.

**15) Relocate the *verb* so that is next to the subject.**

Various European languages including Italian, and Portuguese, along with Hindi, Russian and Chinese (which has only recently been added to this list), *can be learned* using this method.

Various languages *can be learned* using this method. These include European languages such as Italian and Portuguese, along with Hindi, Russian and Chinese. Chinese has only recently been added to this list.

**16) Choose the best sentence (a or b). The parts in bold are designed to show you the main differences in the word order in order to help you choose the best option.**

1a) **The following are** some examples of rare species that have been investigated over the last 25 years and are included in reviews by Smith [2001], Jones [2017]:

1b) Examples of rare species that have been investigated over the last 25 years and are included in reviews by Smith [2001], Jones [2017] **are the following**:

2a) Among the factors which influence longevity of seeds, of particular importance are **temperature and moisture content**, thus ageing of seeds is tightly linked to conditions of storage.

2b) **Temperature and moisture content** are particularly important factors influencing the longevity of seeds.

3a) **To do this exercise**, you do not need to be able to understand the meaning of the technical words.

3b) You do not need to be able to understand the meaning of the technical words **in order to do this exercise**.

4a) However, **this operation is only defined for some nouns**, which are called countable nouns.

4b) However, **only for some nouns this operation is defined**, these nouns are called countable nouns.

1) a (this reflects the normal word order in English which is to put the subject of the verb at the beginning of the sentence)

2) b (as in 1a)

3) a (put the reason first)

4) a (See below)

The construction in 4b is not correct English. The word *only* requires a strange construction (the same as in a question) when it is placed at the beginning of a phrase:

\* Only when we added the mercury, *did we realise* that ...

\* Only after the cadmium has been added, *can the nitrogen be* introduced ...

Moral of the story: Stick to the usual word order: Subject verb object - don't begin with an adverb.

17) For 1-5, decide whether the part in bold is in the correct position. If it is not, move it to the correct position. For 6-9, complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the *first*.

Note that the word order in the first sentences is not correct.

1. We consigned **these values** to their respective chemicals.
2. We can associate **the list of points in P** with each cell.
3. X receives **the position of the pointing device** as input.
4. We sent to our co-authors **all the data**.
5. They deferred to the next meeting **the matter**.
6. *In Fig. 2 a reference undeformed configuration, named X, and an adjacent deformed configuration, named Y, are shown.*

Figure 2 \_\_\_\_\_

7. *Ten datasets with the same X but a different Y, along with five datasets with a different X but a similar Y, were generated.*

A number of datasets were generated: \_\_\_\_\_

8. *The analytical steps, owing to the difficulties in measuring X, require some simplifications.*

Due to \_\_\_\_\_

9. *We can separate, by splitting these sections in the middle, P and Q.*

By splitting \_\_\_\_\_

1) OK 2) OK 3) OK (as *input* could also be put after *receive*) 4) all the data to our co-authors 5) They deferred the matter to the next meeting. 6) Figure 2 shows ... named Y. 7) A number of datasets were generated: ten datasets with the same X but a different Y, and five with a different X but a similar Y. 8) Due to the difficulties in measuring X, the analytical steps require some simplifications. / The analytical steps require some simplifications due to the difficulties in measuring X, 9) By splitting these sections in the middle, we can separate P and Q.

**18) Write the email.**

You are working with a colleague to produce a presentation for an international conference. Your colleague has emailed a first draft of the presentation in order to get your opinion. You think:

- there is no introduction
- there is too much text
- there are too many slides
- the fonts and colours are not clear
- the concluding slide is really boring

Write an email expressing your thoughts.

**19) Answer these questions thinking from a reader's perspective.**

1) *How could these sentences be improved?*

A) Finding a candidate with all the right qualifications, with a high level of communications skills, a good knowledge of at least two languages and a friendly personality is a rare event / not an easy task.

B) It is advisable that a foreign language should be learned at a young age.

2) *Which is better? A or B? Why?*

A) You are doing this course in your own time but at the expense of your department in order to learn English.

B) In order to learn English you are doing this course. The course takes place in your own time but at the expense of your department.

3) *Which is the least readable? A, B, C or D? Why?*

A) **English**, although currently the international language of business, **may** one day be replaced by Spanish or Chinese.

