Mqondisi Bhebhe

The Simplified Academic Proofreaders' Manual

MQONDISI BHEBHE

THE SIMPLIFIED ACADEMIC PROOFREADERS' MANUAL

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book explains the principles of academic proofreading in a manner that helps everyone from authors, students to lecturers, tutors and the like understand their work even better. It explains common pitfalls in academic writing, highlighting notes for the proofreader to focus on in order to ensure the best outcomes in the process. It assists everyone in the academic 'food chain', beginning with students, helping them reach a virtual common understanding with their tutors/lecturers on what would be expected from their work; The teachers, in due time, will realise that students' work contains a few errors and they will shift their focus towards developing them in more advanced ways of understanding. As a result, the student finishes their work faster and more accurately, while the marker becomes more thorough, accurate, reasonable and above everything, fair to all students. When everyone gets a fair reward for their work, there can be actual development in the academic field.

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THE USE OF HYPERLINKS

This work, although it has numbered headings and logically arranged subjects, e.g., Grammar-related topics under their chapter and document organisation headings at the beginning, follows the alphabetical order of the elements and uses primarily, hyperlinks to take one from a current navigation spot to another just by one/two clicks.

For example, you will notice that at the bottom of every page, there are letters from A-Z, divided in two categories. The first category has **A B C D E F I L O P Q R S T V U W**, while the bottom half has the group **H G J K M N Z**.

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The first line is the shortcut to all headings beginning with each alphabetical name displayed. This means that, no matter where you are on the document, no matter the page and section you are reading, it is easy for you to open another page and reach you specific target section without any perusals. For example:

You are reading about Research Report, almost at the beginning of the book when you realise that there is something you need to quickly check under 'Language coherence and enhancements' as something 'clicking' in your mind tells you that you mistakenly used the reflective tone in a non-reflective context. To navigate to the 'Language Coherence and enhancements' section wouldn't be difficult as it is a major section of the book but to find the particular area could be. For instance, your error possibly falls under 'Use of the Third-Person perspectives', 'Passive Voice' or 'Reflective language'.

You then, using this book's hyperlinks, start with the 'Third-person subheading'. Instead of going the long route, i.e., the Language coherence and enhancements' heading and scrolling down until you reach 'Third Person', the book requires you to merely click 'T' in the alphabetical links at the bottom of any page and you will find the list with:

TENSES:

THIRD PERSON

TRANSITIONAL ELEMENTS

You will click your 'Third Person' in this short list and you will be there. With the second option, go to the bottom of any page, Click 'P' and you will find this:

PASSIVE VOICE:

(PARENTHESES)

PAST TENSES

PERIOD/CAPITALS:

PRECISE SENTENCES:

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PRESENT TENSES

PREPOSITIONS:

PRONOUNS:

PROPER NOUNS:

Your 'Passive Voice' link is the first on the list. Lastly, going to the bottom of any page and clicking 'R' will bring up:

REFERENCING

REFLECTIVE LANGUAGE:

RELATIVE PRONOUNS

REPEATING

You 'Reflective language' will be lying 'Second' on the list.

While the top section of the hyperlinks is simple and straightforward (i.e., When you click 'A', everything beginning with A appears, and the same happens with B, C, and D and so on…), the bottom section is, however, complicated. None of the letters displayed is a literal shortcut of what they represent, meaning, you will have to memorise that the following happens when each of the links are activated:

*H – Takes you to the structural headings.

*G – Takes you to the grammar headings.

*J – Takes you to the vocabulary choice headings.

*K – Takes you to the referencing in-text headings.

*M - Takes you to the reference list headings.

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*N - Takes you to the referencing comments headings.

*Z - Takes you to the table of contents.

It is the author's great pleasure to present the work to all students, tutors, authors and proofreaders at large, hoping you will find this work useful in your studies.

HAPPY STUDYING!!!

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1 ITEMS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN STUDENTS' ASSINGMENTS STRUCTURE

1. ESSAYS
2. CONVENTIONAL ESSAYS
3. INFORMATIVE ESSAY
4. BIOGRAPHIC ESSAYS
5. REFLECTIONS ESSAYS/ACADEMIC JOURNALS/DIARIES
6. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS
7. TEMPLATE-BASED ASSIGNMENTS
8. REPORTS:
9. BUSINESS REPORTS
10. INFORMATIONAL REPORT
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12. BUSINESS MEMORANDUM
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15. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
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18. RESEARCH PROPOSALS
19. CRITICAL ANALYSIS
20. SHORT QUESTIONS
21. SCIENTIFIC/LABORATORY REPORT
22. BUSINESS LETTER
23. CASE STUDY

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1.1   ESSAYS

We have many types of essays in academic writing, all differing in terms of purpose, scope, inclusions and exclusions. Some are designed to share details about a person's life history; others narrate a single encounter in life while the majority develop a chosen academic area and present it in a logical and understandable way. The format will basically be the same (Introduction, Body and Conclusion/Recommendations) but what you will include under each area is likely to carry vast differences; let's start with the most basic/most common ones:

1.2   CONVENTIONAL ESSAYS

This is the usual type normally prompted by an inquisitive question, e.g., 'Do you think Australia can cooperate with its Asian neighbours given its close ties with Britain?' The whole essay seeks to provide a detailed response to the essay question, using an Introduction, a Body and a Conclusion. Each paragraph must be of the following sizes for consistency:

Introduction:

The first paragraph must give:

i) Background information (Help them understand what you are talking about in the first place as many do not know what/where Australia is, their British ties, Asian neighbours and the need to cooperate with them. Try something like *'Australia is a big country in the Indian ocean surrounded by emerging Asian economic giants like Japan, Indonesia, China, etc. but because it was colonised by the British in the 16th century, 80% of its population are citizens of British descent. With the recent emergence of globalisation and the rapid growth of Asian economies, they are under pressure to take advantage of their proximity to their oil-rich neighbours but, however, their close ties with the United Kingdom, which is not a close ally of these states stands in the way of Australia's prosperity."*

ii) A thesis statement (Your view/perspective on the main topic) and essay objectives, e.g. *"Although it sounds more like a gamble, I personally believe that they must leave their historical roots and move on to forge new partnerships before America takes the whole market share as it is rapidly doing in China at the moment."*

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iii)An outline of the major points and highlights to be focused on in the essay (in this very same order). E.g., "*This essay will look at Australia's trade strongholds, its resources, and its market and analyse the effects in production, diplomatic relations and economic growth of dumping its former colonial masters and conclude by evaluating the wisdom of such a move…etc.*"

This gives your readers a clearer direction and they will anticipate your further 'address' and how you explain your reasons for adopting the position/stance/thesis statement. This must take between 3 to 7 sentences but avoid overly detailing it.

Body MUST follow the PEEL/DPEEL format:

Proper academic paragraphs discuss one major point at a time. It will help readers understand everything if you begin by mentioning what the paragraph is about, explaining in great detail and showing how it all fits in the topic .You have to define the key term in the paragraph,

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e.g., *'Asia is the world's most densely populated continent, or simply, the region extending from Indonesia to Israel…'*. When the main item has been defined, it is time to make it clear where it fits in the topic by presenting the main POINT in the topic sentence (e.g. *"The first reason why Australia must leave Europe is that Asia has 2 fifths of the world's population"*). The next sentences EXPAND/EXPLAIN the main point and may even share examples, e.g., *("Therefore, opening their borders to Asian countries will mean a healthy influx of cheaper labour and more consumers for Australian-made products, boosting local GDP"),* EVIDENCE and references *(Share statistics of how many companies can benefit by having more than 10 million new buyers every year)* and give a final thought that LINKS the idea with the rest of the assignment (*E.g., "Bearing in mind that labour will be cheaper than in England, Australia will have much more goods to export at even cheaper prices than before, and the UK will have no choice but to continue trading with them and they won't lose anything, proving the wisdom why Australia must act now and embrace Asia before the end of 2025"*). Your paragraph is best structured this way as this helps you to include every aspect of the point and ensure it serves a worthy purpose in the paragraph.

Conclusion:

This is a summary of everything mentioned in the essay, in one paragraph; it begins by reminding readers the central pint (e.g. *"In conclusion, there is nothing more reasonable than Australia joining the Asian bloc of traders and 'dump' its European roots as they have proved unproductive."*) and showing how it was supported/developed throughout the essay *(e.g., "This essay showed how the consumption of British products costs 25% of Australia's GDP compared to the 5% that it would if they were trading with Asia, the growth of opening their borders and the advantages of accessing cheaper oil resources. On top of that, it summarised how the development in foreign relations with Asia could actually bring peace to Europe and beyond, meaning that, in the long run, Australia will unite both parties and will not be 'caught' in the middle, to the benefit of numerous world economies."*) After sharing the implications and the effects of their conclusions, one can even go on to recommend certain forms of actions that can be taken in light of everything discussed, e.g., *"Therefore, It is quite clear/obvious that the world needs a united partnership between Australia and Asia to help bridge the hostilities, end trade wars and foster international cooperation and Australia is in the best position to achieve all of that if they act on it before the USA does that in 2025."*

*The bottom line is that there must be a question answered and explained in a standard way in the end.

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1.3   INFORMATIVE ESSAY

This one intends provide unique, more accurate and useful information on a chosen topic. It can range from describing a historical event, place, monument, life history, processes, methods and anything that readers may need a better perspective on. The major difference will be the thesis statement (which does not seek to answer a question but to shed more information) and the conclusion (which focuses on ensuring that the readers were educated to some extent throughout the essay. The other structural elements still apply as shown previously.

Introduction:

Take, for example, the question, 'What do you know about a country called Australia?'

You need to give

i) Background information (Help them understand what you are talking about in the first place as many do not know what/where Australia is, what the name means and why it is so important to the readers. Try something like *'Australia is a big country in the Indian ocean surrounded by emerging Asian economic giants like Japan, Indonesia, China, occupying 5th place in the world economy."*

ii) A thesis statement (Your view/perspective on the main topic) and essay objectives, e.g. "*This essays seeks to explore its history with the intention of showing the readers how they fit within this emerging world power."*

iii) An outline of the major points and highlights to be focused on in the essay (in this very same order). E.g., "*This essay will look at Australia's army, economy, trade strongholds, its resources, its markets and give everyone the opportunity to understand its open policy to migration, etc."*

This gives your readers a clearer direction and they will anticipate your further 'address' and how you explain your reasons for adopting the position/stance/thesis statement. This must take between 3 to 7 sentences but avoid overly detailing it.

Body MUST follow the PEEL/DPEEL format:

The same as the previous structure is required, i.e., A topic sentence (e.g. "*Australia is a country deep in the ocean and it is hard to tell if it is an island or continent as some claim")*, Explanations and expansions, e.g., *("The country is water-locked and big enough to accommodate*

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a sizeable portion of Europe and it compares favourably with continents like North and South America"), EVIDENCE and references *(The UNESCO predicts that its population will reach 1 billion people in a few decades from now)* and a final linking sentence *(E.g., "Even though many prefer to call it a country or island given its water-locked status, the place is big enough to accommodate many countries and its economy, population growth and industrial size gives one each and every reason to view Australia as a continent").*

Conclusion:

The same is required here; repeating the thesis statement (e.g. *"Australia is a marvellous continent with a lot to offer the world…"*) bringing together the main points supporting it (e.g., *"There is a lot to learn about Australia than its numerous Asian neighbours as seen its massive economy, progressive army, education sector etc."*) and recommendations like, "*Therefore, regardless of the many bad stories we have had, Australia is actually a rich continent with an open policy, always ready to welcome the world…*"

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*The bottom line here is that readers must have learnt something new or what was previously hidden and by now, they have a better view/perspective on something, preferably, a more accurate one.

1.4   BIOGRAPHIC ESSAYS

This is an essay just like the other types, except for the fact that it focuses on narrating the life story of a human being. While no one can dictate the facts to include in this assignment, one must not take advantage of the freedom and include half-truths, inaccurate details or present them in a haphazard order.

Here are the most important details to be included:

1) Logic: Begin with first things first, from the individual's childhood to the beginning of a career, followed by the stages of development that were encountered. The current position and end with the future aspirations if available. Mixing these or writing them in a random order could result in a lot of ambiguities.
2) Accuracy: There is no need to lie even if the individual is not a public figure. However, sharing details that can be traceable and verifiable will strengthen your argument.
3) Relevance: The information shared must be important to the readers and contributing reasonably to the subject under discussion.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
The main character is not properly introduced	Avoid mentioning too many people as readers are only interested in the main character
Information shared cannot benefit anyone	The details must be of public interest to a greater extent; avoid petty issues
The facts provided contradict public information, e.g., a President well-known to be 'white' is referred to as a 'Black man'.	Provide undisputable facts; verify them or present a credible source to back up your claim
The story is hard to follow as it mentions random events without a proper logic.	Begin with first things first and logically present the subsequent events down to the end; readers must be able to construct a 'timeline' using your story
A biased tone, e.g., in 'my/our' country; he was a monster to the Australian people, etc.	Avoid showing any kinds of bias, either towards or against the character; leave yourself and your feelings out of the discussion.

1.5   REFLECTIONS ESSAYS/ACADEMIC JOURNALS/DIARIES

Introduction:

Given the question, 'Describe how you learnt to drive.'

You need to give

i) Background information (Help them understand what you are talking about in the first place as many do not know who you are and why your story is unique. Try something like *I am a 16-year-old disabled teenager from a poor community in South Africa employed as the first disabled courier messenger in the continent.*"

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ii) A thesis statement (Your view/perspective on the main topic) and essay objectives, e.g. "*This essays shares my journey through disability, poverty and prejudice and how I learnt to drive and get a well-paying job in a region with high unemployment rates for disabled persons.*"

iii) An outline of the major points and highlights to be focused on in the essay (in this very same order). E.g., "*This essay will describe the place I was born, my family and community and all the hardships faced by disabled people of my age and conclude with recommendations on how such ones can be assisted in the community*"

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This gives your readers a clearer direction and they will anticipate your further 'address' and how you explain your reasons for adopting the position/stance/thesis statement. This must take between 3 to 7 sentences but avoid overly detailing it.

Body MUST follow the PEEL/DPEEL format:

You need a topic sentence (e.g. "*The first reason problem I encountered was the lack of money*"), EXPLAINATIONS *("My family lives on less than $1 per day and it takes a full 6-months saving exercise to avail money for driving lessons and testing"),* EVIDENCE and references *(Share statistics of how many disabled young men have licenses in the region, etc.)* and a concluding thought *(E.g., "I, however, started a small business outside my home and eventually operated a fruit shop of my own, which helped me qualify for a cash loan in due time").*

Conclusion:

This part begins, as usual, with repeating the thesis statement (e.g. *"In conclusion, getting a license was the most difficult but rewarding journey in my life."*) followed by highlighting the major points and lessons discussed around the central position *(e.g., "From living without money to the undermining and criticism I got from stereotyped communities, I finally learnt how to ignore peoples' views and walk down my own path and eventually succeeded. I learnt that success is what I create for myself and will never let anyone else's views stand in my way again.")* Direct recommendations and calls for action can also be used, e.g., *"I am planning to get my pilot license in three years from now and have already started budgeting and I am sure the way I dealt with the driving problem will steer me to greater success in future."*

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*The bottom line is that you must have properly detailed your encounter and shown readers everything they need to learn from you and they must know how to improve based on your triumphs.

In-text citations

Introduction:

Observation:	Comments:
The work begins with /goes straight into the main text /starts in the middle or from nowhere.	The introduction lacks sufficient background information
A very long introduction opening paragraph	Your introduction only needs to focus on introducing what you are going to talk about, why and how; the rest is probably unnecessary information that needs to be removed or moved to the body.
Introduction does not mention the reason why the work was written	(You need to include your thesis/focal statement at some point in the introduction).
There is a clear objective in the introduction	This is a good statement of intent; ensure all paragraphs are related to this point throughout.
The milestones contained in the essay are not clear/insufficient	(You need to provide the premises/essay outline and explain how you will support your perspective).

