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### **English for Academic Purposes (EFL interdisciplinary stream)**

These notes are an extract from teaching week 2 from the English for Academic Purposes course. These notes may be useful for scholars who study English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in other contexts.

#### **English grammar**

Command of English language grammar is an assumed skill in most post-secondary courses. English language grammar will rarely be taught in the classroom. If you make mistakes with spelling and grammar, you may be penalised if this category appears on the marking rubric. Your assessors may highlight errors and show corrections on your assessment. This practice may vary by college, course and assessor.

Most university courses award the vast bulk of your credit for assessments for the accuracy of your technical content and argument. This type of scenario is common:

“Maria wrote a very good research report for the undergraduate unit ‘Business Statistics’. She critically engages with relevant theoretical principles at all times. She also uses excellent examples and poses an argument that is innovative. However her spelling and grammar intermittently makes mistakes from start to finish. The examiner awards an overall score of 90% (A+ or High Distinction) for content and deducts a further 5% for intermittent grammar mistakes. Overall score 85% (A+ or High Distinction)”.

This statement above is illustrative of how many examiners do not place very strong weight on spelling and grammar in certain disciplines, especially for assessments that mostly involve quantitative calculations and the use of formulae.

As a general rule, students are expected to display strong spelling and grammar in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences programs which are more descriptive than quantitative. Students should show mastery of English grammar if they are enrolled in subjects where English literature is central to the assessments. These sub-fields include: creative writing, culture studies, philosophy, linguistics, history and English literature.

## **Nouns**

Always use capital letters (also known as 'upper case') for the first letter of proper nouns.

You do not need to use capital letters for nouns that are not proper nouns. The names of animal categories (*e.g.* cats) and plant categories (*e.g.* flowers) are examples of nouns that are not proper nouns.

Lower case letter example: d for dog

Upper case (capital) example: D for Darwin, which is a capital city.

There are many types of proper nouns so it is difficult to list every example.

The most common types of proper nouns are:

<b>Proper noun</b>	<b>Examples</b>
People's names	<b>Ellen</b> <b>J.K. Rowlings</b> <b>Dr. Martin Luther King</b>
Names of organisations and products	<b>Royal Thai Airlines</b> <b>Ipad Deluxe (model 123A)</b>
A person's official title	<b>Professor Marie Curie</b> <b>Vice President - Finance, Apple Corp</b>
Names of places	<b>Phnom Penh, Cambodia</b> <b>Trafalgar Square, London England</b>
Names of venues and buildings	<b>Wembley Stadium</b> <b>Arthur Ashe Stadium</b>
Addresses	<b>10 Downing Street, London England</b> <b>Red Square, Moscow</b>
Structures with formal names/titles	<b>Taj Mahal</b> <b>Sydney Opera House</b>
Other formal items/objects	<b>The Popemobile</b> <b>Air Force One</b> <b>United Airlines Flight No. JFK777</b>

Always use capital letters for acronyms. Acronyms are abbreviations for nouns.  
Examples:

UN or U.N. = United Nations

PRC or P.R.C. = People's Republic of China

Always define your acronyms at first use. Sentence example:

In 2010, I was an exchange student who studied Finance in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). I resided in Pyongyang during the 12 months that I lived and worked in the DPRK.

## Apostrophes ’

You should use an apostrophe to denote ownership. Ownership may belong to a living being (*e.g.* an animal) or a non-living entity such as a vehicle.

If one person, animal, plant or another entity/object is the owner, you place the apostrophe before the s.

Examples:

Owner	Sentence
Person	Ellen’s television program is famous globally.
Institution	Most of Yale University’s students live in Connecticut.
Animal	The dog’s mother is a Husky breed.
Plant	The flower’s petals are wilting.
Other entities: Nation Object Organisation	Bhutan’s citizens can obtain a passport for no fee. The book’s pages are fading. This temple’s worshippers are all citizens of Laos.

You place the apostrophe after the s if there is more than one owner.

Examples:

Owner	Sentence
Person	Taiwanese citizens’ collective wealth.
Institution	African universities’ endowment funds.
Animal	These dogs’ mothers are all Huskies.
Plant	Those bunches of flowers’ petals have different colours.
Other entities: Nation Object Organisation	These citizens’ passports have all expired. These five books’ authors are popular. These seven temples’ worshippers are aged under 50.

## Plurals of nouns and verbs

Verbs are action words such as 'run'.

Adjectives are descriptive words such as 'beautiful'.

Many scholars who write using English as a Foreign Language (EFL) struggle to use the plural form correctly because their native language does not distinguish between singular (one) or plural (two or more) forms.

Singular word (example): Student

Plural word (example): Students

For most words, you add an s to the end of the word to convert it from singular to plural.

This general rule applies for nouns, verbs and adjectives.

There are exceptions to this general rule. Some of these exceptions include:

Words ending in 'ife'

Life (singular). Lives (plural).      Wife (singular). Wives (Plural).

Words ending in 'y'.

Noun: Butterfly (singular), butterflies (plural).

Verb: Try (singular). Tries (plural).

For further details, see:

Oxford Dictionary (2016), Plurals of nouns,  
<<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/spelling/plurals-of-nouns>>. Accessed 10 October 2016.