B) *Although* **English is** currently the international language of business, it may one day be replaced by Spanish or Chinese.

C) **English may** one day be replaced by Spanish or Chinese, *even though* it is currently the international language of business.

D) **English is** currently the international language of business. *However*, it may one day be replaced by Spanish or Chinese.

## 20 True or False?

1. People want key information first. On CVs people put their most recent achievements first. They don't put what primary school they went to.
2. If you put most important element at the beginning of sentence it forces you to think what the most important element is. This will also help the reader understand more.
3. By putting subject and main verb at the beginning you will be forced to write more concisely and probably with shorter sentences.
4. People want to know WHY they are doing something before they are told HOW to do it.

## SEMINAR 3: ABSTRACTS

### 21) Read this abstract about batteries in cell phones. Why is it a bad Abstract?

cell phone - cellulare, 5G - quinta generazione, battery - batteria/pila, recharge - ricaricare, predict - prevedere

In the last few years 5G cellular batteries have become increasingly popular in the telecommunications and computer industries. Many authors have studied the various features of such batteries and noted that the lifetime of a 5G cellular battery, in particular those used in the most recent generations of mobile phones, may be subject to the number of times the battery is recharged and how long it is charged for. In addition, it has been found that there is no adequate analytical model to predict this lifetime. Such an accurate model is necessary in order for producers and consumers alike to be able to predict how long the batteries will last and also, in some cases, how they can be recycled. In this work, an analytical model is developed which describes the relationship between the number of times a battery is recharged, the length of time of each individual recharge, and the duration of the battery.

**22) Read this revised abstract. Why is it better?**

(1) The lifetime of a 5G cellular phone battery may be subject to the number of times the battery is recharged and how long it is charged for. To date, there has not been an adequate analytical model to predict this lifetime. (2) In this work, an analytical model is developed which describes the relationship between the number of times a battery is recharged, the length of time of each individual recharge, and the duration of the battery. (3) This model has been validated by comparison with both experimental measurements and finite element analyses, and shows strong agreement for all three parameters. (4) The results for the proposed model are more accurate than results for previous analytical models reported in the literature for 5G cell phones. (5) The new model can be used to design longer lasting batteries. It can also lead towards further models that can predict battery failure.

**Now read an analysis of the structure of the abstract above.**

- 1) The problem that this paper is trying to resolve. Why did you carry out your project?
- 2) New solution given by authors of the paper. What makes it different from previous research?
- 3) Validity of the model. Does it really do what you say it does?
- 4) Results. What is new compared to previous results?
- 5) Implications and future work. What does this all mean? What are your conclusions and recommendations? What do you plan to do next? *[Check your journal to see if implications and future work are required or not in the Abstract.]*

**23) Here is an alternative, less traditional, structure. Which version do you prefer?**

We have developed an analytical model which predicts the relationship between the number of times a 5G cellular phone battery is recharged, the length of time of each individual recharge, and the duration of the battery. We validated this model by comparison with both experimental measurements and finite element analyses, and it shows strong agreement for all three parameters. The results for the proposed model are more accurate than results for previous analytical models reported in the literature for 5G cell phones. The new model can be used to design longer lasting batteries. It can also lead towards future models that can predict battery failure.

**25) Below is a fictitious abstract entitled *Is it Time to Leave Him?* It is written in an impersonal way. What do you notice about the structure?**

(1) Three red flags were identified [Or: We identified three flags] that indicate that the time to leave him has come. (2) These red flags are: five burps per day, two sitting-zapping sessions per day, and five games on the Playstation with friends per week. (3) A large number of women have doubts about the right moment for leaving their partner. (4) Often women wait in hope for a change in their partner's habits. (5) One hundred couples were analyzed, recording their daily life for six months. (6) Women were provided with a form to mark the moments of annoyance recorded during the day. (7) Burps, sitting-zapping sessions and games on the Playstation with friends produced the highest index of annoyance. (8) The probability of eliminating these habits was found to be significantly low when the three red flags had been operative for more than three months. (9) Thus, these numbers provide a good indication of when the time to leave him has come. (10) With these red flags, women will no longer have to waste their time waiting for the right moment.

### **Structure of dynamic abstract**

1. What you did + the key result, i.e. begin with info that the reader does NOT already know
2. Introduce background by connecting to what you said in (1).
3. Use the background information (max 30%) to justify what you did.
4. More info on your results.
5. Implications of your research.