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Body paragraphs:

You observe this:	How you comment:
Paragraphs begin with one clear sentence that strengthens the position adopted in the introduction	Perfect topic sentence
Another point seemingly unrelated to the topic sentence is abruptly introduced out of the blue	This point requires its own paragraph.
There are a few sentences explaining the point introduced in the paragraph's opening thought	You made proper follow-ups to the main point, which is good.
The body introduces new material in the middle	The middle part is for developing, proving and expanding on the topic sentence.
Not even en one citation or reference to where information like that can be found/verified.	No one will take you seriously if you make it appear as if it comes from you and no one else knows it; remember, as students we are not considered credible sources of information yet; therefore, if you want your argument to hold its ground, link it with the available pool of established lines of thought and evidence.
The topic sentence is not related to the introduction, title or thesis statement	Remember the title and introduction; everything discussed must be related to those items.
The concluding thought is 'independent' and does not fit in the overall topic scope.	Remember the title and introduction; everything discussed must be related to those items.
This topic sentence is too long	You do not need many words here; announce to your readers with one clear voice as to what you seek to achieve in the paragraph; the following sentences will explain that in detail.
	The main point must be clear; present it separate from its explanations and present each element in its own sentence.
The topic sentence begins with a random explanation and introduces the main point in the subsequent sentences.	Avoid confusing your readers; the opening sentence must be clear on the main focus of the paragraph; explanations can follow later.
The essay's headings are related to the question	This is a relevant heading to the question.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
The content supports the parent heading	Continue using relevant content that matches its environment.
Very long paragraphs You had paragraphs of varying lengths, with some as short as one sentence-long while others were more than 8 sentences long.	- Readers will not get a proper idea here. - Try the DPEEL /TEEL or DTEEL format for the readers to understand not only the main points but their explanations as well. - The paragraph must not be too long and complicated because readers get tired while searching for the main points; make it easy for them by identifying the main point, its explanation, examples and explain how it fits in the overall topic and move on.
Very short paragraphs, with some as short as one sentence statements.	- Do not reduce your essay to mere 'dot-points' - This is too short to make a proper academic argument. - You presented the point but you still need to explain it, support it and show how it fits in the overall scope of the essay. - You provided a clear point but not everyone will understand it the way you do. Do not leave it unexplained; add some more sentences using the DTEEL/TEEL/PEEL templates for the sake of academic consistency as well.
The paragraph contains suspicions, sensitive organisational information, state secrets or damning accusations.	This is very sensitive information and anyone presenting it must name their sources
The topic sentence is very long or appears to be a 'paragraph' on its own.	The paragraph must focus on one main point
The paragraph ends with a summarising thought	You provided a good link between your paragraph and the rest of the essay.

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Conclusion:

You observe this:	How you comment:
Words like 'At the end/In summary/etc. are included towards the end.	You prepared your readers to start reflecting back in order to form an overall picture before reading the closing remarks.
The work reminds readers of its main focus	Well done by re-emphasising the main point
One sentence-long conclusion	- The conclusion is way too short and does not mirror the whole essay. - Readers that did not get the chance to go through the entire essay must still understand its focus by merely reading your conclusion; summarise everything here - The purpose here is to summarise the whole essay; you have mentioned the bottom line but you still need to explain 'how we got here' for them to understand what the 'bottom' line is all about in the first place. - Your work is incomplete if you do not mention how it started, the milestones encountered, the realisations that were made and how it is likely to affect t=our lives as readers now and in the future.
A very long and unfocused conclusion	- You explained what you needed to explain in the body. - You are now wrapping up the essay; report back on how you addressed the key objectives and stress the importance of implementing the new understanding in their lives.
The conclusion goes straight into summarising the major highlights	Start by reminding the readers of the main thesis statement so that they can understand where the major points are coming from
Several new perspectives that were not seen in the body start appearing in the conclusion	You were supposed to provide new details in the body; conclusions are for summarising what has been done.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
	Avoid taking them back again to the body by continuously providing new material; readers may end up suspecting that the progress was not adequate and that there is still more that can be explored in the area under investigation; besides, it reveals lack of order and self-discipline.
There is a lot of references and new evidence in the conclusion	You were supposed to provide new details in the body; conclusions are for summarising what has been done.
There is a closing sentence that shows readers the best ways to make use of the information raised.	This sentence lays the matter down to rest, well done.
The conclusion is not specific about the number of points raised, e.g. 'This essay discussed many things about…'	There are some readers who do not have time to go through the whole essay; summarise everything for them here and ensure all the major points are presented in the conclusion.
The work is hanging in the balance with no bottom line	End with one closing sentence that accurately summarises the whole plot and answers all the outstanding and 'what-if/so-what/what-then' questions.
The work is continues problems and complaints down to the last sentence	Your discussion is not going to be useable if it cannot provide the solutions; be confident; focus on the positive side and, even though you cannot provide all the answers, at least, avoid sounding as if you have lost hope yourself.

1.6   TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Taken from the two English words 'Analysis' – meaning, breaking down and examining components and subcomponents and 'Text' which can be anything written, in visual or even audio format. The student here is required to examine a featured item and interpret it to the readers, uncovering hidden meanings, trends and unique understandings. One will

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remember what we said about critical analyses and, with that in mind, break the text down into smaller/manageable parts and reveal its hidden meanings, intentions and interpretations for the benefit of the reader. The normal essay format can be followed, with special attention given to the following features:

Introduction:

You need to give background information, a thesis statement (Your view/perspective on the main topic) and essay objectives (an outline of the major points and highlights to be focused on in the essay (in this very same order). This gives your readers a clearer direction and they will anticipate your further 'address' and how you explain your reasons for adopting the position/stance/thesis statement. This must take between 3 to 5 sentences but avoid overly detailing it.

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The introduction can also include:

- a summary of the reason/s why you chose the theme
- what the theme's appeal to the audience is
- a justification of your choice of arrangement; outlining why it is appropriate for the chosen audience.

Body:

These must stand out in the paragraphs (structured in the DPEEL format):

- more background information, e.g., summarising the article's main thesis and focus.
- Assessing and analysing the credibility of the article by identifying the type of evidence used;
- Comment on the methodology, e.g., primary research, secondary research, first-hand experience, surveys, emotions, general/public knowledge etc.
- Comment on the manner of presentation/writing style, organisation of the article and pointing out how best the reader can understand it.
- Revealing the hidden meanings
- Interpreting the most important points
- Use live examples from the text and make as many direct quotes from the main source article as possible.
- Avoid paragraphs that discuss multiple points.

Conclusion:

As always, the conclusion repeats the thesis statement and highlights the major points discussed that support/reinforce the central position. It must help readers remember what you have discussed consistently throughout. Avoid introducing additional details; remember, the objective is helping readers understand a text/visual learning aid better and not 'changing/altering' it in any way.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
The work starts in the middle	Introduce the topic
Nothing explains the context under consideration	Share background information
Overly long paragraphs that contain several points each	Arrange your topics according to importance
More than one theme is found in each paragraph	Each source needs proper developing in its own paragraph, unless if it is a head-to-head comparison.
The student is merely providing overviews and general aspects	Analyse the sources
Only narrations and nothing about the relevance of the information is mentioned.	Evaluate the sources
Only your analysis is seen and no specific references are made to the passages in the text.	Link the sources to the topic
Only elaborations and descriptions are made	Show limitations/strengths
Premature conclusions keep appearing before properly wrapping up the argument.	Introduce your perspective at the right time.

1.7   TEMPLATE-BASED ASSIGNMENTS

A template is a framework that enables a user to replicate the original method to produce the same result. In academic writing, they come in form of structured guidelines, blank data-response forms, tables and step-by-step notes that detail what must be done, when and where, down to the end.

They are effective when it comes to extracting certain kinds of answers from the students or even when measuring the extent to which they can follow instructions and stick to a defined order and protocol. High-risk work environments often use them in character and attitude tests.

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Students are examined according to the manner in which they understand instructions and the extent to which there are willing and able to comply with them. This helps assessors in understanding the difference between their students and which ones might be requiring specific attention. The items to look out for are summarised below:

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You observe this:	How you comment:
An off-topic introduction	Your introduction is not related to the guidelines.
The content falls under headlines not included in the framework	Avoid introducing new headlines
Items in the framework are responded to but in a haphazard order, i.e., the last one first and the first one in third place, etc.	Stick to the order in which the items have been mentioned in the template
The answers largely consist of overly paraphrased text	Use the keywords in the template
The answers are longer than the word-count limits mentioned in brackets at the end of the question/s.	Do not exceed the stated word-count limit
The answer ignores emphasised instructions, e.g. some templates emphasise the inclusions and exclusions in the scope using big/bold capital letters, e.g., Please **DO THIS/DO NOT DO** any of this and that.	Do not deliberately ignore the instructions; pay specific attention to the highlighted instructions.
Answers seem to come out of the blue and address nothing specific in the question.	Every answer must correspond to an element in the question.

1.8   REPORTS

1.9   BUSINESS REPORTS

These are work-related assignments often given to junior staff by senior executives when they want to solve certain problems. The report is involves the collection of data, processing and disseminating it for the purposes of decision-making or changing stakeholders' attitudes towards something.

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The important aspects here will include the sources of data (their credibility and accuracy), their relevance to the problem, the methods used in processing the data and their potential of solving the problem both in the present and long term.

Students must use headings to guide their approach, from the background of the problem to the terms of reference, the objectives, the budgets, timelines, situational analyses, the actual execution methodology and other key achievements. The headings carry a lot of weight as they stand out and can convey the wrong message if deemed irrelevant to the problem.

Some institutions provide their own templates that emphasise headings like the Internal and External Analyses that use conventional methods like the SWOT and PESTEL analyses. We assess the student against the above criteria that applies to each case on an individual basis. As mentioned, some must decide on their own as to which headings they will use while others must follow what has been provided as follows:

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You observe this:	How you Comment:
No overview of the business in question	Readers would like to familiarise with the company, its mission/vision/setting/history and strategic objectives before even committing to following your suggested solution
The report focuses on petty routine issues	The report must solve a genuine problem, otherwise, management may not commit to providing resources to what seems to be a waste of company time.
You did not provide all the reasons why you wrote the report	Your introduction must list and explain the major objectives why the report was necessary.
The introduction is not focused	Avoid mentioning the results and conclusions in the introduction because you are still planning at this stage
The abstract is not detailed enough	This part is written at the end and must contain everything mentioned in the report.
The researcher goes straight into the investigation without due protocol	- Conduct proper Internal and External environmental assessments
Poor/biased/unfamiliar data collection methods	- Clarify/Justify your data collection methods
A lot of short-cuts are observed in the procedures	- The procedures involved must be ethical and relevant to a business professional.
No mention is made at relevant intervals on the benefits of each element of the business report to the organisation as a whole, for now and in the future	- Often link your activities to the overall goals of the business, i.e., mention how this will increase the profits/improve liquidity/solvency and efficiency
The results are merely presented in 'codes/figures/tables/business language'	- Properly interpret the results to the readers
Recommendations completely disregard competition laws, threats to environment, employee and consumer rights, management cooperation and do not contain backup/alternative plans for executives to choose from.	- Recommend practical action plans within reasonable budgets
The recommended action plan involves too many people and resources beyond the organisation's capacity	- Optimise costs and time constraints in the implementation.

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1.10 INFORMATIONAL REPORT

This type focuses on enlightening the readers on the nature and existence or lack of certain areas in life, be it business, social, scientific, academic or otherwise.

While normal report headings and subheadings like environmental analysis and logical descriptive parts are often used, the major difference here is that this is mostly narrative and may include details that are considered irrelevant in special-purpose reports.

With this in mind, hearings like the Methodologies, data collection methods and others are removed or adjusted to reflect the main purpose of this work. Extra care is required in the conclusions and recommendations as the main purpose is merely sharing information; as a result, recommendations and evaluative contexts are often excluded.

You observe this:	How you comment:
No introduction	You need a detailed introduction
Jumping into conclusion	You are merely informing and not investigating
Use of evaluative terms like, 'it was not fair/ bad/good' etc.	Avoid using your own opinions
Use of investigative techniques like, 'We would like to investigate/find out A, B and C…'	You are describing what is already existing; remove the primary research methodologies
A significant part goes on and on about what must have been done/ must be done in future/etc.	Be careful with offering your own critical viewpoints as your duty is, simply, informing.
More recommendations than descriptions.	Share only the nature of the topic and do not go beyond the scope.

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1.11 INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

This one digs a bit deeper into the subject and investigates the causes, reasons, rationales and provides alternative approaches.

A strong emphasis is placed on the use of headings here as the use of irrelevant titles could affect the quality of the output and the information may not be useable. Therefore, the writer must detail the following:

- terms of reference
- background information
- data collection techniques
- materials and other resources
- investigating team and its competencies
- the environment and its influences
- budgets
- timelines
- declaration of conflicts of interest
- ethical considerations
- results analysis
- margin of error
- discussion
- conclusions
- suggestions of alternatives
- reflective aspects (optional)

One must avoid giving opinions, suggestions and being overly critical as that doesn't often come as a result of proper investigations. In fact, the habit of jumping into conclusions will cast a lot of doubts on the accuracy of the information presented; basically, the writer avoids everything that makes them lose credibility and will always adhere to ethical conduct and professional standards for the investigation to be respected and complied with.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
No executive summary	Summarise the whole report in one or two paragraphs
Very short introduction	You do not seem to know what is to be investigated
No history/background on how it started	The authority initiating the investigation must be clear; this defines the readership/target audience too.
Overly focusing on the investigation itself without justifying it	- The objectives are vague/narrow - Provide a clear outline of how this will be done and share the preferred outcome
- Use of emotional tones and exaggerations	The investigation is going to be biased
- Focusing only on one side	- Being too positive will weaken your approach as you feel less compelled to be clinical - Being too negative will affect the quality of your work and your objectivity because you will be hard to convince in many cases
A very low/poorly constructed budget	You do not have enough resources to do this investigation
A lack of knowledge on how to handle an investigation of this level	The procedures do not seem adequate/relevant to the investigation
A 'tight' budget	The budget does not have additional/emergency resources to expand the scope or adapt its inclusions should the need arise
Unclear job descriptions	The team/s seem to be doing duplicated roles or have unclear job descriptions
Presence of team members likely to act with partiality	The teams have conflicts of interest
No clear information dissemination protocol	The dissemination of information is likely to lead to leakages and outside influence

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You observe this:	How you comment:
Confidential information seems to be reaching unauthorised persons/unauthorised persons seem to be commenting on parts of the report that must not be made available to them, at least, not at this stage.	The confidentiality of information is not up to standard.
Not enough attention is given to uncovered results	You are overlooking critical evidence
The list of results is not comprehensive	You did not present all findings
Only the impacts of a few issues are discussed	The analysis exaggerates the impacts of certain aspects and undermines the impacts of others
The conclusion interprets a different story from what was revealed by the results	The conclusion is not consistent with the findings
No proper/clear summary of major points to be taken from the study are in the conclusion	The final conclusion/outcome is not clear
- Recommendations focus on a few areas - Very few recommendations that are not consistent with either the results and the conclusions	The recommendations are too broad/not clear
- The action plan seems to be focusing or including items that were not raised in the report.	The action plan does not properly implement the findings and recommendations

1.12 BUSINESS MEMORANDUM

Often regarded as the most convenient of all structures in Business Studies, this one is used when conveying information within an internal environment of an establishment.

Like the formal business letter, though, it must first identify the sender and the receiver (logically, this establishes the relationship between the two parties and initiates the communication process).

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The major difference with the other forms of internal business communication is the structure of the message's title, the position of the date, and the message itself.

