

## GRADUATE STUDENTS' WRITING

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### **Abstract:**

*Learning to write a second language is not merely learning to put down on paper the conventional symbols of the writing system, but it is also purposeful selection and organization of ideas, facts, and experiences.*

*In fact, writing is a thinking process. It is different from speaking, as it aims compactness and precision in expression as well as grammatical, idiomatic and orthographic accuracy and in that conventions of writing, it tend to be less flexible than those of speech. Moreover, the graduate students' who learn to write English has not only to cope with the mechanical problems connected with the script of the language but also with the problems of ease and fluency of expression, of grammatical and lexical accuracy and of the appropriateness of the style of writing according to context and situation in particular discipline. Now the question is how to set about the task.....?*

**Keywords:** Graduate, student, writing, level.

### **Introduction**

As both the academic and professional environment continue to grow more rapidly with each passing year, there is increased level of competition, a greater number of students' are deciding to continue their education beyond the under graduate level. This is well, and the students' should be commended for striving for the highest level of achievements. However, the recent studies indicate that the average student writing ability, including those students', going on to masters' program, has reached incredibly low level of competency. Professors' expect writing assignments at graduate level [Masters' program] to be of higher order. Graduate level writing needs to be explicit, concise, and free from common error, as compared to under graduate. Writing well at the graduate level is very important, where nearly all thinking must be translated into text. What makes writing at the graduate level more challenging is the need to communicate thoughts that go beyond basic understandings. Through the typical graduate course, students are asked to elaborate on their thinking, question their assumptions, examine the biases, and defend the positions they take with in discussions parts and assignments. . . .all through clearly written communication.

### **Graduate versus under graduate level**

Technically speaking, there are no specific rules of writing that differentiate graduate level work from under graduate. The following suggestion provides information to help students to cope up with their writing

- Compare general graduate level writing expectations with under graduate writing expectations.
- Identify common academic writing strategies applied within graduate level writing, including basic writing mechanics, using quotes, making assertions and attributing sources.
- Identify where to find more specific writing support through professors' and guides.

### **Undergraduate**

- Paraphrase the conclusions from basic research article.
- Summarize the events in a story
- Write a personal response to a book or a movie.

- Summarize what a teacher said in a straight forward lecture.

### **Graduate**

- Framing an argument.
- Taking someone else's argument apart.
- Systematically inspecting a document, issues, events...etc
- Synthesizing different points of view.
- Applying a theory to different phenomena.

### **Mechanisms**

- In general, the following rules should be applied to specific writing within graduate paper.
- Avoid contractions.
- Avoid passive language.
- Introduce and explain all acronyms.
- Avoid biased and offensive language.
- Avoid ending sentences in preposition.
- Avoid use of figurative language and clichés.
- Avoid syntax, grammatical, punctuation, and spelling error.
- Use less complex structure.
- Write in third person voice unless directed to write in the first person voice.
- Create succinct paragraphs with clear topic sentences, supporting sentences, and quotes and summaries from sources, and succinct conclusions and transition sentences.

## **WRITING STRATEGIES**

“Engrave this in your brain. Every writer gets rejected.  
You will be no different.” -John Scalzi.

Writing means putting yourself at the mercy of others who may not always say nice things about what you write. Learn to make the most of the insults and accept the praise with a dose of skepticism. Use the criticism from others to improve and strengthen the writing. The following principles of writing must be addressed in order for the work to be of 'graduate level.'

### **1. Separate and identify your beliefs from that of your research**

The most difficult and complicated part of the writing process is the beginning. Graduate level writing is meant to be an exercise in critical thinking and personal analysis on the part of the student. Our ideas and beliefs on the writing topic should be explicitly stated and it should be separate from those of their research.

### **2. Know your reader**

Any piece of writing should keep one question in mind: Who is the audience and why are they reading your writing? In addition to clearly presenting your ideas, bear in mind, that, the writing is original contribution to your particular discipline. Its explicit facts should help in guiding the reader for better comprehension.

### **3. State the reason for writing early**

By writing much, one learns to write well. It is important to start writing early, as it helps in, to overcome the hurdles and helps the writer to accomplish his task in a better manner. Hence, state your purpose early and use as much space as possible for solidifying the statement.

### **4. Define all ambiguous or potentially confusing terms**

This applies to an ambiguous word or technical jargons that can only be understood by experts in a specific field. Make sure to define all such terms, i.e. technical jargons that readers may have difficulty with, assuming that the reader has zero knowledge on the subject.

## 5. Using quotes correctly

'The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe.' G. Flaubert.

Graduate level writing uses quotes in such a way that they enhance the writing, not to carry it. Before adding verbatim quotes to graduate paper, ask yourself: 'What does this mean in the context of my writing?' This question forces to elaborate on quoted material or introduce it clearly in the context of your points or assertions. This may prevent you from quoting as much, opting for cited paraphrasing and summaries instead.

## 6. Making Assertions

Always substantiate claims. It is not that having thoughts, beliefs or feelings are banned as a graduate learner or scholar, but in the context of academic writing those do not 'matter'- what matters is how such ideas, findings, and assertions link to existing knowledge in the field, so that writer can expand the existing conversation and knowledge. Thus, attribution of sources to support writer's assertions is key and synthesizing multiple perspectives is ideal.

## 7. Transition

A graduate level of writing should flow smoothly from start to finish. To achieve this, the writer must use transitions to connect ideas together and also to connect each paragraph to one that follows it. Then, the writer must form a strong conclusion for the writing to be considered anywhere near the graduate level.

## 8. Seek Feedback

While graduate level writing is largely an individual effort, there is a need of guidance and criticism, from experts of that particular field, right from the selection of a topic and refining the manuscript to editing, proof reading etc. till completion.

## 9. Revision process

No piece of writing gets it perfect the first time. In fact, research and writing go hand in hand with revision. Revision is not merely proof reading for mistakes; rather, it's an act of complete "reviewing", which involved expanding on key concepts, deleting a good material if it doesn't make an essential contribution to writing.

## Conclusion

Writing is a transferable skill. One of the best means to better your writing is to read top journals, eminent writers and writing techniques, dissertation in particular field to familiarize with the corpus of research while gaining a better sense of the language used to demand varying concepts. Graduate students' can continue with these skills to be a better writer, thinker, and communicator throughout their professional and personal life.

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