### **SEMINAR 4: AVOIDING MISTAKES AND REDUNDANCY**

**26) How does the following text this sound to you?**

Scrittori diversi hanno diverse metodi di organizzazione dei loro rapporti, e alcuni sembrano avere alcun methodo visibile a tutti. La maggior parte degli scrittori migliori, tuttavia, sembrano essere in straordinariamente vicino un accordo per l'approccio generale di organizzazione.

**27) Cut the redundant words. For example:** It was yellow ~~in colour~~ and round ~~in shape~~.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This will be done in the month of December.</li> <li>2. During the maturation process, the plant grows to ten times its original size.</li> <li>3. As can be seen, Figure 1 highlights that <math>x = y</math>.</li> <li>4. The activity aimed at the extrapolation of X is not trivial.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. The summary statements presented above represent the authors' current perceptions in relation to the results. Since the work is ongoing, these statements should only be viewed as conclusions to the extent that it is the author's intention and aim to embellish them in the light of subsequent events.</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

**28) Find the redundant word and delete it, as in first sentence.**

1. One ~~suitable~~ method is to separate the men from the women.
2. Dynamism and velocity are typical characteristics of this species.
3. Their head office is located in London.
4. If there is water present in the system, this may cause rust.
5. The results obtained highlight that  $x = y$ .

1) suitable 2) typical or characteristics 3) located 4) present 5) obtained

Alternative for 4) Water in the system may cause rust

**29) Each of the sentences below contains words or phrases that can be deleted without requiring any other changes. Delete such words and phrases.**

The solution ~~adopted~~ was to ~~carry out a~~ test of all the software on the market.

1. As we have already noted in Section 4.2.1, the presence of x can influence y.
2. However, we have to make use of other techniques.
3. Paint samples, as described previously, normally contain mixtures of different substances.

4. In comparative terms, there is no real difference between x and y.
5. Also, we present simulation results that will provide a two-fold contribution: (i) confirm the effectiveness of ..., and (ii) highlight the importance of ...
6. The document was written in the English language and the contents represent a new innovation in the sector of telecommunications.

1. As ~~we have already~~ noted in Section 4.2.1, [the presence of] x can influence y.
2. However, we have to ~~make~~ use of other techniques.
3. Paint samples, ~~as described previously,~~ normally contain mixtures of different substances.
4. ~~In comparative terms,~~ there is no real difference between x and y.
5. Also, we present simulation results that ~~will provide a two-fold contribution:~~ (i) confirm ..
6. The document was written in ~~the~~ English language and the contents represent an innovation in ~~the sector of~~ telecommunications.

**30) Replace the *verb + noun* construction with a single verb**

to reach a conclusion = to conclude

- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. achieve an improvement | 5. execute a search      |
| 2. carry out a test       | 6. exhibit a performance |
| 3. cause an increase      | 7. give an explanation   |
| 4. effect a reduction     | 8. implement a change    |

- |            |             |            |            |
|------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| 1) improve | 3) increase | 5) search  | 7) explain |
| 2) test    | 4) reduce   | 6) perform | 8) change  |

**31) Answer the questions in relation to the two versions.**

- 1) Which is easier to read a) or b)?
- 2) Which is more elegant a) or b)?
- 3) Which contains more information a) or b)?

VERSION A (55 WORDS)	VERSION B (40 WORDS)
In Figure 2 the curve <b>exhibits a downward trend</b> (portion A-B); then it <b>undergoes a rapid rise</b> (part B-C), it then <b>assumes a leveled state</b> (zone C-D). It <b>possesses a peak</b> at point E before <b>displaying a slow decline</b> ... On the other hand, the curve in Fig. 3 <b>is characterized by a different behavior</b> .	In Figure 2 the curve initially <b>falls</b> (segment A-B) and then <b>rises rapidly</b> (B-C). It then <b>levels off</b> (C-D). Finally it <b>peaks</b> at point E before <b>falling slowly</b> ... On the other hand, the curve in Fig. 3 <b>behaves</b> differently.