It usually starts with the Purpose statements (which shed background information) and the Explanation thereafter. These methods of communication are suitable for conveying policy information and not comprehensively solving all problems and, therefore, they usually do not go deep into comprehensive investigative, analytic and evaluative issues; as a result, they are always short, clear and precise. Students must be advised against including too much unnecessary information which, at times, must never be conveyed through this channel.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
The memo starts in the middle	You did not mention the originator
The memo starts in the middle	You did not mention the recipient
No greeting	Show proper respect to the recipient
No heading	The purpose is not clear
No introduction	You need to introduce yourself, reveal your capacity and make the relationship between yourself and the recipient clear
The memo includes petty issues/is too long	You over-elaborated issues
The issues could be dealt with by a different person/office	The message sent is not suitable for this type of document

1.13 MAKING COMPARISONS

Just like the critical analysis, this type evaluates the given items against each other with the intention of helping the readers to make a wise choice. It also takes the form of an Essay and has an Introduction, a Body and a Conclusion. Care must be taken to include these additional features to make it a lively, balanced and comprehensive comparison.

Introduction:

You need to give background information, a thesis statement (Your view/perspective on the main topic) and essay objectives (an outline of the major points and highlights to be focused on in the essay (in this very same order). This gives your readers a clearer direction and they will anticipate your further 'address' and how you explain your reasons for adopting the position/stance/thesis statement. This must take between 3 to 5 sentences but avoid overly detailing it.

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Body paragraphs must follow the DTEEL format:

Comparing items involves:

- separately defining each item in its own paragraph topic sentence (for readers to understand what exactly it is that you are comparing).
- Using paragraphs that analyse or subdivide each item for evaluations to be made
- Showing the similarities and differences
- Evaluating the good and bad aspects of each of the items
- Making direct comparisons of their respective strengths/limitations

Conclusion:

- reminding readers of the main points of contention
- condensing the main features
- highlighting similarities
- highlighting differences
- sharing the evaluative aspects
- making conclusive remarks/recommendations/summaries
- The main part of the conclusion will be selecting or recommending that the readers choose the item with the most advantages and the least disadvantage, depending based on the depth of the discussion.

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You observe this:	How you comment
- No background information	Provide an introduction that explains where/when/how this issue started
The introduction does not cover the broader issues involved	You did not explain what you are comparing
The work is not divided into sections	Readers must first understand everything about each key component separately before
Multiple points can be seen in single paragraphs	Mention each unique point in its own paragraph
Points referring to the : - Nature - Similarities - Differences are all crowded in single paragraphs	Logically arrange the similarities and differences in different paragraphs
No conclusion	There must be a paragraph that shares the bottom line you want the readers to carry in their minds after the comparison.

1.14 LITERATURE REVIEW

A familiar part of major assignments, this one demonstrates the writer's subject knowledge on an issue under investigation, The purpose is to understand what is involved, how much is known and what is still lacking, opening the space for the writer's own piece to take centre stage. The same Introduction-Body-Conclusion format is required, with a slightly different focus as follows.

Introduction:

This is where one defines the topic and their objectives, sharing how they will arrange the work so as to reach that purpose.

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Body:

- This is the main review area
- however, before beginning, the writer must ensure proper background information was provided and, if it was too long to include in the introduction, it will be time to stress issues like the profession's background, its importance and the specific area within it that your research applies to.
- Identify the sources of current information and classify them as primary, secondary and auxiliary sources
- mention their objectives; describe their authors' knowledge, scope and exclusions
- mention the methodologies from data collection to dissemination
- show the strengths and weaknesses of the sources
- reveal the unresolved issues that current literature has failed to address.

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Conclusion

- a summary of what the work is about
- how current literature fits in, its advantages and limitations
- weigh up the points raised against each other
- identify the main target gap to exploit in the current literature
- show the readers how your work will solve such problems

In-text: Literature review

You observe this:	How you comment:
No introduction	Introduce your work as you would do in an essay
Mention is made about the results, recommendations, etc.	Avoid referring to the report itself as it is usually not there at this stage
The student sounds as if they are already busy researching on the topic	This is a preparatory document
No mention about when the topic started is made	Share background information
Not enough explanations are given on the area under investigation	Define your topic
Sources that agree, support, disagree and contradict are all mentioned in a haphazard/ random order	Arrange your sources into categories
The language used seems to be attacking the personal and academic reputations of the authors	Avoid being too critical
The review attempts to shed even the smallest issues that do not make a big difference to the existing knowledge	Share major strengths and weaknesses
The review brags about being the best even before the proposal is approved	Do not exaggerate the relevance of your research
Other irrelevant inclusions.	Stick to positioning your own research and gaining support

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1.15 ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

These are gaining increasing importance because of their ability to provide valuable information about academic sources. They evaluate an article and examine it for its soundness and useability in various academic contexts. Some are written I one short paragraph and do not have complicated structural requirements. However they can be long and take an essay format (requiring an introduction, a body and conclusion) and it will be up to the institution to allow students to combine everything in one paragraph or separate these elements and adapt them for a particular audience. Most institutions prefer to see the following:

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- a full citation of the source in APA/Harvard or any other specified referencing style
- an introduction or description of the featured article, its scope and setting, objectives, authors, etc.
- the target audience
- the methodology it uses
- strengths/weaknesses and other evaluative contexts
- the main part of the conclusion establishes the extent to which the source/article can be used for academic (or social) purposes.

Here is what to show readers in their in-text material.

In-text Annotated Bibliography:

You observe this:	How you comment:
No citation	Identify your source properly
No logical order of headings	Logically, we provide: - scope, - aims, - authors' backgrounds, - methodologies, - strengths, - limitations and the overall suitability comments
Missing comments	Comments must be made in relation to each of the above

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1.16 DISSERTATIONS/THESES

1.17 RESEARCH REPORTS

These are fundamental parts of higher learning as they test the student's ability to independently search for new knowledge and understandings on certain issues judged to be of utmost academic importance. This is how the world comes to get new medicines, new machinery inventions, laws and other pieces of information that improve the way we understand our universe and other areas of life. They begin with research proposals and can take many forms, depending on the specific purpose at hand.

Therefore, in order to properly prepare useable inventions, credible and flawless methods, processes and key protocols must be used and most of these have been standardised over the years. Generally, a research report appears 'sound' enough if it contains the following headings:

- abstracts, (-is written after conducting the whole research -summarises everything done and contained in the report. -is a mirror image of the whole report, summarising all the sections/contents of the report, beginning with the title, introduction, methods, participants, results, discussion, future suggestions, etc., (giving one or two sentences summarising each section) because the information is, logically, already available by then.)
- Introductions, (-is written before conducting the research
- explain the topic that will be investigated and its sub-areas
- mention the intentions the researcher has in mind
- identify the objectives and narrow them down to the specific areas within the overall topic you will focus on.
- will not contain the results, discussions, limitations and other information because it is logically not available at this stage.)
- objectives
- Research significance statements,
- Hypotheses,
- Research methodologies,
- Survey participants,
- Materials,

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- Measuring instruments,
- Results analysis/discussions,
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

One must understand the meaning of each section and write content that relates to each subheading and avoid over-elaborating less essential elements while overlooking the key areas.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research:

Most probably, you are going to get stuck in choosing the research methodologies and the best way is to understand the nature of the data used, how it is collected/measured/disseminated and what the overall objective with the data will be.

Here are a few pointers:

Qualitative types are focused on facts, objectives, behaviours, attitudes and opinions/perspectives. On the other hand, Quantitative research focuses on amounts, numbers and statistics and actual quantities of variables.

According to Bhebhe (2018), 'The qualitative researcher is likely to ask "what do you think/how do you feel/is this good or bad..?" (Getting broader responses) while the quantitative individual will seek to know the measurements in terms of time/amounts/weight/length/distance and ask questions like "how often/how many/etc." (Narrowing responses into specific numbers/amounts/key result areas).'

Differences in the data:

- Qualitative data is not countable since it measures the quality/descriptions/characteristics/etc.,
- quantitative data is countable because it establishes accurate, physical amounts/quantities.
- Quantitative data may reveal how many people did something but it is only
- Qualitative research explains why/how they did it.

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Once we understand what our research seeks to establish between 'numbers' and 'qualities/ characteristics', structuring it won't be that difficult.

You observe this:	How you comment:
No executive summary	Summarise the whole report to give readers its overall idea
No introduction	You omitted the objectives
No mention of the report's importance and target audience	There is no research significance statement
No mention of the key areas the report seeks to address/clarify	Give the hypotheses
No mention of the report's structural approach	Outline your research methodologies,
No mention of the report's participants	Define and describe survey participants,
No proper budget	You do not seem to be using the right materials for a research of this magnitude,
Unfamiliar measuring tools	Your measuring instruments and metrics need more explaining,
Premature/Misplaced Results	The results presentation analysis/discussions must come after all the processes
Inconclusive conclusion	Your conclusions must show the readers the bottom line
Recommendations are not clear on the responsible persons, timelines involved, impacts and other logistics	The recommendations must be clear for policy makers to draft a proper action plan from them

1.18 RESEARCH PROPOSALS

These are the preparatory documents that lay the foundation for the main Research projects and must be submitted for approval by the faculty personnel before one can be allowed to conduct such research under the institution's name. This is normally done to ensure:

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- The topic is relevant
- The information is not plagiarised
- it follows proper research methodology techniques
- it follows proper ethical guidelines and does not infringe on peoples' rights
- for quality control purposes
- it fits well within the objectives of the institution.
- to widen out the research areas so as to cover many relevant community problems.
- to establish a basis for lecturers to assist the student wherever possible.

The following must be presented before one can be allowed to embark on a research journey:

- Title,
- Executive Summary,
- Introduction,
- Research questions/Statements/Significance,

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- Literature review
- Methodology,
- Research design,
- Ethics,
- Results,
- Timeline,
- Budget,
- References,
- Appendices.

All these are projected outcomes and must be written in the future tense as the project is still an idea on the desk at this stage. The rest is explained using a covering letter if permitted and that will be dealt with under business letters and other means of formal communication within an institution.

You observe this:	How you comment:
The proposal uses the past tense as if the research has already been carried out	Use the future tense
It details the results as if the research has already been carried out	Do not detail the results
Premature mentioning of what should/should not be done	No proper recommendations can be drawn at this stage
Overly detailed sections that discuss more than the objectives	You are merely outlining what you will do
Failure to use words like, 'should this be granted, the research will do this and that…' and other terms that give the selection committee alternative ideas to bear in mind when deciding on the approval aspects.	Avoid sounding as if you have already commenced as the proposal is for asking for permission to research
Environmental and situational analyses are a mere rough draft and are not convincing enough	Present a realistic environmental analysis, budget and timeline
Only a few can be said about the topic	Use a variety of literature to show that it is a researchable area/with potential

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1.19 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

This is a combination of a 'critique' and an 'analysis'. As the terms suggest, you break down a topic into several units and share some educated views, opinions and perspectives. The main purpose is to help readers with an enhanced understanding of the issue under investigation and to determine its worth/usefulness in their lives.

To effectively do this, the reader needs to understand everything about the article. By everything, we mean understanding:

- what the issue is about
- who the author is
- the credibility of the source itself
- the structure and methodology followed
- strengths/weakness
- views and opinions
- comments on how the readers are encouraged to view the matter

The use of headings can help in logically arranging the discussion for the readers to get a comprehensive idea. Here are the key areas/examples:

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You observe this:	How you comment:
Critical introduction	The introduction must only contain facts to show the readers what the work is about
The body is mostly descriptive	Your main goal is exposing the strengths and limitations, helping readers understand whether the area under investigation is good/bad
The work is one sided	You need to share both the good and the bad perspectives for the readers to reach an informed decision.
Use of emotional terms	This kind of terminology controversially places you at the centre of the discussion and affects your objectivity, never mind the credibility that the readers see in you
Lack of logic in the body paragraphs	Your paragraphs must follow a logical manner; use the following order: - Start with paragraphs about the nature of the item - (followed by) the good side - (followed by) the bad side - (followed by) the bottom line

1.20 SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

Some educators do not favour the use of long essays as they feel that they only focus on a narrow area and a few repeated points. As a result, they do not care much about the ability to explain but the number of points they learnt throughout a certain study period. The types of assessments here come in very short questions so that they can generate a variety of answers.

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The respondents must ensure they pay special attention to the wording of the question and present an answer that closely matches what is being examined. For example, if a question says, 'What did you see in the car?', the answer should border along the words 'In the car, I saw A, B and C…'

If the answer says something different, the readers may find it difficult to understand if your answer is even related to the question. These questions have a key phrase that guides the type and length of answer that you we must provide. For instance, a question that says 'list four things…' could only require simply naming the items and providing no further explanations. On the other hand, if it says 'discuss/explain/etc. 'the writer might be required to provide more details. As long as the answer provided is consistent with the wording in the question, there will be no doubt that the writer knows the requirements and that is a sign of good potential to the markers.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
The question says 'list three things' but the answer explains 5 items	You need to underline the key word in the question and focus on it to provide an answer that matches the description in the question
The question is asking for a 'contravention' but the answer is talking about a 'crime'	The wording in your answer slightly differs I meaning with that in the question; avoid paraphrasing the keywords as that could obliterate the meaning of your answer
The question says 'list and explain' but the answer explains first and lists later	The order of your answer could also render it incorrect as it still does not match the description in the question.
The question says 'Choose one from the list below' but the answer introduces something not from the 'list'	Your answers must show that your mind is fully focused on the question before you.
The answers correspond to each element in the question	Your work mirrors the requirements of the question and is perfectly positioned for better marks.

1.21 SCIENTIFIC/LABORATORY REPORT

These reports detail the activity that takes place in a laboratory or place of investigation and it focuses on scientific problems. As Science is a factual subject, the writers must make sure the information provided contains verifiable facts and that often shines the spotlight on the methods used in such investigations.

Here are the key areas expected in a Lab report:

- Title,
- Abstract,
- Introduction,
- Method,
- Materials

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- Processes/Procedures
- Results,
- Discussion,
- Reference List,
- Appendices.

Some scientific experiments are affected by the prevailing temperatures, weather and other environmental influences. Therefore, other reports detail a section in the Methodology or Appendix, about the setting and the environmental conditions that prevailed during the experiment. The place, date, time and duration are becoming increasingly important.

A key area that must differentiate the scientific report from other types is its terminology. It must prove beyond doubt that the writer is familiar with analysing, measuring, interpreting data and using conventional methods in solving problems and they must not confuse one term for another, or use one word in the wrong context. For example, the meaning of the word 'base/basic' in Science is different from its ordinary English derivative and readers familiar with the subject may pick up those 'minor errors' and lose the plot/direction. Therefore, a Scientific dictionary is required to ensure your use of terms like 'observe, experiment, measure, imply (relationships), explore, sketch (diagrams), apply (knowledge) recall (information), categorise/consolidate, compare/contrast, etc., convey accurate Scientific meanings.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
Wrong headings are used	These are not the proper headings for this type of work
The work is in essay form and has no headings at all.	It will be difficult to identify all the key structural components at this pace; use proper headings from the Title page to the Abstract, down to the conclusions and Appendices
Proper headings/wrong content	This heading does not go hand-in-hand with the content mentioned under it
Proper headings/wrong order	Begin with the abstracts, followed by the introduction, objectives, etc. before the conclusions and recommendations; readers can only understand the information when presented in this order unless if it has been tempered with or manipulated.
No proper conclusions	- Give readers the bottom line - Make proper recommendations on how to improve this using scientific methods

1.22 BUSINESS LETTER

A letter is a written form of communication that often reaches the recipient through conventional postal methods; this logically raises the need for clear identification of the sender, the receiver and their locations before the message can be understood in context. The same applies in business; letters must convey the proper details in a logical manner, with the only difference being that this one must be more formal because the setting dictates as such. Therefore, care must be exercised on the titles used, the message conveyed over such means and the types of salutations/addressing methods used.

