

● 专门用途英语课程系列

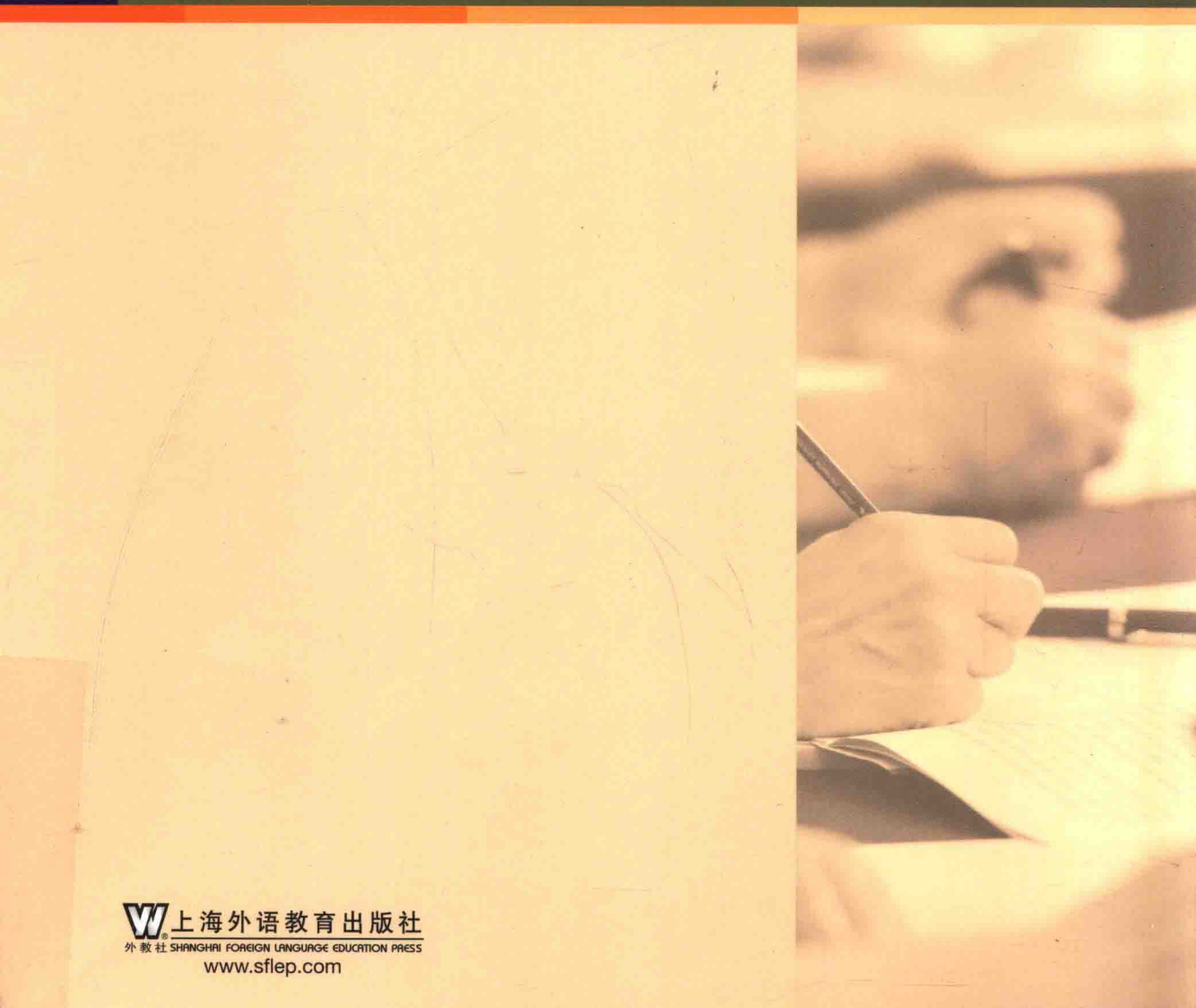


Writing

Learn to write better academic essays

学术英语写作

Els Van Geyte



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出版说明

根据高等教育本科阶段人才培养新目标和大学英语教学新要求，外教社策划推出了“专门用途英语课程系列”。本系列教材以外教社已出版的多种拓展课教材为基础，吸纳专家学者的最新研究成果和建议，充分考虑我国目前的大学英语教学现状、师资条件、实际需求等因素，必将进一步推动我国大学英语教学的发展。

本系列教材包含“学术英语课程群”和“职业英语课程群”两大类。

● 学术英语课程群

侧重高级英语及学术英语听、说、读、写、译等技能的培养，为大学生出国留学、攻读研究生、进行科研等学术活动打下更扎实的英语基础。此类课程包括：综合、视听说、演讲、写作等。

● 职业英语课程群

侧重提升与专业及职场相关的英语运用能力，在培养学生基本语言技能的基础上，教授与专业相关的英语词汇和表达，并尽可能传授专业知识，以使大学生轻松通过英语媒介获取本专业知识和信息，游刃有余地应对英语职场生活。

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About the author

Els Van Geyte has been working at the English for International Students Unit at the University of Birmingham for over a decade, where she has been teaching English for Academic Purposes on pre-sessional and in-session courses. She has authored two books in the Collins English for Exams Series: *Reading for IELTS* and *Get Ready for IELTS Reading*. She has also published Foreign Language courses.