**32) Delete any redundancy, making any other changes necessary.**

1. There will be a series of initiatives involved. To be precise, three initiatives will be promoted over the next five years.
2. Understanding the way we learn languages is a complex multidisciplinary task. In order to understand language acquisition, it is necessary to consider psychological, neurological and social aspects of human interactions.
3. The paper is organized as follows: in Section 2 a survey of the works related to X is provided. In Section 3 the method that we propose for the analysis of X is shown.

In the key below, the parts to delete are in *italics*.

1. *There will be a series of initiatives involved. To be precise,* three initiatives will be promoted over the next five years.
2. *Understanding the way we learn languages is a complex multidisciplinary task.* In order to understand language acquisition, it is necessary to consider psychological, neurological and social aspects of human interactions.
3. [The paper is organized as follows]. Section 2 surveys the works related to X. Section 3 outlines our method for analyzing X.

**33) What is the problem with all these titles?**

Design of an XYZ system for implementing ABC.

An investigation into the modeling of the XYZ process.

The development of an XYZ tool for predicting ABC.

A study of a novel ABC system.

An insight into XYZ.

**34) Invent a title**

What is the main finding of your research? Invent a title that encapsulates this finding.

Be as specific as possible. Use as many key words as possible. Located your main key word as near as possible to the beginning of the title.

## SEMINAR 5: INTRODUCTIONS, METHODS AND RESULTS

### 35) Compare the abstract and the introduction. How are they different?

*rods- barre, brittle - friabile / fragile, bent - piegato, surface - superficie*

ABSTRACT When thin brittle rods such as dry spaghetti pasta are bent beyond their limit curvature, they often break into more than two pieces, typically three or four. With the aim of understanding these multiple breakings, we study the dynamics of a bent rod that is suddenly released at one end. etc, etc.

INTRO The physical process of fragmentation is relevant to several areas of science and technology. Because different physical phenomena are at work during the fragmentation of a solid body, it has mainly been studied from a statistical viewpoint [1–5]. Nevertheless a growing number of works have included physical considerations: surface energy contributions [6], blah [7], blah [8], blah [9], Usually, etc. etc. ...

### 36) present simple, present continuous, present perfect, present perfect continuous

1. In the last few years there **is / has been** considerable interest in ...
2. Although many different approaches **have been proposed / have been proposing**, to date there **is not / has not been** an adequate analytical model to solve this issue.
3. For more than a decade analysts **are developing / have been developing** new ways to improve learning strategies.
4. Since 2012 there **are / have been** many attempts to establish an index [Mithran 2012, Smithson 2014], but until now no one **has managed / has been managing** to solve the issue of ....
5. As yet, a solution **is not / has not been** found, although three attempts **have been made / have been making** [Slimm 2011, Fatz 2013, Yui 2016].
6. Traditionally, researchers **always see / have always seen** the time factor as a constraint.
7. In the last two years we **are investigating / have been investigating** new ways to do this.
8. This **receives / has received** much attention in the past decade.
9. Recent developments in this field **lead / have led** researchers to consider new ways to do this.  
Such methods **are showing / have been showing** very good results.

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1) has been                         | 6) have always seen                          |
| 2) have been proposed, has not been | 7) have been investigating                   |
| 3) have been developing             | 8) has received                              |
| 4) have been, has managed           | 9) have led, are showing (have been showing) |
| 5) has not been, have been made     |  |

**37) The extracts below come from the 'review of the literature' section. *Alopecia areata* is the medical term for male baldness. Analyse how the three paragraphs are structured. What function does each sentence serve within the paragraph?**

1. Smith et al (2015) reported that *alopecia areata* may be cured by massaging the scalp with substances such as honey, lemon juice, black pepper and egg yolk. *However*, the application of mango pulp with mustard seeds had only an 18% success rate. We prove that the placement of frozen banana skins for 3-minute periods over the bald patch has a success rate of more than 30%, in fact ...
2. In 2017, Jones et al carried out tests using coconut milk, *but* only with a relatively small sample (75 subjects). In our experiments, we used a much larger sample (600 males, average age 44.6), using a blend of almond oil and castor oil.
3. In a previous paper [23] we found that emotional anxiety and intake of fast food were the primary causes of *alopecia areata*. *In this paper, we make a further contribution* by showing that although the consumption of vitamins is considered to be possible cure, in reality that avoiding certain vitamins not only cures *alopecia areata* but also *alopecia capitis totalis*.