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Generally, a business letter is considered proper/complete if it includes:

- the sender's information (their name/surname and address if it is a printed letter or email addresses if it is sent electronically)
- the letterheads identifying the organisation that the sender represents
- The date of the writing of the letter,
- the recipient's details and contact information
- opening salutations
- the heading of the message
- the first paragraph that explains the relationship between the writer and the receiver and summarises the reason why the letter was sent.
- the body that explains the purpose of the letter and details the action required from the receiver
- Any other pertinent issues and future perspectives
- Signing off/salutations (which can be left out if there is a clear letterhead.
- Some business letters require a personal signature of the sender to be authentic.

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The writer must provide clear and adequate details in an unambiguous tone; here are some of the other examples:

No information about the sender	Consider identifying the source of the letter first.
No greeting	Your letter could be read by the wrong person if you do not properly identify its intended recipient
The sender goes straight into the discussion without acquainting the recipient with background information	A short 'about-you phrase' is required to establish the relationship between the sender and receiver; if the receiver is a minor female person while the sender is a 40-year-old married man, certain organisations request another 'relevant' person to handle the matter, etc. Therefore, mentioning it in the first place saves readers their valuable time.
No recipient address/details	The letter will get lost.
NO clear purpose	The recipient will find it difficult to action your letter
No proper closing salutation	Use "Yours Faithfully" to an unknown (A 'To whom it may concern/Dear Sir/Madam' recipient) and "Yours Sincerely" to a recipient you address by their name/surname).
The letter is too long and petty	Businesses do not have much time; mention only the main objectives.
The letter mentions its purpose in a random manner	Arrange your contents orderly from the introductory elements to the details and conclude with the expectations
The sender demands action	Politely ask them to action your letter and promise to wait for them in the meantime.

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1.23 CASE STUDY

This is the discussion based on a featured character. It analyses the prevailing situation, and sows how theory can be applied in solving it. They are very common in Business, Economics, Health and other Social Sciences. For example, a company is presented to the students, with its policy documents, financial performance results and a catastrophic situation at hand; the students may be asked to use their Marketing knowledge to solve its problems in report, template or essay form.

The most important areas will be:

- The introduction containing detailed background information.
- Detailing the prevailing situation to show that one understands the problem to be solved; any mistake here may lead to even bigger errors and show that the writer is not in a position to provide a sound discussion as they still need help/ sound like an outsider in the matter.
- Interpreting the problems
- Identifying the key areas that the problem relates to
- Showing the solutions that the theory provides in such instances
- Avoiding using personal opinions and informal sources.
- Prescribing policy issues for the future.

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Here are the common examples:

You observe this:	How you comment:
No introduction	Readers will like to know who/what they are reading about, its background, history and the prevailing circumstances
The main task is not clear	Provide the problem statement and, by so doing, you will be sharing the case's objectives
The applicable theory is missing	Describe and explain the problem/task using the applicable theoretical convention
The case analysis 'forgets' about the main character	Keep reminding the readers about how everything mentioned helps the character
No links to existing theory and previous real-life examples	Include real-life applications and verifiable accounts of where this used to work
No logical conclusion	Avoid the 'what-if/so-what' questions by showing how everything is relevant to the case's main character and the readers in general.
No future orientation	Avoid making only narrow, once-off solutions but focus on the future.

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2 LANGUAGE COHERENCE AND ENHANCEMENTS

Although we do not always write "grammatically-challenged" sentences, it has often been seen that readers may still fail to get the intended sense and academic context of our words because of the choice of vocabulary we use. We may use complicated, heavily worded and ambiguous statements in an effort to impress readers with vast knowledge on the subject, forgetting beginners and those whose first language is not English. Therefore, this section points outs the mistakes that can force us to compose overly complicated sentences that go against our intended purpose and find ways to eliminate that for the benefit of our readers. You have to understand that everything said here is grammatically correct, but it lacks the proper academic appeal and still fails to meet common academic standards; here is the table of contents.

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2.1   TRANSITIONAL ELEMENTS

An academic assignment is composed of numerous points that do not come from the same source and yet, they must be combined to make one exclusive thought to enable an overall understanding. For example, the question, 'Must Britain leave the European Union?' will need many points for and against and a comprehensive analysis that details the cause and effect relationships of decisions and what policy makers must do in order to properly show the connection between the multiple factors. This calls for the effective use of Transitional devices, the words/phrases that help a reader connect two or more different contexts, see the relationships, understand hidden points or conveniently move on from point to point without the need for cross referencing.

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We often encourage the use of Transitional/Linking Devices in the following contexts:

i) Where the student has a habit of writing independent thoughts beginning with mere articles and hardly shows what each sentence is doing in a paragraph, e.g., *'This dog is nice. This dog is female. This dog is cheap. This dog can bite. This dog is easy to train. I will buy this dog.'*
There is nothing grammatically wrong with the above paragraph but reading it is tiring as one will have to investigate the purpose each sentence is serving there. However, if we use linking devices, the text can sound like this:
'This dog is nice. Surprisingly, it is female but very cheap. One cannot ignore the fact that it can bite, yet, on the other hand, it is easy to train. With all this in mind, I will buy this dog.'
As a result, the use of linking devices ensures every context is self-explanatory and it turns all those 'dot-points' into one unique, flowing story.

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ii) Some linking devices assist with the structure of a document. For example, imagine you are told to provide a detailed step-by-step diagnosis on a person with migraine attacks. To a non-medical professional, you would like to avoid presenting it like this:

"I will record the patient blood pressure, weight and temperature. I will ask the patient if there has been a history of such ailments in the family. I will expose the patient to different lighting conditions and observe their sensitivity. I will prescribe over the counter forms of treatment and advise them to come back if the condition worsens."

However, the use of proper linking devices could show which step comes first and clarify the chronology in this way:

Firstly and most importantly, I will record the patient blood pressure, weight and temperature.

Secondly, I will ask the patient if there has been a history of such ailments I the family

Thirdly, I will expose the patient to different lighting conditions and observe their sensitivity.

Eventually/Finally, I will prescribe over the counter forms of treatment and advise them to come back if the condition worsens.

Here are the other transitional terms, depending on the situation

iii) When providing Contextual additions:

We can say, 'Secondly/Third, and again, in addition, besides that, on another note, from another angle, equally important, finally, furthermore, next, lastly, what's more, moreover, etc.)

iv) When making Contextual comparisons:

We can use, 'In sharp contrast, Whereas, From this angle, yet, on the other hand, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, head-to-head, side-by-side, by comparison, compared to, up against, balanced against, vis-a-vis, although, conversely, meanwhile….'

v) When proving something:

The most common ones include, 'Therefore, Evidently, Obviously, because, since, for this reason, furthermore, moreover, besides, indeed, in fact, in addition, in any case, that is

vi) When making Contextual Exclusions/exceptions

We can say, 'Besides, Notwithstanding, With the Exception of, yet, still, however, nevertheless, in spite of, despite, of course, sometimes…'

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vii) Time indication:

Obvious examples here will be, 'Before that, In the meantime, Meanwhile, Thereafter, immediately, soon, after a few hours, finally, subsequently, later, previously, formerly, consequently, etc.'

viii) Contextual repetitions:

Try, 'Just to sum up, To ensure we are still on the same page, Retrospectively, Before we move on, Not to be forgotten, in brief, as observed previously, as already noted/pointed out, etc.

ix) Contextual emphasis:

Common examples are, 'definitely, with all certainty, extremely, obviously, without a doubt in fact, indeed, for real, absolutely, positively, naturally, surprisingly, always, forever, unquestionably, undeniably, without reservation.

x) Contextual Sequences/relationships:

We have, 'First, second, third, and so forth, next, consequently, following this, by then, now, at this point, after, afterward, subsequently, finally, previously, prior to this, simultaneously, at the same time, thus, therefore, thereafter, hence, etc.

xi) To provide a summary:

Examples: As we have seen, in brief, therefore, to sum up, in conclusion, As already shown, thus, as a result, consequently, etc.

xii) Outline examples/approaches:

Examples: A major area, take for example, on the other hand, take for instance, in another case, without forgetting this, just to illustrate, on this point, , take the case of, to demonstrate, to illustrate, as an illustration, etc.

xiii) When making recommendations:

It would be wise to, on a wiser note, it must not be under-emphasised that, etc.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
Independent sentences	Choose proper transitional words from the groups above
Very short paragraphs	Encourage using proper transitional words from the groups above
Unrelated thoughts	Encourage using proper transitional words from the groups above
Sentences beginning with the same words	Use linking devices to change readers' focus from one clause to another
Transitional devices do not reveal the proper activity/mood/etc. For example, the linking word for making examples is used in a context where making recommendations seems to be more appropriate.	Use proper transitional elements in consistent with the mood/context/that clarify the activity involved.
The chosen linking device contradicts the context	Encourage using proper transitional words from the right group (above).
A good variety of linking devices is used	Your work is cohesive and easier to read.

2.2   CONTRACTIONS/ACRONYMS / COLLOQUIALISMS

These are words invented by non-professionals in a language and are disseminated using less official means and, hence, the ambiguity that results when spoken in the presence of people who never got exposed to such lifestyles. Some of them are short-cuts to words we commonly use, others are used to emphasise, criticise, exaggerate or even confuse bystanders in certain situations. While it is convenient to use these words in a social and everyday lifestyle, we would like to give it much thought when it comes to Academic Writing. The strong reasons why we must follow strictly defined research and presentation methodology is to help us share knowledge universally with anyone in the world without needing a 'pocket dictionary' for new street 'lingo' that keeps developing and is not universally accepted by its adherents. Common examples are contractions (aren't/I'm/I've/etc.), slang ("dude/stuff/gal/dad/pops/mom/guy/kid/etc." and many other symbols that are used at random to represent full words. Some colloquialisms are offensive (e.g. the so-called 'f-words', 's-words' and other swearing material must never be deliberately used in academic assignments.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
The writing is full of slang	Show proper understanding of the difference between academic and social platforms
Too many contractions	Avoid suspicions that you may be lazy or are not taking your work seriously.
Too many symbols, including informal and unfamiliar ones.	Avoid suspicions that you may be lazy or are not taking your work seriously.
Use of obscene/vulgar language	- Use language that will not draw incorrect judgements of character towards you as the writer. - Show proper respect to all readers. - Distance yourself from controversies.

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2.3   REFLECTIVE LANGUAGE

In many assignments like diaries, journals and reflective essays, one is required to report on their own personal encounters for the benefit of a wide readership audience. Mistakes are often made here regarding the use of pronouns. While it is a norm that academic writing is about the content and not the individual behind it, this type of work is an exception as it focuses more on the write and less on the content or sometimes gives an equal level of consideration therein. Students must be advised against generalising their tones here but the need take advantage of the first person perspective in order to share enough details about themselves in an accurate manner.

Therefore, where questions specifically say, "What was it like when you were growing up/ describe your home town/How would you feel under these conditions…?', the answer must clearly say 'I did this and that/me/my home town/my feeling about this…' and avoid saying 'a student would/etc. As long as the answer is consistent with the key phrase in the question, there are fewer chances that one could be heading towards the wrong direction.

You observe this:	How you comment:
Introductions seem to be about distant characters	This must be about you from the start.
Communication seems addressed to the general population	This work is about you; more 'me/my/I' is required.
The use of second person pronouns and passive language	This work is about you; more 'me/my/I' is required.

2.4   PRECISE SENTENCES

We mentioned at the onset of this chapter that many of our sentences may still fail to educate the readers, not because they are grammatically wrong, but because they include too much unnecessary details that end up obscuring the main point. Take an example of an obese person; on its own, fat is not a problem as it is needed in the body to provide extra proteins and energy. However, when it starts overlapping and interfering with veins, tissues and other areas, complications arise. This simply means there are acceptable standards of

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terminology and others that are deemed too much for the benefit of the readers. In short, we must always be brief enough to convey our message and avoid overdoing it as that could become counterproductive.

You observe this:	How you comment:
Heavily-worded sentences.	Only the main points are required in academic writing.
Long explanations.	Use fewer words; check the synonyms of your key phrases in the thesaurus and use them instead of long text
Too many repetitions.	Try using one word at a time in a sentence.

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2.5   PRONOUNS

These are often placeholders representing certain nouns in a sentence. E.g., Instead of saying Aaron/Aaron's car/etc. over and over again, we can simply say 'He/Him/His car/etc.' to avoid too much repetition and improve the variety. However, if we use 'It/She/Our/etc.' were we previously referred to the subject as Aaron, many questions arise, e.g., On the pronoun 'It' – 'is Aaron an object and not a human?'; Around 'She' – 'is Aaron a female and not a male person', concerning the pronoun 'Our' – 'Does the car really belong to Aaron in this story?' and many other questions. The point is ensuring that the pronoun chosen represents/accurately substitutes the noun and does not change the meaning of the context. Common mistakes are often seen involving 'who/whom', 'they/their/etc.' and other similar texts.

You observe this:	How you comment:
A plural pronoun for a singular subject., e.g., 'this is a sports car'; 'they are very expensive'	Your choice of pronoun must show that you understand that the subject is a singular item
A singular pronoun for a plural subject., e.g., 'these are sports cars'; 'it is very expensive'	Your choice of pronoun must show that you understand that the subject is a plural item
An object pronoun for a human subject., e.g., 'this is a teacher car'; 'it is well educated'	Your choice of pronoun must show that you understand that the subject is a human being
A human pronoun for an object-like subject., e.g., 'this is a sports car'; 'he is very expensive'	Your choice of pronoun must show that you understand that the subject is an object, and not a person.
Omitting the pronoun entirely., e.g., 'this is a sports car'; 'is very expensive'	You need to use the pronoun as the subject's placeholder in all contexts, otherwise, you will be presenting incomplete sentences.

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2.6   PUNCTUATION (PARENTHESES)

These are punctuation marks that separate a text from its explanation to help the reader concentrate on the main substance of the story. However, there are other explanations that are so 'urgent' that they must be indicated next to the text to which they relate so that the reader can get an immediate clarification before proceeding as such meanings might be crucial in their overall understanding. These clarifications, however, must not be read aloud and that is why they are enclosed in parentheses as their reading is optional. We use them when providing in-text citations, contextual explanations, reminding readers of key/hidden information and many other areas.

You observe this:	How you comment:
Randomly used parentheses	Use parentheses on items that will sound ambiguous if read aloud.
Incomplete sets of brackets	Provide both the opening and closing parentheses to shoe the beginning and ending of the material that must not be read aloud.
Inconsistent parentheses	Stick to either the normal or square brackets; do not open using one and close using the other.
Complex parentheses	When enclosing text within the overall parentheses with its own parentheses, try not to use the same type (although it is not wrong); Use one set on the outermost part, preferably the square brackets, and the normal parentheses to separate the rest of the material inside the big square brackets for consistency.

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2.7   DIRECT QUESTIONS

The two main types of questions used in academic writing are the direct and rhetorical types. The latter does not require an immediate answer (and sometimes it never requires one at all) and they can be left without a question mark and they resemble ordinary text because the reader is not expected to stop and act on them immediately; they can only stay alert as they look for the answer to the rhetorical question raised later on in the text.

However, direct questions, on the other hand, require an immediate answer and call for a complete halt in the reading process in many context; they actually can replace the full-stop. The problem with many students is failing to know which type needs a question mark and which one does not and the answer lies in the use of inquisitive texts. For example, where one strongly feels they must use 'who/what/where/which/etc.' and an auxiliary verb like 'do/did' before the subject among other things, the question mark may be required. These call for care to be exercised where these terms are used as they may make the text appear like a direct question requiring an immediate answer and the failure to recognise that renders the work ambiguous.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
The sentences include features of both reported and direct speech	Pick one format; reported speech is always in the past tense while direct speech must be enclosed in inverted commas.
Directly quoted words appear from nowhere in the sentence	Show the speaker and their words through the use of commas and inverted quotes.