## Structure

Do not compose one long single block piece of writing. Break your discussion into paragraphs. Each paragraph should focus on one single idea or argument.

Most academic pieces of writing start with an introduction, a main body of discussion and a conclusion. This structure applies to the entire body of work such as one essay. This structure may also work for an extended paragraph.

This three part structure is not usually appropriate for a discussion post of 150 words. A post this simple may stick purely to the argument, which is the same as the body of discussion. No introduction or conclusion is required for a post of *circa* 150 words.

If you struggle to structure your discussion thread you could follow this simple format:

- Introduction sentence that opens with an argument (*circa* 20 words). Start a new paragraph and insert a blank line;
- Compose approximately seven sentences of discussion about one idea (*circa* 140 words). Start a new paragraph and insert a blank line;
- Concluding sentence (*circa* 20 words).

Total words: 180. If you follow this structure, you should write a few extra words above the minimum of 150 words, as this structure works best for longer pieces of writing.

The sample 'discussion post' written by Jay at the end of this presentation shows an example of this 20/140/20 structure. This format is a suggestion for those who struggle at present to develop their own suitable structure for posting a discussion thread. There are many variations to this structure that are acceptable.

## Tenses

Please distinguish between past, present and future tenses.

As a general rule, many past tenses end with 'ed'. Current tenses end in 'ing' in many instances. You may create a future tense using a preposition such as 'shall' or 'will' and place this before a verb.

Examples of verb tenses:

Past tense	Present tense	Future tense
Studied	Studying	Will study
Travelled	Travelling	Shall travel
<b>Exceptions</b> (irregular):		
<b>Wrote</b>	Writing	Will write
<b>Met</b>	Meeting	Shall write

## Formal writing style

To place this discussion in context, I suggest that you re-read some of the posts which appear on the discussion board during week 1.

<http://chat.thefreeschool.education/forum87.html>

I also suggest that you next re-read some of the text that appears in the discussion notes above.

After you read some of this material, consider these issues:

1. The tone of the voice of both sources (student posts compared to this document);
2. The spacing and layout of both sources.

This document aims to write in a serious tone that shows respect for its audience at all times.

The author of this document takes you seriously as a scholar. I aim to have fun and keep the atmosphere relaxed and enjoyable even though I write seriously!

Reconsider the sentence I typed above:

(A) "This document aims to write in a serious tone that shows respect for its audience."

I could have written the same message as follows:

(B) "Hey, take note folks how I'm being good to you guys and don't talk down to you by writing a bunch of junk in a way that aint serious".

Sentence (A) writes using English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The tone is formal - it uses correct spelling and grammar at all times. It shows respect for the audience by speaking to them as adults in a professional manner similar to the way that staff from organisations write to their customers and partners.

Sentence (B) is informal and has a colloquial ('street talk') sound to it. This does not adhere to principles of using EAP.

Andrea and Jay will use the EAP style at all times during this course.

We would both like to relax our style and sometimes avoid using EAP. However, given that this is an EAP course, we think that it is best teaching practice to lead by example and always use an EAP style. This way you will not have to decide for yourself whether the instructors are using the EAP style in certain sections of our discussions.

It may take weeks, months or years to develop a 'sixth sense' that enables you to automatically determine whether a piece of writing uses the EAP style.

As a general rule, the following sources will virtually always use EAP when the discussion engages with principles that relate to teaching and learning in the college environment:

1. Peer reviewed journal articles;
2. Textbooks printed by scholarly publishers such as Routledge;
3. Other scholarly publications such as university theses and conference papers.

## Referencing

Please follow the American Psychological Association (APA) 6th edition referencing style guide.

Muhlenberg College Trexler Library (2016), *APA style*, <[http://www.muhenberg.edu/library/reshelp/apa\\_example.pdf](http://www.muhenberg.edu/library/reshelp/apa_example.pdf)>. Accessed 10 October 2016.

A simplified interpretation of the APA style requires the following basic details.

Books (order of listing):

1. Surname and initial/s of the author/s
2. Year of publication
3. Title of publication
4. Location of the publisher
5. Name of the publisher.

Example (open-access resource):

Brown, C. & Brown, P. (2010), *English grammar secrets*, London, England: Macmillan Press.  
<<http://www.sasistanbul.net/md/wp-content/uploads/Fl-English-Grammar-Secrets.pdf>>. Accessed 10 October 2016.

Journal articles (order of listing):

1. Surname and first initial/s of the author/s
2. Year of publication
3. Title of the article
4. Title of the journal
5. Volume number and issue number
6. Page range.

Example (open-access resource):

Thompson, P. & Tribble, C. (2001), Looking at citations: Using corpora in English for academic purposes, *Language Learning and Technology*, 5(3), 91-105.  
<<http://lt.msu.edu/vol5num3/thompson/>>. Accessed 10 October 2016.

This concludes our discussion of EAP grammar. We continue in Part B with the weekly lecture.

	FORUM	STATISTICS	LAST POST
	<a href="#">Welcome</a>	Topics: 5 Posts: <b>114</b>	October 10th, 2016 Posted by lourdes ↗
	<a href="#">Ask a tutor</a>	Topics: <b>13</b> Posts: <b>30</b>	October 8th, 2016 Posted by HONEY ↗

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