**38) Complete the gaps in relation to YOUR OWN RESEARCH.**

Author et al (2017) approached the problem of \_\_\_\_\_

by doing \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Our approach is to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In fact, the advantage of our solution is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

It is a novel approach because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**39) Paraphrase the following phrase in at least two different ways. You must change every word except for *Cicccone* and *Italians*.**

Cicccone claimed that Italians do it better [1998].

## **SEMINAR 6: CLARITY VS AMBIGUITY AND VAGUENESS**

**40) Disambiguate these sentences.**

1. They delivered food to the elderly residents living locally in a large box.
2. Like Sandra, he had dark brown hair, with enormous black eyebrows, a moustache and a short beard.
3. If you take your dog in the car don't let him hang out of a window while driving.

1. They delivered food **in a large box** to the elderly residents living locally.
2. He had enormous black eyebrows, a moustache and a short beard, **and like Sandra** he had dark brown hair. **//// Like Sandra** he had dark brown hair. **His** eyebrows were black and enormous, and he had a moustache and a short beard
3. ... don't let him hang out of a window while **you are** driving.

**41) Decide which form in bold makes the information contained in the sentence quicker and easier for the reader to absorb by not forcing the reader to have to re-read anything.**

1. In [14], Gugerevic made a case for blah blah. Interestingly, in [15], Yang made a similar proposal to Gugerevic in which he stated that blah blah. The **former author's / Gugerevic's** findings thus illustrate that ...
2. Sometimes prion transmission occurs through blood transfusion, contaminated surgical instruments, or skin lesions. In **the first case/ a blood transfusion**, a breach of the blood-brain barrier may be responsible for the disease.
3. There are two possibilities: either  $x = 1$ , or  $y = 1$ . They are mutually exclusively and blah blah. **The first one / If  $x = 1$  then this** implies that ....
4. There are several countries involved in this project: Peru, Chile, Honduras and the Philippines, all of whom had very similar initial budgets and, in addition, were all subject to the same qualifying criteria. Note that **the latter / the Philippines** were the last to join the project which meant that ...
5. Mercury is used for a variety of purposes blah blah. In the past, **this metal / mercury** was considered as being ..

In all cases the second form is the best because it prevents the reader from having to go back to the previous sentence in order to understand / remember what *former*, *first*, *latter*, and *metal* refer to. You may think such repetition is in inelegant. You should concentrate more on communicating your ideas in the simplest and clearest way possible, rather than being worried about elegance (which is more relevant in the literary world than the academic world). What this exercise also highlights is that concrete specific words are much quicker to absorb than generic and / or abstract words.

Note to 2): repeating *blood* several times is not a problem because it is a key word

**42) Disambiguate the following sentences.**

1. To take our children to the party we all used our cars and then we left them there.
2. This should help to prevent piracy of CDs by Americans.
3. We investigated lions and tigers and elephants that are on the endangered species list.
4. The fire broke out in the forest bordering the river but was extinguished before any major damage could be done by the local fire service.
5. Instructions for use: These articles are poisonous. If there are children in the house, keep them locked up safely.
6. A full range of games were presented for the men with no balls (e.g. darts, diving, bungee jumping).
7. Being over 500 years old, Dr Alvarez handled the painting with great care.
8. Preserved in a frozen state, Professor Chang examined the samples.

- 1) To take our children to the party we all used our cars and then we left the **children** there.
- 2) This should help to prevent piracy of **CDs produced by American artists**.
- 3) We investigated lions and **tigers, and also those elephants** that are on the endangered species list. // We investigated lions, tigers, and elephants. **All three types of animals** are on the endangered species list.
- 4) The fire broke out in the forest bordering the river but was extinguished **by the local fire service** before any major damage could be done.
- 5) These substances are poisonous. If there are children in the house, keep the **substances** locked up safely.
- 6) A full range of games **requiring no balls** were presented for the men (e.g. darts, diving, bungee jumping).
- 7) The **painting** was over 500 years old, so Dr Alvarez handled it with great care.
- 8) Professor Chang examined **the samples, which** were preserved in a frozen state.