2.8   EXAGGERATIONS

Because academic writing is always about sharing new knowledge and new perspectives that can touch the lives of our readers, we must use valid arguments that are automatically persuasive and capable of changing the readers' perspectives on matters. However, in order to effectively do that, we must still maintain a neutral unbiased perspective and show our credibility but focusing on the facts. Therefore, we must never get desperate and start exaggerating issues in an attempt to force the readers to use their emotions rather than rational judgements in their evaluations of the text. These calls for the removal of texts like, 'Imagine how unfair it was when…', 'I don't know who on earth will ever believe that…; because some may find it fair and easy to believe.

You observe this:	How you comment:
Too many exclamations	Limit your use of such features because they end up raising false alarms and overemphasising unimportant material.
You sense conversational tones directed to the reader	There is not much factual information in this context; revert back to presenting details and avoid emotional engagement
Anything that attempts to manipulate, twist and influence the readers' thinking unconventionally	Avoid worrying too much about how the reader will react; simply focus on the facts and noting much.

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2.9   PASSIVE VOICE

This section has emphasised that credibility is a key issue in academic writing; in order for the readers to take anything we write seriously, they must be convinced that the writer had no ulterior motives and was in a good mental position to make a sound judgement, otherwise, anything suspicious from there will defeat the whole purpose of the work. We must use terminology that shows that anyone in our position could have made the same observations and reached the same conclusion, leaving the readers without any choices but to admit that the text is suitable for academic purposes. Students must avoid including themselves in non-reflective text, e.g., 'Our country deserves better than this…' (No one will ever believe that what you are discussing about other countries is accurate as suspicions will be that you are biased towards your people) or 'my work/my article/Me this…Me that…' 'I will do this and that….'; On the other hand, terms like 'the country..' (not specific), 'the essay…' and 'this will be done…' do not raise further questions and help readers focus more on the content.

You observe this	How you comment:
There is too much mentioning of the author or other human figures not directly related to the content	Use the passive voice so that the readers focus more on the content rather than the individuals involved.
The writer uses first-name pronouns	If this is not a reflection, revert back to using impersonal forms of address.
You sense some conversational tones, seemingly directed towards the reader	Do not communicate directly with the reader on your own; rather, let the work engage with the audience on its own.

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2.10 USING THE THIRD PERSON PRONOUN

In order to do well in the above, we must differentiate between the types of pronouns used in academic writing:

- The first person: Me, I, my, etc. (Usually, this is the writer of the article in their personal capacity).
- The second person: You, your, yours (This is usually the reader, the recipient of the message or anyone interacting with the writer in one way or the other).
- The third person: One/They/Their (Any random individual who is likely to benefit from or have a connection to the article.

Now that we have identified the above, we need to think carefully about the ones that are likely to show a degree of the writer's interference with the academic material under consideration. No doubt, we are likely to single out the first and the second one and comfortably use the third one as it is not likely to offend anyone at all.

Eliminating bias is not only limited to the content we include in our arguments but, also, the mannerisms in our choice of pronouns can bring that into question as well. For example, whenever there is an example that mentions criminals, if a writer always uses 'he' each time, there is a likelihood that the male readership will end up getting offended as criminals in jails today are both male and female; that is why there are female prisons and officers. On the other hand, a writer who only reserves 'top' positions for males may also lose their female readerships because they have also proved to be capable as well. Therefore, identify all pronoun uses that are likely to reveal negative stereotypes, bias/hate towards/against certain genders, races, tribes and various differences existing among the human race. In summary, the neutral/third person perspective will save you a lot of trouble in future.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
Unnecessarily revealing the gender of the individuals involved	Simply use third person pronouns/impersonal structures to shift the readers' focus from the gender of the individuals to the main content.
There is more 'me/you' pronouns	Avoid making this about yourself and the reader; academic writing is for a very wide audience and replacing personal forms of communication with formal terms improves its credibility.
The student is not sure about the pronouns to use in their work.	Choose the better pronoun from the types listed above
The writer is inclined towards certain genders in certain contexts, revealing certain stereotypes in their reasoning.	Use neutral pronouns where the context is not gender-specific to avoid offending sensitive readers.

2.11 LEGAL WORDS

Every profession has its own domain language – terms and vocabulary that exclusively applies to its circles and hardly anywhere else and the legal profession is no exception to this rule. It borrowed many words from the Roman-Dutch Law and features many Latin words and grammatical expressions that do not apply in ordinary English. Examples are 'actus reus' (an actual act), 'bona fide' (in good faith), "dolus eventualis" and others; these students can fail their assignments if they do not include these terms and it will not be wise to keep advising them to replace them with the English explanations in parentheses. However, the failure to use punctuation could result in ambiguities, e.g. 'The politician was charged under section 2(a) of the constitution after committing an *actus reus* against the government…'. You can imagine the effect of the words in italics had they been left in the text resembling ordinary words; therefore, these students must use proper punctuation marks, be it italics, underlining or even inverted commas, to prevent readers from mistaking these legal terms for ordinary text in their assignments.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
Words imported from other languages written without any distinguishing features	(Italicise or explain these non-English words).
The student uses unconventional methods to differentiate non-English words from ordinary text	- Use underlining - use bold fonts - use inverted commas - provide brief/guiding explanations in parentheses - use an asterisk and footnotes to explain the non-English words - highlight/mark the non-English words using symbols and provide detailed end notes if a longer explanation is required. - etc.

2.12 STRONG/DOMAIN VOCABULARY

While still on the subject of using domain language, there are other sections of the text that cannot specifically apply to a certain profession but may still sound 'armature-like' if presented using ordinary speech. For example, 'The doctor put a small glass under his arm due to the fact that he wanted to know how hot or cold he is.' (Pretty long, isn't it?) However, 'The doctor gave him the thermometer/The doctor checked his temperature' shows that the writer (although it is not enough to confuse them for a doctor) is an above-average student who understands proper terminologies; students who use the exact names of objects, processes and other nouns usually earn better marks and they develop faster in their academic paths.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
The choice of terminology does not reveal proper/adequate subject knowledge, e.g., 'The mechanic was looking for that thing that they use in turning the round things that fasten the pieces of metal together'	All this work could be reduced to one short phrase, i.e., 'The mechanic wanted a spanner'; this shows how important it is to learn and use domain language.
Very long, sophisticated and unnecessary forms of technical jargon.	The chosen terminology must not be something new to you as the writer.
Very unfamiliar terms that require one to constantly refer to the dictionary	(Consider slow/'lazy' readers and those without a dictionary nearby; all must be able to understand your work without difficulty; simplify, simplify, simplify:).

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2.13 COURTEOUS/POLITE LANGUAGE

Many readers will easily articulate to your views and respond to your call for action if they believe you are a humble, respectful, virtuous and rational individual. For example, if your writing reveals that you are a rude individual, perhaps, showing a criminal element, no one is likely to be interested in what you are appealing for and your writing loses focus.

The same applies when writing about certain forms of communication between you and senior individuals, be it a resume, application for employment, communication with a government official/ academic institution, you are likely to win them over by using respectful words that show that you understand their work routines, respect/recognise their authority and that you are willing to work with whatever course of action they direct towards you.

Therefore, avoid detailing your wayward behaviour, hurling threats and insults (or even showing support for them in different ways). Address individuals with their proper titles, no matter their personal conduct might be, e.g., "Sir/Madam/US President/Prime Minister/ Prince William/etc."; avoid naming them like 'ordinary citizens' of your level, e.g., 'Trump/ William/etc.' as that could reveal undesirable characteristics in you. The manner in which you conclude such assignments must show that you respect the officials' work and that you will not attempt to tell them what they must do, when and how. As long as you are subjective to their processes, you are likely to succeed in this type of work.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
No greeting	Show a proper degree of respect/courtesy
No mentioning of titles/prefixes	Observe traditional forms of protocol
The tone is harsh and shows many expectations	Avoid demanding
The writing reveals too many good things about the writer and 'forces' readers to acknowledge them unfairly	Avoid bragging
The writer uses unofficial information	Avoid disclosing information obtained illegally
Too much repetition of the request/ too much emotional blackmail	Avoid nagging
Use of unusual expressions and comparisons	Do not exaggerate
The writer, although an outsider to the organisation, demands action by a certain date or overly details the instructions to be followed when actioning their request.	Do not give ultimatums and conditions

2.14 ANALYTIC/EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE

The various assignments we talked about earlier, namely, Annotated bibliographies, literature reviews and critical discussions, involve a lot of analysing and evaluating and, without using terminology that fits these descriptions, your work may not be marked at all sometimes. So, to avoid begin accused of not answering the right question, a distinction must be drawn between ordinary narrations, analysing and evaluating Effective use of Analytic/Evaluative language:

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i. Analytical language: this involves choosing a set of words/vocabulary that breaks down a matter into more 'visible' parts, reveals certain relationships between various objects/issues/aspects and shows the underlying implications, whether hidden or otherwise, in a way that helps readers understand how one element relates to the other or fits in the overall system/process. Examples are terms like, 'A is caused by B, leading to C but all are subject to whether or not D meets criterion 1 or 2…" (Bhebhe, 2018).

ii. Evaluative language: This form of speech leads readers to the understanding of how relevant/important/significant an object/subject/issue can be. Evaluation is the careful 'weighing up' of aspects in order to note both the good and the bad side of something, its strengths and limitations so that the readers can make up their minds with a clear picture/mind map. Words like, "bigger/better/relevant/ etc." help readers get accurate dimensions of the characteristics of the issue and are, thus, encouraged (Bhebhe, 2018).

You observe this:	How you comment:
- The work is a mere overview - The work merely describes the text	Analysing involves digging deeper, dissecting the material and examining the pieces closely
The work is full of narrations	Refer to the definition of analysing before proceeding.
The work is too critical/judgemental	Refer to the definition of evaluation before proceeding.

2.15 ACTIVE VERBS:

The construction of precise, short and confident sentences, as described earlier, can also be enhanced with the positioning of the verbs sometimes. It can be noted that when the verb is too long or comes late in the sentence, there is likely to be an overuse of terms that do not directly relate to the question and that simply bloats the work without any new material addition to the argument.

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Therefore, using active words is likely to improve the presentation and the understandablility of the text. For example, 'The cleaning and preparations of the room will be done by me and the consultation will be done by Andrew' can sound much clearer if we use, 'I will clean and prepare the room while Andrew consults on them…' This precise and direct way of presentation takes readers straight to the point, the verb/main action becomes the focal point and that enhances their retention as well.

You observe this:	How you comment:
The sentences are long, beginning with the objects and the nouns and ending with the verbs	**Using active verbs entails beginning with the verb itself or placing it at a prominent position; that optimises the number of words used and improves the meaning.**
You notice sentence like, 'A discussion of the essential elements will be made', 'An answer will be derived through following proper procedures using various alternative techniques, etc.'	The manner the verbs have been used makes it difficult to understand who is doing what in the work; use active verbs.
Uncertain words like 'maybe/possibly/ perhaps'	The readers expect some 'expert' guidance from you; use definite and confident terms for them to see the relevance of your information.

2.16 REPEATING UNNECESSARILY

The strength/depth of an academic article is the number of points it uses and the ability to bring about new knowledge/realisations to the reader. However, merely listing the points only increases the quantity and reduces the quality, leaving readers requiring more explanations and interpretations. However, too much explanations and interpretations increases the quality (understandability) but reduces the quantity of points and the discussion, as a result, lacks depth. This, no doubt, requires a lot of balancing and, to get it right, we need to show that we understand the meanings of the words we use so as to avoid repeating the same thing over again.

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Common examples involve beginning sentences with the same words, e.g., John is a boy. John is tall. John is bad. John is smart. John this and that…' At this rate, readers may not finish your work as it resembles a poem without any hidden meaning. Using placeholders like 'The student/He/The boy/Him/etc.' will likely bring the variety your readers need.

Other examples involve using words that, even though they are different, carry the exact synonymous meanings, e.g. 'Mr Trump, Head of State, President, etc.' in the same sentence. Other habitual errors of using the same words over again may need us to ask other people who know us to provide us with constructive criticism as the mannerisms we display in speaking are likely to appear in our writing as well. Student need dictionaries, Google search engines for synonyms and dictionaries that are designed specifically for the subject they are doing to improve on this section.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I saw a car, an automobile and a vehicle.'	These words make readers think there are three items in the context but all point to one thing; widen out your use of nouns.
You notice something like, 'Aaron was here this morning. Aaron likes bread. Aaron must not come here in the morning.'	The name is only relevant and contributing something new in the beginning; it becomes irrelevant in subsequent contexts where it is obvious; use its alternatives later on.
You notice something like, 'This car is good. This means I will buy it. This means I will be enjoying. This means my friends will be jealous. This means….etc.'	Every sentence begins with the same word and, at that pace, the repeated word could end up forming between 30 and 40% of your final word count. Although it is not wrong, it makes readers 'dizzy'. Use pronouns, synonyms and linking devices to replace the repeated text.
You notice something like, 'Aaron, he is hardworking…'	Where you have used the name, forget the pronoun because both have the same function in the sentence; use only one of them and not both at the same time.
You notice something like, 'I wanted him to understand that. That is what I wanted him to understand.'	The second sentence is clearly there to fill up the space and make the reader sweat, with no meaningful outcome; beware of such text as it could render the entire work useless. Only repeat/emphasise when extremely necessary or when other techniques like paraphrasing and explanation cannot be properly implemented.

2.17 OVER-SIZED ACADEMIC SENTENCES

A proper academic sentence contains a

i) Subject, object and a verb
ii) Subject, predicate relationship
iii) Subject, verb, complement

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These combinations were explained in detail in Bhebhe (2018). However, some readers include too many subject-predicate combinations and other unnecessary transitions until the sentence resembles a full paragraph and loses meaning. We discourage against such practice because, in an attempt to provide a short-cut, writers end up confusing everyone with overly long thought that are hard to follow.

You observe this:	How you comment:
A sentence that is as long as an entire paragraph	An ordinary reader will probably fail to memorise all the ideas contained in this sentence; present each idea separately
Improperly combined sentences	See Sentence combinations

2.18 REDUCING WORD COUNT

Many assignments, especially, templates and reports do give certain word-count limits per section in order to achieve a uniform set of structural elements. However, some students believe the use of many words will strengthen their work and that a 'bloated' appearance can be taken as a sign of handwork, which is wrong. It is obvious that there may be many words in a sentence but not all of them may be providing countable individual/relevant points related to the topic; most of them are redundant verbs, adverbs and unnecessary descriptions that could be removed without affecting the meaning of the sentence, a sign that they are not useful/essential. As we know that too many spices can end up ruining a tasty dish and that, although fat is beneficial for health, however, too much of it may result in many complications, we must be careful about doing this in our assignments.

Therefore, students must be encouraged to identify the words in their sentence that directly relate to the topic/question and trim the excess material for more clarity. There are many words in a sentence that do not contribute anything meaningful. That, combined with the fact that some assignments even specifically tell us to summarise, means we must learn and master the skill of presenting our work in short and precise sentences:

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Here are a few pointers:

You observe this:	How you comment:
Too many transitions in the sentence.	(Use fewer words and be more precise/assertive/confident).

2.19 WHEN A QUESTION SAYS, 'EXPLAIN IN YOUR OWN WORDS.'

Many educators, in an attempt to train students to think independently and to express themselves, prefer using this type of examination. However, what type of 'own words' are we talking about? Wild accusations and opinions? Obviously not! It might be the existing text or verifiable facts that we encounter throughout the study materials. The major point is ensuring that we use our own vocabulary to explain, usually, the same things taught by the lecturer. It helps them with the necessary feedback and in improving learning material.

You observe this:	How you comment:
The answer mentions what certain authors think and uses too many references.	(Use your own words in this answer).

2.20 OMISSIONS OF CERTAIN KEY INFORMATION

As mentioned earlier, proper academic sentences contain at least a:

   i) Subject, object and a verb
   ii) Subject, predicate relationship
   iii)Subject, verb, complement

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These combinations were explained in detail in Bhebhe (2018 and must be there for a proper thought. However, certain assignments are written in templates, short tables and other places and may actually permit the temporary/occasional omission of such 'less' important parts of speech as follows:

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'car hits road/ teacher wins first prize' etc.	I will merely tell you that you omitted the determiner here and there but it all depends on the availability of the writing space, the types of readers in the target audience and your own preferences; consider these things when making adjustments if necessary.
You notice something like, 'Dog mine'	I will merely tell you that this is not a complete sentence as it does not have proper predicate-subject combinations, e.g. One reader could feel as if you are saying 'The dog is mine' while another could fill in the missing words as, 'This is a dog mine', 'The dog is not mine' etc.; consider these things when making adjustments if necessary.

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3 GRAMMATICAL CONVENTIONS

Academic assignments must convey the proper message using proper English for the benefit of the readers. The use of random terminologies, tenses, plurals, incomplete sentences and improper subject-verb agreements often result in ambiguities and defeat the purpose of our work. Therefore, the following pages show the basics that a required for the construction of proper, concise and acceptable, standardised sentences. Please pay attention to the following elements:

1. COMMAS:
2. DETERMINERS:
3. QUANTIFIERS:
4. COMPOUND WORDS
5. SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENTS:

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3.1   COMMAS

As one of the most widely used forms of punctuation, a comma forms a vital/integral part of a sentence. It helps the speaker enhance the process in which the readers can understand the text and remember it by showing them where they must take necessary breaks. As modulation and proper emphasis is required so as to enable proper absorption of what is being said, there is no doubt that the lack of commas may result in serious ambiguities and a lack of order in our work.

Therefore, commas are useful in the following areas:

- providing a break for the readers to rest and breathe normally when reading out loud
- to separate thoughts in a sentence
- to introduce important text like direct quotes, major points and key transitions.
- to separate words and text that must not be taken as one unit
- when combining key clauses using transitional elements.
- to help readers understand points of emphasis, the key fluctuations and developments in a story
- to enhance the reading experience in a passage
- and many more…etc.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
The comma is not serving any of the purposes outlined above	- This context does not need any comma. - The comma is out of place
There are different points in a sentence but nothing separates them	This context needs a comma to show the major separation of the points contained in your work.
You notice something like, 'Andrew, Peter, Simon, or Anne'	The comma is only relevant when separating the multiple points and it loses its purpose at the end of the sentence; remove it and use 'or/and/etc.' after mentioning all the available points.
You notice something like, 'I have, a lot of cars.'	The comma must not interfere with the reading momentum by separating items from the same clause, in this case, the noun must be read continuously with the verb, not separately; therefore, this comma must go.
You notice something like, 'I like chicken, and rice/ I will go to the city, and the village.'	In as much as we do not say 'Jack, and Jill', we must remove the comma between items in the same compound noun or compound predicate.
You notice something like: He went on to say 'I love you would you marry me?'	A short pause is required to separate the direct quote from the rest of the introductory elements and that is where the context requires a comma.
You notice something like, 'We invited Barry and Gill, Aaron and Anna, and Henry.	The comma before 'and', also known as the 'Oxford comma', is allowed if the main purpose is to show that 'Henry' is alone and not accompanying the two couples in the context; without it, readers may assume that Henry is coming with Aaron and Anna, contrary to the intended meaning. It, however must be used sparingly as its misuse could result in a lot of ambiguities.
The comma is used to separate complete sentences	See sentence combinations.
You notice something like, 'I want chees tomatoes ham and butter today'.	The comma would be helpful in separating the points here.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like. 'In the beginning I wanted to come alone…'	A pause is required after the introduction; readers may like to let that settle in and visualise the setting of the context before moving on; a comma is, definitely required after 'beginning'.
You notice something like, 'This therefore means however that…'	The words 'therefore' and 'however' are merely guiding on the direction of the meaning but are really not contributing anything new in the text, hence, the term interrupters is used to describe them. They must be preceded and succeeded by commas for the readers to focus on the main text all the time.

3.2   DETERMINERS

These remind us of the relevance of using proper introductions in our work. As we keep noticing that proper conversations with people require proper introductions to have taken place prior to concentrating on the substance of the discussion, the same is expected with the key words in a sentence, and that is where we need determiners.

They are words that 'introduce' nouns in our work, making them self-explanatory and, when used properly, they eliminate the necessity to provide long explanations on every major noun we use. For example, 'I bought car yesterday' sounds odd to many people and requires many explanations on the type, colour, quantity, location, etc. of the object in question. That is why we have many types of determiners in the following key categories:

- Articles – a car/the car
- Quantifiers – only car/one car/a single car
- prepositions/location – that car
- Adjective – red car
- Condition – used/new car

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Where the determiner is properly used, no additional explanations are required as the reader often gets the whole picture of what is in the context. Here are some examples:

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You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I want to drive car now'.	Whose car? What type/colour/etc.? To avoid the hundred questions in such singular nouns, simply place a determiner like 'the/an/a' and so on.
You notice something like, 'I want many car at my wedding.'	Without the suffix, readers may ponder over this context for a long time searching for more clues as the quantifier 'many' seems to be suggesting a plural while the noun is singular; use the proper suffices, e.g. 'cars' to avoid the need for a determiner.
You notice something like, 'The children saw pride of lions crossing the river at the game park.'	The group/pride is a singular item on its own; it needs its own determiner like 'the/a pride'.
You notice something like, 'I saw longest snake in the world on TV today'	Certain types of adjectives, depending on how they have been used, require determiners before them, e.g., 'the longest'
You notice something like, 'I want to drive a car. A car must be yellow. Car must be clean'.	The first determiner is appropriate because it is about a random/general/unknown car. The second one, if about the same car, is becoming improper because it is now a known/obvious item, therefore the proper determiner is the definite article, 'the car'. The third case involves a total omission and either a determiner 'The' could do but, to avoid repetition, this time the pronoun 'It' would be the most appropriate.
You notice something like, 'They came looking for car to buy…'	If you meant only one car, avoid a situation where readers will assume you are talking about many of them; use proper determiners.
I went to The England from Netherlands	The determiner is appropriate for certain types of countries, e.g., 'The US/UK/Soviet Union' but not others like 'South Africa/Britain/etc.

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3.3   QUANTIFIERS

These words improve the flow and help readers understand the quantities/amounts and hidden numbers of objects in a context. There are quantifiers that are predominantly used with singular objects, with plurals and certain words that sound ambiguous should unconventional quantification rules be applied on them. Here are a few examples.

'Many boy were invited to attend the function'

'There was one women in the queue that afternoon'

'I got some new informations/trainings/knowledges at the three-day workshop'

There are ambiguities when singular quantifiers are used with plural nouns and vice-versa. However, there are certain words in English like the ones mentioned in the example that make no sense when pluralised and will never change whether in a singular or plural form. Although some exceptions like 'water' can sometimes be modified to 'waters', such instances are now limited to archaic English and, whether they are correct or nor, the truth is that their acceptance is evolving and many readers are no longer familiar with that type of language any more. Therefore, whenever we use certain quantifiers, we must ensure they go with the appropriate objects for the readers not to lose track of the 'numbers' involved in our context because that affects the overall understanding of the assignment.

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Take note of the following:

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I wanted one of the car at the auction but could not afford it'.	Even though you wanted one, it appears as though there were many of them; use the proper quantity there, i.e. 'cars'.
You notice something like, 'I had no idea on the amount of cars in the yard but I knew the number of petrol in them'.	Quantifiers like 'amount' are associated with non-countable items while 'number' refers to a countable resource; avoid confusing them.
You notice something like, 'There were less students but many work to be done'	Quantifiers like 'more/less' are associated with non-countable items while 'many/few' refer to a countable resource; avoid confusing them.
Singular items accompany plural quantifiers	(Use singular quantifiers with singular objects).
Plural items accompany singular quantifiers	(Use plural quantifiers with plural objects).
The writer attempts to pluralise an uncountable item like 'wealth/knowledge/knowhow/information etc.'	These types of terms may end up sounding ambiguous if you forcefully pluralise them; leave them in their ordinary/standard form.

3.4   COMPOUND WORDS

The word 'compound' is synonymous with a product of a combination of elements into one final product that must be taken as one unit. With this in mind, when we hear of a compound word, it must click that the word is a combination of two or more terms to perform a different purpose and convey a different meaning. These words are usually combined with the intention of describing a unique situation or word, e.g., when combining 'in' and 'grown' to describe a 'hair' that has grown inside the skin, we normally use 'in-grown hair'. The common mistake here is presenting the two words 'in' (a preposition) and 'grown' (a verb in its past tense) and 'hair' (the main noun in the context) without a hyphen, e.g., 'in grown hair' and that often raises many odd questions on the intention of the writer. Here are the common scenarios where this happens:

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You notice something like, 'I have first hand information on this case…'	How do we know that you are not talking about 'hand information' that simply happens to be the first? Without a hyphen in the proper place, e.g., 'fist-hand', your meaning could be lost.
You notice something like, 'I have a lot of work load this morning/You two are trouble makers…'	The word 'workload' and 'troublemaker' are single terms; they become ambiguous in certain contexts where they are improperly combined or with slow readers.

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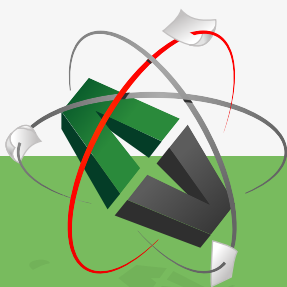
3.5 SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENTS

When explaining activities in a context, the subjects that are performing them must be clear to the readers, otherwise, the wrong meaning is derived with the smallest mistake therein. For example, where only one subject is involved, the verb used must match the number of subjects mentioned in that particular context, otherwise, the readers will start searching for inexistent subjects and lose track of the plot.

An example is the use of a singular subject with a plural verb, e.g.

'The boy kill the lion'

We normally associate the verb 'kill' in its present tense with a group of subjects and 'kills' with one subject. Therefore, the context above raises further questions on the actual number of persons involved in the activity and shows an example of a poorly-constructed context that places the burden of verifying the facts on the reader rather than the writer.

Therefore, the following examples can come in handy in such situations:

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'The boy dance at school'	Avoid writing singular nouns with singular verbs (in the present tense, we do the opposite).
You notice something like, 'The boys dances at school'	Avoid writing plural verbs with plural nouns (in the present tense, we do the opposite).
The boy studies Maths and Science while the girls do Home Economics.	These are the standard forms of subject-verb agreements required.

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3.6   INDIRECT SPEECH

Indirect speech are the words spoken by an individual who is no longer actively involved in the current conversation and are usually made in an effort to convey the message to a concerned audience. The difference is that it happens after the initial direct speech and it may even report on many facts that occurred before, during and after the speech. This places more responsibility on indirect speech to properly convey accurate and understandable versions of what transpired in the initial conversation and it must reflect the current time (the date of the indirect speech) and the original time (the date of the direct speech).

Common mistakes involve failing to paraphrase the direct speech and trying to convey it the way it was spoken as the lapse of time can make that impossible, e.g.,

'He said today I am going to teach you people a lesson.'

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The only proper element is the past tense in the beginning but it becomes complicated when the word 'today' appears; it was fit to be called 'today' when it happened but, because of the lapse of time, it is no longer fit to be called 'today' as today is another different day. Besides, 'you people' might be pointing to the current audience, which is wrong because they might not have been present then and the message was not directed to them. Therefore, proper reported speech conveys an undisputable message and says:

'He said he was going to teach those people a lesson that day'

Never mind the fact that it is becoming longer and that a few words have been added; the message has been preserved and the additional words are bridging the time gap and the change of circumstances between the initial and the subsequent contexts.

Please check these examples:

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I just went there did not notice that I am in the wrong lecture room…'	This is not proper and consistent indirect speech.
You notice something like, 'He was shouting I love you! in his sleep the whole night.	Proper punctuation is required in form of commas and inverted quotes here.
You notice something like, 'I am going to report you.	Inverted commas are used in sets, with the opening and the closing part; where there is an open quote, there must be a close quote and vice-versa.
You notice something like, 'He was asking what did I do to deserve this'	The use of inquiry-related terms like 'do/did/what' will likely change the context to a direct quote or direct question; decide on using the question marks and/or inverted commas if you cannot paraphrase and present it in proper report speech.

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3.7   PREPOSITIONS

When it comes to describing the direction, strength, positions, magnitude and other key attributes of our text, we will be talking about the use of prepositions. They are important in helping readers understand what is doing what, how, where, what time, in what manner and to what extent in our work. Like determiners, no one can ask about the amounts involved, the directions and other aspects of our contexts if the right prepositions have been used in a proper manner. Examples include:

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I wanted see you.'	Include the missing preposition to clarify the relationship between 'wanted' and 'see' in your sentence.
The writer wants describe death and has a choice between 'She passed' and 'She passed on/away'.	Please use stronger combination of verbs and prepositions best suitable for the context.
You notice something like, 'By doing this, it leads to that…' and feel it can be shortened to 'Doing this leads to that…'	The preposition's inclusion unnecessarily complicates the sentence; remove it in this case.

3.8   PERIOD/CAPITALS

The term 'capital' is associated with something of specific importance and of noteworthy significance and this item must always stand out among its counterparts. Sentences require a capital letter in the beginning and the same applies to proper nouns. Capitals are also used when emphasising important text that must be visible to every reader and in making certain exclamations and unusual speech mannerisms. Here are examples of their contextual requirements.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
The beginning of the sentence is undefined/ unclear	(Begin sentences using capital letters).

3.9 PUNCUTATION: FULL-STOP

We mentioned that, for proper English sentences to show readers the beginning and end points, they must have a capital letter in the beginning and a full-stop at the end. Periods are useful in helping readers pause adequately between thoughts and in enumerating the points included. They are, however, not always necessary in topics/titles and subheadings.

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'i love you I need you.'	Proper academic sentences have a full stop after every subject-predicate combination, e.g., after 'I love you'.
The end of the sentence is unclear	Use a period to mark the end of your sentence.

3.10 BRITISH OR AMERICAN SPELLINGS?

There are two major variants of English used in today's academic writing, the US and UK dialects. While speaking with these two language groups may not be a challenge, however, writing rules, grammatical conventions and spellings differ a lot, requiring us to maintain a level of consistency. For example, British spellings include 'favour', 'organisation' and 'centre', while the American versions of the same spellings are, 'favor', 'organization' and 'center', respectively.

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Yes, we use textbooks that use either of the above styles but our assignments must show that we understand the difference and be consistent. Therefore, we must avoid confusions like:

'I wanted to remain at the *centre* of the stage so as to gain *favor* from the leader of the *organization*'
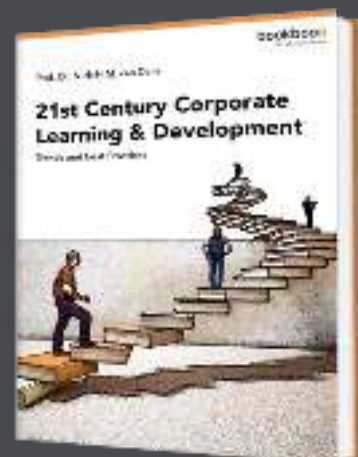
The italicised words tell the story of a confused and disorganised student who does not understand the name of the language they are writing about and its conventions and the first part begins with British spellings but ends with Americanised versions. Here are the key things to remember in future:

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You observe this:	How you comment:
A combination of both British/Americanised spellings	Choose one type of variant and stick to it throughout.
The Audience is British but there are too many Americanised spellings and vice-versa	Use spellings and expressions that are relevant to your audience.