## SEMINAR 7: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS

**43) Decide in which cases below it would be difficult for the reader to establish who made the confirmation / suggestion.**

1. In 2017, we confirmed that Italian dogs are more intelligent than British dogs [25].
  2. In 2015, Carter suggested that dogs are more intelligent than cats [36].
  3. In 2015, it was suggested that that dogs are more intelligent than cats [Carter, 36].
  4. In [36], it was suggested that that dogs are more intelligent than cats.
  5. In 2014, it was suggested that dogs are more intelligent than PhD students.
- 
1. *We* clearly indicates that you are referring to your own work.
  2. The author is the subject of the verb, so it is clear to the reader.
  3. The passive form means that the reader is not sure until the end of the sentence if it was you or another author. A long literature review full of passive sentences is very heavy for the reader.
  4. This usage will depend on your chosen journal (it is accepted in some but not in others). As in Example 3, you are forcing the reader to look at the reference to check whose paper [36] is - yours or another author's.
  5. There is no reference. Readers cannot be sure if you made the suggestion or someone else.

**44) The following extract is the first paragraph of a Discussion (though something very similar might also be found in an Introduction). For each verb in bold, try to understand if the verb refers to something Kim (the author) did or found, or to something another author (AA) did or found.**

Bilingual children (1) **were found** **KIM / AA** to show a greater adaptability to new situations (e.g. change of school, change of diet) and demonstrated a greater ease in communicating confidently with adults [Simons, 1995]. As result of an extensive search for bilingual children in ten European countries, 149 children (2) **were identified** **KIM / AA** (Table 1). One hundred and twenty two children with parents of different nationalities (3) **were assigned** **KIM / AA** to a group (hereafter Group A). It (4) **has been found** **KIM / AA** that those children with parents of the same nationality but who lived in a foreign country (for example, a child with English parents living in Italy) (5) **have** **KIM / AA** a greater level of adaptability than those children with parents of different nationalities living in the native country of one of the parents.

**Now compare the version below with the one above. How is the distinction between KIM and AA now clearer?**

Bilingual children (1) **show** a greater adaptability to new situations and demonstrated a greater ease in communicating confidently with adults [Simons, 1995]. **Simons investigated children from the US and Canada. On the other hand, the focus of our study was Europe and** as a result of an extensive search for bilingual children in ten European countries, 149 children (2) *were identified* (Table 1). One hundred and twenty two children with parents of different nationalities (3) *were assigned* to a group (hereafter Group A). It (4) **was found** that those children with parents of the same nationality but who lived in a foreign country (for example, a child with English parents living in Italy) (5) **had** a greater level of adaptability ...

**45) Read the example (in italics) and note the structure (1-4).**

*1) Smith et al (2016) found that researchers and PhD students had above average intelligence. 2) Our study totally contradicts Smith's finding. 3) Our experiments proved that such PhD students have very limited intelligence, and would in fact be more suited to cleaning toilets. 4) This radical finding may help governments reduce the amount of funding given to university education.*

- 1) What another author found.
- 2) Whether your findings confirm or contrast the other author.
- 3) Details on what you found.
- 4) The implications of your finding.

**Now write a similar paragraph describing your own work. You can use the same structure (1-4) or you can invent your own structure**

**46) Write the email**

Your paper has been rejected (subject to 'revisions') by one out of three referees. The referee who rejected your paper says:

- The English is poor - but he gives no examples. In your opinion the English is fine.
- The figures are not clear - you think they are very clear.
- The bibliography does not include two important references which the referee gives you - you think the references are irrelevant.

You have now made all your modifications to the paper. Write your reply to the referees' report explaining what changes you have (or have not made) and why.

**47) Discuss with the person sitting next to you why the paragraph below is not good. The paragraph describes the author's limitations.**

Unfortunately, our statistical tool is not able to describe all the variables involved. Moreover, there were some discrepancies with x and y. However, the same tool was used for conducting similar research with American samples, and the results were reliable and representative.

**48) Read these ways to deal with different types of limitations.**

*Limitation: You did not study X*

We were unable to access the data on X because such data are not available in the public domain. Other studies found the same problem (e.g. Lu 2012, King 2013) and decided to focus only on Y and Z. We are currently in the process of collecting data on X, and this will be the subject of a future paper.

*Limitation: Old data*

Even though the data were collected two years ago, the stability of this sector means that such data have not changed significantly. In fact, in the last two years the percentage of x has remained exactly the same [Wang 2013, Chu Wa 2014]. In addition, more recent data are not currently available.