3.11 INCOMPLETE SENTENCES

As mentioned by Bhebhe (2018), our work can never make any sense if sentences sound incomplete or lack the fundamental elements that make a complete thought. Proper sentences must all be complete/comprehensive and self-explanatory on its own. As for the number of words, there is no minimum or maximum, as long as there is the mentioning of the main character and what they are experiencing, or simply put, the action and the doer, readers are likely to grasp the direction of the text.

Common mistakes:

- He cry at. (The place is not clear)
- He cried the whole. (The time is not complete)
- He felt hurt and to solve it by crying from 8 pm to until 6am in the morning the next day. (The action is incomplete/unclear)

The following are complete sentences:

- He cried.
- He cried the whole night.
- He felt hurt and decided to solve it by crying from 8 pm to until 6am in the morning the next day.

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Despite the number of words, the sentences are complete and contain all the required elements as follows:

e.g. "He (subject) cried (predicate)." (Subject-predicate).

e.g. "He (subject) cried (verb) the whole night (complement providing the further explanation).

Here are the common mistakes that we sometimes make and present incomplete thoughts:

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I went to the city. To collect my money'.	The first sentence has its subject and predicate and is, therefore, complete. The second is, however, assuming the readers will go back to the first one to get a complementary idea and that what is missing from it is too obvious to write down. WRONG! Every sentence requires its own subject-predicate elements to make proper sense on its own, independent from another.
You notice something like, 'Since there are several cars. I will not worry about the transport tonight.'	The first sentence is a dependent clause and an incomplete thought since it relies on the second one for a complete thought; Avoid half sentences that leave readers hanging/thirsting for more information.
You notice something like, 'Also, that manager was there.'	This sounds like a complete sentence but with an ambiguous element; conjunctions are used in joining contexts and their inclusion automatically implies that there is more to the text than meets the eye. Consider using independent clause markers like 'That manager was also there…' to complete the idea.
You notice something like, 'I want to go home. Although I do not know how'	The second sentence begins with a conjunction and, hence, the ambiguity. However, combining both of them, e.g., 'Although I do not know how, I want to go home' or 'I want to go home, although I do not know how' improves the meaning in both sentences. Therefore, sometimes, combining them can reduce the amount of work required to make the sentences readable.

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3.12 RELATIVE PRONOUNS

These are words used to represent subjects in a sentence. An example is the sentences:

1) A car goes
2) It goes to the market every day.

Combining these sentences involves using a conjunction to replace the word 'car' in the latter half, e.g., 'The car that/which goes to the market every day.' The conjunction 'that/which' is, in this case, the place holder-subject for the phrase 'The car.' Please do not omit them as that could result in incomplete sentences.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'This is the man. The man though he could fly.' Using the pronoun, we simplify it to, 'This is the man who thought he could fly'.	The pronoun 'who' conveniently replaces a human subject.
You notice something like, 'This is the money whom I want to spend'	The pronoun 'that/which' replaces an object-like subject better.

3.13 SENTENCE COMBINATIONS

Although we are encouraged to construct short, simple and precise sentences, we are sometimes forced to combine two or more thoughts if they can only make sense when written as one unit. This, however, requires proper sentence combination techniques to ensure all the independent clauses form a complete thought in the end.

For example, the following sentences are complete as they are:

E.g., "This is a phone."

"I want to buy it."

(We can simply use a conjunction and paraphrase the rest to fit in the context, e.g., "This is the phone that I want to buy").

(Separating the sentences with a period, we get: "This is a phone. I want to buy it.")

(Or, we can use the comma and conjunction: "This is a phone, and I want to buy it"].

(Using the semicolon, you would say, "This is a phone; I want to buy it").

Common mistakes can include:

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"This is a phone, I want to buy it." (Using the comma improperly).

"This is a phone I want to buy it." (No punctuation or transitions at all).

The use of commas, transitional elements and conjunctions shows the relationship between the independent clauses and eliminates the ambiguity.

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I am a boy, I live along 7th street…'	To void run-on sentences; use the comma and conjunction, e.g., 'I am a boy, and I live along 7th street…'
You notice something like, 'I am a boy, I live along 7th street…'	To avoid run-on sentences; use the period and capital letter, i.e., 'I am a boy. I live along 7th street…'
You notice something like, 'I am a boy, I live along 7th street…'	To avoid run-on sentences; use the semicolon, e.g., 'I am a boy; I live along 7th street…'
You notice something like, 'I am a boy, I live along 7th street…'	You can also paraphrase and adapt, e.g., 'I am the boy who lives along 7th street…' OR 'I am that boy who lives along 7th street…'

3.14 ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are important words in the construction of complete sentences. They are used in descriptive positions as they explain the nature of the nouns used. They provide the required details regarding the sizes, colours, manners, moods and various conditions of the objects in the context. Notable adjectives include bad/good/big/nice/advance/delicious/cute/fat/friendly/etc and help readers evaluate and form accurate judgements on the nature of what is being discussed.

Writers must avoid the following:

'Aaron is a [adjective 'bad' is missing] man and you must hate him'

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'Aaron is a bad [missing noun 'man'] and you must hate him'

'Look at the below table [wrong order; adjectives must describe nouns and not the other way round] for clues in answering the question'

Here are some contextual examples.

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I want a big'	A noun must accompany the adjective at the end.
You notice something like, 'I want a ball big.'	The adjective describes the noun; therefore, it must come first.
You notice something like, 'Stop eating this because it is an apple. Rather, eat this one because it is an apple.'	The contexts are lacking two adjectives; 'ordinary apple' and 'better/more nutritious apple'; without the relevant adjectives, readers lose the plot completely.

3.15 VERBS

As described earlier, a verb is a major component of a complete/proper sentence as it shows the action involved. Many writers make the mistake of omitting them or using unclear verbs and that obliterates the meaning behind the whole sentence. Imagine going reading a passage and going through this sentence:

'He [missing verb] doing something bad'

Here are the other notable examples:

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You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I do not a car'	This context requires a verb to sound more like a complete thought. It is hard to understand whether you 'want/hate/drive/have/etc.' the car; include the right verb.

3.16 TENSES

Because academic writing, like any other form of storytelling, takes place over a long span of time, we always come across various types of tenses in order to accurately present the time period to which the context relates. The major groups of tenses are the past tenses, the present and future tenses and they all vary in terms of the manner in which the even

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happened and the length of time involved. Some are used with events that started and ended in the past, others relate to what happened and was preceded by something else while others are about what will continue happening for some time.

Common mistakes include combining all of them in one context or using the past when describing the present or vice-versa.

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I wanted to came to hearing the speech'.	Mixing tenses like this confuses readers on what happened first, what is currently happening and what is still to come.

3.17 PRESENT TENSES

These tenses are about what is occurring today and the conditions attached to them; some may be occurring today having begun in the past while some may be expected to continue into the future. Other present tenses occur and end in the present moment. Here are some examples.

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(This is already in the process of occurring or occurs more often, e.g., I eat; Use the Present Simple Tense).
You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(This occurred in the past (not specific) but the most important thing is that it continued until today .e.g., I have eaten in this restaurant till now; Use the Present Perfect Tenses)
You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(The activity is happening now and will continue into the future. e.g., I am eating. Use the Present Continuous Tenses)

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3.18 PAST TENSES

These describe what happened a while ago and do not overlap into the present day. They vary in usage as some denote what happened and ended in the past while others talk about what continues and what was replaces by something else. Here are some pointers.

You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(This happened and ended in the past e.g., I ate. Use the Past Simple Tenses)
You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(It happened and ended in the past (before something else notable happened after it) e.g., I had eaten. Use the Past Perfect Tenses)
You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(The activity began in the past and lasted/ continued for some time but ended in the past, e.g., I was eating. Use the Past Continuous Tenses)
You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(The activity began in the past and lasted/ continued for some time but ended in the past before something else began, e.g. I had been eating.(Use the Past Perfect Continuous Tenses).

3.19 FUTURE TENSES

This hasn't happened and our choice of tenses must reflect that. We need to be careful with our choices here as some are about continuing future tenses, present future tenses and indefinite circumstances.

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Here are other conditions:

You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(This hasn't happened at all and is still an intention, e.g. I will eat. Use the Simple Future Tenses).
You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(The action will be completed at a certain time or will happen before another action succeeds it, e.g., I will have eaten. Use the Future Perfect Tenses).
You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(It will happen and continue for a while (or happen before something, e.g., I will be eating. Use the Future Continuous Tenses).
You notice something like, 'I was once ate'	(The action begins now or in the past but will continue into the foreseeable future, e.g., I will have been eating. Use the Future Perfect Continuous).

3.20 CONFUSING VERBS FOR NOUNS, NOUNS FOR VERBS OR VERBS FOR ADJECTIVES

Because of the availability of many spellings, we sometimes write words that do not properly fit in our contexts by mistake, confusing our readers in the process. This calls for closer inspection of our writing as some of our words might actually be verbs that we end up using in place on nouns and adjectives in place of adverbs or vice-versa.

Examples are words like 'practising/practicing', 'effecting/affecting' and others that end up confusing the audience as nouns are often chosen instead of verbs and vice-versa. Sometimes, we confuse adjectives for transitional devices in the case of using 'Further' instead of 'Furthermore' as 'Further' is often taken as a normal adjective.

It is, therefore, advisable to verify our spellings from the dictionary and check their form as the dictionary mentions not only the meaning but the nature of the word as to whether it is a verb, noun, adjective etc. When we are sure that our context is about naming something, describing an action or otherwise, we can then understand the spelling required therein.

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Here are the other common mistakes:

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I wanted to get his understand on the matter'	You confused the verb (understand) for the noun (understanding).
You notice something like, 'I understanding the matter now'	You confused the verb (understand) for the noun (understanding).

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3.21 APOSTROPHE

This is a small comma-like mark hanging over words to indicate ownership relationships between objects. The apostrophe is useful in shortening contexts that may overload readers with too much unnecessary information. An example is 'The money belonging to the man who gave birth to Aaron'. If you have more than one context involving such long texts, the readers are likely to get tired without much gained from the entire reading exercise. Therefore, using, 'Aaron's father's money' saves both the writer and the reader a lot of their valuable time and aids the understanding therein.

Common mistakes include the following:

'Aaron father money' (No apostrophe).

'The entire student's fees' (When referring to more than one student)

'In the 1990's, there was this and that…' (This is not how we use the apostrophe; it does not change singular nouns to plurals).

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I wanted to hear the students version before making a decision.'	The apostrophe will be useful in connecting the student to what belongs to them, in this case, their version.
You notice something like, 'I wanted to hear the student's version before making a decision.'	(The apostrophe wrongly placed if this is a plural context; write the whole word first and the apostrophe at the end of it).
You notice something like, 'I wanted to see the students' before making a decision.'	(This is not how we use the apostrophe because it clarifies the texts that imply an ownership of something).

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3.22 PUNCTUATION: ORDINARY WORDS

Our choice of capital letters and the use of formatting like inverted commas and italics helps readers understand the importance of the words we use in our work. For example, when readers see a capital letter, they assume that there is a proper noun in the sentence or that you were intending to start a fresh sentence in that context. Similarly, words written using small letters are usually not given more emphasis as they are easily confused for ordinary text. However, other nouns that do not fit the description of proper nouns require additional formatting like italics and inverted commas while certain referencing styles require book titles to be underlined. The bottom line is that there must be visible formatting to differentiate ordinary text from proper nouns and vice-versa.

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'i am very grateful'	This is a proper noun requiring a capital letter to set it apart from normal text.
You notice something like, 'I Am VeRy gRateful For tHe Opportuniy'	Ordinary words can only be capitalised at the beginning of the sentence; otherwise, leave them in small letters.
You notice something like, 'Before you turn to question two in the second paper…'	The name 'Question Two' needs more emphasis and, for it to stand out, you need to use capital letters as shown.

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3.23 PUNCTUATION: PROPER NOUNS

You notice something like, 'There is a mass stayaway due to the please pay me movement today.	The name of the industrial action is called 'Please Pay Me'; you will need capitals and inverted commas to ensure readers do not confuse it with the normal text.
You notice something like, 'My name is susan and this is my husband given shepherd.'	One can notice that the speaker is a lady named 'Susan' but only a few will realise that her husband's name is 'Mr Given Shepherd'; without proper salutations and capital letters, it will be almost impossible.
You notice something like, 'The united Nations children's fund (UNICEF)	How, on earth, did one capital lettered word produce that abbreviation, readers may ask? Try using proper capitals in every part the proper noun.

3.24 NON-ENGLISH NOUNS

There are some words that are being used in the English language that were borrowed from other languages and, because they do not have close substitutes to-date, they are still used in the same way. This is common in professions that require the use of domain terminologies like medicine and law. The problem arises when they are written without capitals, inverted commas or, at least, italics to differentiate them from ordinary English words. Here are the guidelines.

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'You people must learn to use your medulla oblongata in these circumstances'.	Some readers have never seen the medical term and you need to show them that it is a non-English term by italicising it and differentiating it from the rest.

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3.25 PUNCTUATION: DIALOGUES AND DIRECT QUOTES

In order to support whatever we are saying, the need arises sometimes to use direct quotes in our work. These are the exact words taken from book pages or dialogues spoken by certain individuals. Nowadays, they are becoming increasingly important when quoting controversial statements or even making accusations; these can backfire at a later stage and, to protect one from those seeking to dispute such text, it is advisable to use direct quotes and quotation marks. Therefore, as explained with proper nouns and unique text, these contexts require proper formatting including commas and inverted commas. It is important to attribute the right words to the right speaker and the use of such forms of punctuation makes it possible. Other dialogues, for instance, in plays and dramas, require the use of capital letters in referring to the speaker, colons to introduce text and even italics and parentheses to indicate the actions involved.

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Here are some examples:

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'Manuel Can you please tell me which of these two roads leads to New York?'	A proper dialogue begins with the speaker in capitals and a colon preceding/introducing the text.
	See more examples under 'Indirect speech'

3.26 PUNCTUATION: SEMICOLON

Almost like the comma, this one also introduces short breaks in a sentence. However, it serves almost the same purpose as the period but it has a lesser emphasis than the former. The most common errors include using it to separate points in a list (which must be done by commas) and separating major points that are unrelated (which requires a period). The best use of this, therefore, is when separating sentences that look like complete thoughts but carrying complementary ideas. These might sound too distant when separated by a period and will change the sentence to something ambiguous should the coma be used instead.

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'His testimony was spot-on; I cannot think of anything different'.	This is how the semicolon is used.
You notice something like, 'I want a car; a bus and; a plane'.	We use commas and not the semicolon in separating points in a sentence.
You notice something like, 'Please have a look at the following table before answering questions;	The semicolon must not be used to introduce major details but the colon will do.

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3.27 PUNCTUATION: COLON

Unlike the semicolon, this one introduces major points in a sentence or paragraph, usually in bullet-point format. It often affects the reading momentum where they are found in the middle of the text as readers may suspect that there is more to the introduced points than meets the eye. Therefore, ordinary points are best presented with or without commas or including transitional devices while the colon is best reserved for longer and more orderly lists of points.

Here are the rules to look out for:

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'A good example of a nice car is: the Mercedes'	The colon must introduce noteworthy, major or very long information; these contexts are left blank as there is nothing extraordinary.
You notice something like, 'Please bring a car: an extra phone: my laptop and some sandwiches'	The colon introduces the text described above; separating thoughts in a sentence requires a comma.

3.28 ADVERBS

This is another describing word that gives a sentence its completeness if used properly. Unlike the adjective, this one describes verbs, adjectives and other adverbs in a sentence. Here are certain examples where an adjective is not descriptive enough in a sentence:

(E.g. The leader is slow (adjective) becoming (moving) democratic in his actions).

The context has an adjective in a proper place but it is not fitting in at all.