*Limitation: Few data*

Our data only refer to one kind of sector. However, as far as we know there are no similar studies for this sector in Italy. Thus we believe that this project opens the way for ...

**Now, describe one limitation of your research, and counter any objections to this limitation**

#### **49) Compare the structure and the information given in the Abstract and Conclusions.**

##### ABSTRACT

With no hope of an afterlife, atheists may have difficulty rationalizing their purpose on earth. With the aim of understanding the coping mechanisms of non-believers, we interviewed 150 UK-born couples (125 mixed, 25 same sex; average age 46) who had happily cohabited for more than 15 years. Interviewees were asked ten simple questions regarding their attitudes to the meaning of life. Our results revealed that there are six key strategies in an atheist's pursuit of a happy and meaningful existence: 1) keep everything simple, 2) have fun, 3) cultivate a sense of community, 4) delight in the wonder of nature, 5) find time for creativity, 6) help other people through frequent acts of kindness. Atheists that implement a combination of these six strategies were found to be more equipped than other non-believers to deal with the death of close ones, health problems, financial difficulties, and bad luck.

##### CONCLUSIONS

We found that six strategies are key to atheists having a satisfying life: simplicity, fun, community, a love of nature, and the importance of creativity and of helping others. An additional but not unexpected finding, not considered in the original research aim, was that an unbridled respect for one's partner is fundamental for a long-lasting relationship. In the light of the vacuous and aimless nature of Western society, our findings suggest that the six strategies should be taught in schools as part of children's philosophy or religious education lessons. Comparisons with traditional religions revealed no substantial differences in approach, apart from a believer's blind faith in a benevolent omniscient overlord and the promise of an afterlife (or reincarnation). These commonalities indicate that traditional religions should attempt to be more sympathetic to atheists, and vice versa. Future work will investigate how the promise of an afterlife may undermine the fulfillment of one's true potential on earth.

**50) Now look at how the Conclusions in Ex 49 are structured. The numbers in the text refer to the explanations given below.**

**1)** We found that six strategies are key to atheists having a satisfying life: simplicity, fun, community, a love of nature, and the importance of creativity and of helping others. **2)** An additional but not unexpected finding, not considered in the original research aim, was that an unbridled respect for one's partner is fundamental for a long-lasting relationship. **3)** In the light of the vacuous and aimless nature of Western society, our findings suggest that the six strategies should be taught in schools as part of children's philosophy or religious education lessons. **4)** Comparisons with traditional religions revealed no substantial differences in approach, apart from a believer's blind faith in a benevolent omniscient overlord and the promise of an afterlife (or reincarnation). These commonalities indicate that traditional religions should attempt to be more sympathetic to atheists, and vice versa. **5)** Future work will investigate how the promise of an afterlife may undermine the fulfillment of one's true potential on earth.

Analysis:

- Repetition of key findings, paraphrased from the Abstract (1) - this is the only overlap between the Abstract and the Conclusions
- Additional relevant findings (2)
- Recommendations for policy makers (3)
- Implications (4)
- Areas for future research (5)

Not all Conclusions will contain all of the above five points.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Rules of a good email

**Meaningful subject line** - otherwise recipient may not even open your mail.

**Never translate typical phrases literally** - learn equivalent phrases.

**Write the minimum amount possible** - you will make fewer mistakes.

**Always put the most important point in the first line** - otherwise reader may not read it.

**Better to be a little too formal than too informal** - you don't want to offend.

**Always be polite** - and remember if there is a minimal chance that your reader will misinterpret or be offended then you can be sure he/she will.

### EMAIL TO EDITOR ABOUT STATUS OF YOUR PAPER

Subject line: Manuscript 1453

Dear Helena Smith

I was wondering if you had received my email (see below) regarding the submission of my manuscript (1453).

Please find attached a copy of the paper for your convenience.

Best regards.

### REPLY TO EDITOR ABOUT HOW YOU'VE DEALT WITH REVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Please find attached the revised version of our paper entitled xxx (manuscript No. 547646).

We found the referees suggestions very useful and have modified the manuscript accordingly.

- The English has been checked by a mother tongue professional editor.
- The figures have been modified, and made more concise.
- We have included the suggested bibliographic references.

We hope that you will find the revised manuscript suitable for publication.

Best regards