However, the adjective changes in to something like this:

(E.g. The leader is slowly (adverb) becoming (verb) democratic in his actions).

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Like the case of the adjectives, students must only use this one when describing the three items mentioned in the beginning and avoid writing them without their described complements.

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I was quick moving to the CBD'	An ordinary adjective cannot properly describe this verb; use the adverb, e.g., quickly moving
You notice something like, 'This is extreme dangerous'	An ordinary adjective cannot properly describe another adjective; use the adverb, e.g., 'extremely dangerous'

3.29 SPELLINGS AND TYPING MISTAKES

This is the most common problem with academic writing. As we keep embracing technology in our work, we now use word processors more than ever before and mistakes ranging from the lack of a proper spell-checker to the presence of automatic correctors that override our typing actions often leaves our work prone to many spelling errors. These need to be monitored as any slight change in the spelling may reveal an untidy, uncommitted individual or cast doubts on our subject knowledge as some may consider our texts ambiguous. One must always make sure they have the latest and up-to-date spelling/grammar tools and be ready to use them to ensure their work conveys the intended meanings. We usually look out for these areas:

You observe this:	How you comment:
Any typing error resulting in an ambiguous thought	Install a stronger dictionary on your word processor.
A typing error revealing that the writer confused one word for its rhyming partner	(Verify all your spellings in the dictionary because not all carry the same meaning no matter how much they rhyme).

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3.30 CONJUNCTIONS

This is a major component used in combining different thoughts into one concise idea and showing the relationship between clauses, nouns and processes.

They can be used in the following places:

i) In the beginning (Although I was not present on the scene, many people kept on asking me to describe it for them)

ii) In the middle (I wanted them to know that I am innocent of all their accusations)

iii) When combining sentences (I will not report for training since/as/because I have a late examination on Thursday afternoon).

iv) And many more places.

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Here is how to correct such problems:

You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I am going to Las Vegas. I have a small amount of money'	A conjunction will improve the relationship between these clauses and say, 'I am going to Las Vegas although I have a small amount of money'.
You notice something like, 'I want to see them, they owe me.'	A conjunction will clarify everything better than the comma and say, 'I want to see them because they owe me.'
You notice something like, 'Since I am going alone today'.	The conjunction does not work with only one clause but its purpose is that of joining more than one together; remove it for this sentence to sound complete.
There is a habit of using 'However' only as the conjunction.	Use a variety of conjunctions because one can be good in one context but prove to be contradicting your whole work in another.

3.31 DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

These words are almost like determiners as they accompany nouns and 'point' out their specific features to the readers. They can reveal the quantities, locations, positions and other various aspects of a noun. Students must always be alert when it comes to choosing between the singular and plural and find ways of ensuring the demonstrative agrees with the rest of the sentence, otherwise, they may get the wrong quantities and other features in their minds.

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You observe this:	How you comment:
You notice something like, 'I like this cars'	Singular demonstratives must be used with singular subjects.
You notice something like, 'I like these car'	(Plural demonstratives must go with plural subjects).

3.32 USING THE DASH SYMBOLS

These are the symbols that we often use as substitutes of certain words in the sentence and in many sentence transitions. While it is not wrong to use either the dash or the ellipses and other types of 'dots', the problem with academic writing is that we must be specific.

For instance, 'This will lead to more unacceptable behaviours – the principal describes this as…' (Readers can assume the dash stands for 'however/but/in addition/moreover/etc. and each term brings a different meaning to the readers). Therefore, these dashes leave a lot of unclear contexts for the readers to assume the obvious and the danger is that they may not assume the same thing; some will get the meaning while others lose it. Therefore, we encourage the use of proper transitions and conjunctions so that our contexts can be self-explanatory and convey the same meaning.

You observe this:	How you comment:
You observe too many dashes obliterating the meaning.	The 'dash' mostly stands for some omitted text and does not usually accurately describe the context. Use proper connecting devices as shown.

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4   REFERENCING (BACK TO TOP)

4.1   APA

REF LIST COMMENTS

IN-TEXT COMMENTS: POSITIVES / UNNECESSARY INC / MISSING DETAILS

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POSITIVES (TOP)

You observe this:	How you comment:
(Author, Date), (Author, Date, p.xx), Author (Date). (Author, Date; Author, Date).	This is a good in-text citation.

UNNECESSARY INCLUSIONS (TOP)

Irrelevant details like the 'urls/website addresses'	Only the author/s and the date are required in your in-text referencing.
Unnecessary commas.	(Remove commas between the author/s and the date)
Improper use of parentheses.	(Reserve parentheses for items not meant to be read aloud).
e.g. (Smith, J.R. Professor, 2009).	(Remove the initials and unnecessary details in your in-text citations).

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MISSING DETAILS (TOP)

e.g. (Author and Author).	There must be an ampersand "&" between the authors.
e.g., This practice must stop with immediate effect. (Smith, 1999)	Include the citation in the sentence by properly positioning the full-stop.
No comma	There must be a comma between the author/s and the date.
No place/url	There must be a place of publication or url if from the internet).
No publishing house	Identify the publishing house).
No colon	A colon must separate the place and publishing house).
No year	The year of publication or (n.d.) if it cannot be established is very important.
The comma is improperly used.	(Use the comma to replace the period)
The period is improperly used.	(The period is not required in Harvard citations).
The writing only uses 'et al' in all multiple-authored sources.	(Include all the other authors in the first mentioning and use 'et al.' in subsequent mentionings).
Incomplete citation.	There is no author, date, title, place, url or doi, etc; these sources are suspicious and could damage your own reputation; at least ensure readers can identify it as either a print, online publication, research paper or something classifiable and leave a few anonymous details.

Please ensure your reference list complies with the following templates for consistency and accuracy:

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In-text citations:

APA in-text citations in the middle and at the end of sentences follow the (Author, Date) format, e.g., (George, 2005, p. 14), (Johnson & Smith, 2004), (Johnson, Smith & Andrews, 2008) or (Jones, 2010). At the beginning of the sentence and where the author is the subject of the discussion, we use the 'Author (Date)' format. A caption sentence below an image can read, e.g., Figure 1. Change in Bloom's taxonomy (Author, 2008, p. 13), etc.

Reference list entries:

All reference list entries must be checked against this criterion to ensure conformity with the Standards set out by the American Psychological Association (6th Edition):

1. Book (Print):
   Surname, Initial. (Year). Title: Subtitle (p. Pages Used). City: Publishing house.
2. Online sources:
   Surname, Initial. (Year). Title. Retrieved from http://www.url.
3. Website:
   Author Surname, Author Initial. (Year). Title. Retrieved Month Day, Year, from http://www.url.
4. Print Journal:
   Surname, Initial. (Year). Article title. Journal Name, Volume(Issue in brackets), pp. Pages.
5. Online Journal (with "doi"):
   Surname, Initial. (Year). Title of the article. Journal Name, Volume(Issue), pp. Page(s). doi element.
6. Online Journal (without the "digital object identifier"):
   Surname, Initial. (Year). Article title. Journal Name, Volume(Issue), pp. Page(s). Retrieved from https://www.url.
7. Edition other than the first:
   Surname, Initial. (Year). Title (edition). Place of Publication: Publishing house.
8. Chapter in a book:
   Author's Surname, Initial. (YEAR). Title of the Chapter. Book Title (pp. x-x). Place of Publication: Publishing Company.

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9. Two authors:

   Surname, Initial., & Surname, Initial. (Year).Title. Place of Publication: Publishing house.

10. Website:

    Author Surname, Author Initial. (Year). Title. Retrieved Month Day, Year, from http://www.url.

11. Article or Chapter in an Edited Book:

    Author Surname, Author Initial. (Year). Title of chapter. In Author Surname, Author Initial., & Author Surname, Author Initial. (Eds.), Title of book (pages of chapter). Place: Publishing house.

12. Online sources:

    Surname, Initial. (Year). Title. Retrieved from http://www.url.

13. Online image:

    Surname, Initial. (Year). Title [Online image]. Retrieved from http://www.url.

14. Print Journal:

    Surname, Initial. (Year). Article title. Journal Name, Volume(Issue in brackets), pp. Pages.

15. Online Journal (with "doi"):

    Surname, Initial. (Year). Title of the article. Journal Name, Volume(Issue), pp. Page(s). doi element.

16. Online Journal (without the "digital object identifier"):

    Surname, Initial. (Year). Article title. Journal Name, Volume(Issue), pp. Page(s). Retrieved from https://www.url.

17. Lecture Notes/Course Material:

    Surname, Initial. (Year). Name/title of lecture [file format, e.g. Lecture notes/ PowerPoint slides/class handout/MOOC]. Retrieved from URL

18. Dissertation, Published

    Surname, Initial. (Year). Title (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from (Name of database). (Accession/Order No.)

19. Dissertation, Unpublished

    Surname, Initial. (Year). Title (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Name of Institution, Location.

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REFERENCING COMMENTS:

You observe this:	How you comment:
Book (Print): Surname, Initial. (Year). Title: Subtitle (p. Pages Used). City: Publishing house. Online sources: Surname, Initial. (Year). Title. Retrieved from http://www.url. Website: Author Surname, Author Initial. (Year). Title. Retrieved Month Day, Year, from http://www.url.	This is a good reference list entry.
Many punctuation mistakes	Use commas, periods, colons and capital letters more accurately.
Only a few citations	Use a bit more information to appeal to a wider variety of readers.
Too many citation	References are for supporting/verifying our arguments and not for increasing the content of our work. Examiners determine the depth of your work by the number of points directly attributed to you and the references are merely there to establish quality. Avoid overly focusing on the quality and forgetting the quantity of the points but provide a good balance between the two.
Surname, Initial. (Year). [Irrelevant details her]: Subtitle (p. Pages Used). City: Publishing house.	Only the title is required after the date in the reference list
Entries not properly arranged according to alphabetical seniority.	Properly list your entries according to their alphabetical seniority or, if numbered, according to the order in which they appear in the text
Very few errors	You generally had perfect citations according to the chosen style.
No reference list	You forgot to compile a detailed list of references at the end of the work; remember, in-text citation only contain the name and the date and, at times, the page numbers and nothing much. It is the reference list that provides all the other necessary details and, without it, the sources will feel they have not been properly acknowledged.

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4.2 HARVARD REFERENCING

There are many variations of this guide across the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, with each one preferring its own set of inclusions/exclusions. Generally, this guide is like the APA, with minor variations in the citations around page numbers, online sources while retaining major similarities in print publications, in-text citations and databases. For simplicity, we will start with the most widely used guide, the Standard Harvard (USA).

a) Standard Harvard:

In-text citations:

'Traditional' Harvard in-text citations (like the APA) in the middle and at the end of sentences follow the (Author, Date) format, e.g., (Ramsey, 2005, p. 14), (Gerrard & Smith, 2004), (Johnson, Rogers & Andrews, 2008) or (Jones, 2010). At the beginning of the sentence and where the author is the subject of the discussion, we use the 'Author (Date)' format. A caption sentence below an image can read, e.g., Figure 1. Number of migrants to Australia in 2009 (Author, 2008, p. 13), etc.

Reference list entries:

We follow these templates in our reference list to ensure uniformity, accuracy and consistency:

1. Book (Print):
   Surname, Initial. (Year). Title: Subtitle (p. Pages Used). City: Publishing house.
2. Two authors:
   Surname, Initial. and Surname, Initial. (Year published). Title. City: Publisher, Page(s).
3. Chapter in an edited book:
   Surname, Initial. (Year published). Chapter title. In: First initial. Last name, ed., Book Title, 1st ed.* City: Publisher, Page(s).
4. Online sources:
   Author Surname, Author Initial. (Year Published). Title. Available from: http://www.url. [Accessed date e.g., 31 March 2016].

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5. Print Journal:

Last name, First initial. (Year published). Article title. Journal, Volume (Issue), Page(s).

6. Online Journal:

Last name, First initial. (Year published). Article Title. Journal, [online] Volume(Issue), pages. Available at: URL [Accessed Day Mo. Year].

7. Print Newspaper:

Last name, First initial. (Year published). Article title. Newspaper, Page(s).

8. Online Newspaper:

Last name, First initial. (Year published). Article title. Newspaper, [online] pages. Available at: url [Accessed Day Mo. Year].

9. E-book:

Last name, First initial. (Year published). Title. Edition. [ebook] City: Publisher, page(s). Available at: URL [Accessed Day Mo. Year].

b) Australian Harvard:

Most schools in Australia and New Zealand discourage the use of parentheses in the date, use commas instead of periods in front of initials and even omit both commas and periods around authors' initials. Key features are outlined below:

In-text citations:

They use the (Author Date) format, (Author Surname Year) or (Author Surname Year, page number), e.g., (George 2005, p. 14), (Johnson & Smith 2004), (Johnson, Smith & Andrews 2008) or (Jones 2010). If the author is the subject of the discussion, we use the 'Author (Date)' format. I made many observations that included the inclusion of commas, initials and other unnecessary details.

A B C D E F I L O P Q R S T V U W

H G J K M N Z

Reference list:

1. Referencing a book:
   Author Surname, Initial(s) Year, Book title, Publisher, Place of Publication Websites:
   Author Surname, Initial(s) Year (page created or revised), Title of page, Publisher
   (if applicable), viewed Day Month Year, <URL>.
2. Print book:
   Surname, Initial Year, *Title: Subtitle,* Publishing house, Place.
3. Online sources:
   Author Surname, Initial Year, Title. Available from: http://www.url. [Accessed
   date e.g., 31 March 2016].
4. Online sources:
   Surname, Initials Year, Title, viewed Day Month Year, <http://www.url.com/x/y/z>
5. Print Journal:
6. Author Surname, Initial(s) Year, 'Article title', Journal Title, volume, issue or
   number, page range.
7. Online Journal:
   Author Surname, Initial(s) Year, 'Article title', Journal Title, volume, issue or
   number, page range, viewed Day Month Year, <URL>.
8. Information from a website:
   Author Surname, Initial(s) Year (page created or revised), Title of page, Publisher
   (if applicable), viewed Day Month Year, <URL>.

c) United Kingdom examples: e.g., MMU HARVARD:

These use the (Author, Date) format but exhibit major differences in citing page
numbers and electronic sources; here are the key structural elements:

In-text citations:

In the middle and at the end of sentences, follow the (Author, Date) format, e.g.,
(George, 2005:14), (Johnson & Smith, 2004), (Johnson, Smith & Andrews, 2008)
or (Jones, 2010). At the beginning of the sentence and where the author is the
subject of the discussion, we use the 'Author (Date)' format.

A B C D E F I L O P Q R S T V U W

H G J K M N Z

Reference list entries:

Please provide these details using the following templates/examples in your reference list to ensure uniformity, accuracy and consistency:

1. Book (Print):
   Surname, Initial. (Year) Title. Place: Publisher.
2. Edition other than the first:
   Surname, Initial. (Year) Title. Edition Name/Number., Place: Publisher.
3. Online sources:
   Surname, Initial. (Year) Title. [File type] [Accessed on Day Month Year] http://www.url/1/2/3/4/5.htm
4. Print Journal:
   Surname, Initial. (Year) 'Title, Volume(number) pp. x-x.
   *There is no period after the date.
   (Source Manchester Metropolitan University).

Students must always refer to their own institutions' academic writing guides before consulting generic guides as failure to stick to instructions could lead to penalties. Institutions spend considerable time and resources in designing, developing and maintaining those individual guides in order to centralise marking and standardising the preparation of assignments in order to control and improve quality; it will, therefore, make more sense to, at least, cooperate with them where they have been specific and where they go out of their way to help students.

References:

Bhebhe, M. (2018). Academic Writing Guide For University Students. Denmark: Bookboon.

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Southern Cross University. (2019). Harvard Referencing Style. Retrieved online February 7, 2019, at https://libguides.scu.edu.au/harvard

A B C D E F I L O P Q R S T V U W

H G J K M N Z