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Introduction

Collins Academic Skills Series: Writing will build on your existing writing skills to enable you to produce successful academic essays.

Designed to be used on a self-study basis to support English for Academic Purposes or study skills courses, it is intended for students on pre-sessional or Foundation courses as well as for first year undergraduate students.

The book has eleven chapters which focus on helping you understand what is expected of you at university. It will help you with research, planning, organization, grammar, paraphrasing and much more. It will make you think about:

- the writing purpose (Chapter 1)
- the expectations of the academic reader (Chapters 2 and 4)
- content and research (Chapters 3 and 6)
- academic principles (Chapters 4, 5, 8 and 9)
- language points (Chapters 3, 5, 7 and 10)
- the writing process from start to finish (Chapter 11)

At the back of the book you will find:

- example essays: a short essay and a complete university essay, with comments on their strengths, weaknesses and differences
- advice on how to respond to marking criteria and assignment feedback
- a glossary of key terms
- a comprehensive answer key.

Chapter structure

Each chapter includes:

- Aims – These set out the skills covered in the chapter.
- A self-evaluation quiz – By doing this you are able to identify what you already know on the subject of the chapter and what you need to learn.
- Information on academic expectations and guidelines on how to develop academic skills – These sections will help you understand university practices and expectations so you know what is required.
- Practical exercises – These help you develop the skills to succeed at university. You can check your answers at the back of the book.
- Tips – Key points are highlighted for easy reference and provide useful revision summaries for the busy student.
- Glossary – Difficult words are glossed in boxes next to where the text appears in the chapter. There is also a comprehensive glossary at the back of the book.
- Remember section – This is a summary of key points for revision and easy reference.

Authentic academic texts

The book uses excerpts from academic essays, written by students who study a variety of subjects, so that you can apply what you learn to your own academic context.

Glossary boxes POWERED BY COBUILD

Where we feel that a word or phrase is difficult to understand, we have glossed this word or phrase. All definitions provided in the glossary boxes have been taken from the *Collins COBUILD Advanced Dictionary*. At the end of the book there is a full alphabetical list of the most difficult words from the book for your reference.

Using Writing

You can either work through the chapters from Chapter 1 to Chapter 11 or you can choose the chapters and topics that are most useful to you. The Contents page will help in your selection.

Study tips

- Each chapter will probably take between three and four hours. Take regular breaks and do not try to study for too long. Thirty to sixty minutes is a sensible study period.
- Regular study is better than occasional intensive study.
- Read the chapter through first to get an overview without doing any exercises. This will help you see what you want to focus on.
- Try the exercises before checking the Answer key. Be an active learner.
- When writing your own essays, refer back to the appropriate sections and exercises in the book. If possible, ask a more experienced writer to give you feedback on your essay drafts.
- All university departments are different. Use the information in the book as a guide to investigating your own university department.
- Read carefully any information you receive from your department about what and how to write.
- Don't think of an essay as a finished product, but as a learning process. It is an opportunity to show that you can find out information about a subject, develop your own ideas about it, organize your thoughts and communicate your understanding to others. Don't rush this process, but find out what works best for you. Adapt the suggestions in this book to suit your learning style and context.
- With practice, writing will become easier, and your confidence will grow so that you can show your tutors your true ability and potential. We wish you every success in your academic career.

Other titles

Also available in the *Collins Academic Skills Series: Research, Lectures, Numbers, Presenting, and Group Work*.

1

Essay purpose and instructions

- Aims** ✓ understand what academic writing is ✓ analyse essay titles
✓ understand the purpose of essays



Quiz Self-evaluation

For each statement below, circle the word which is true for you.

1 I understand what academic writing is.	agree disagree not sure
2 I understand the purpose of essays.	agree disagree not sure
3 I know the academic meaning of instruction words in essays.	agree disagree not sure
4 I can find key words in essay titles to help me understand what I am expected to write.	agree disagree not sure
5 I can analyse the structure of an essay question to give a full answer and include the right information.	agree disagree not sure
6 I know who to go to at my university if I need advice about an essay.	agree disagree not sure

- Tip** ✓ When you start your degree, you will come across a lot of new words which are specific to your new environment but everybody seems to think you already understand them. Don't worry about this, but look them up as soon as possible. In this book, the words are explained in the glossary boxes and they are all in the glossary at the back.

What is academic writing?

Glossary

dissertation
(dissertations)

N-COUNT

A dissertation is a long formal piece of writing on a particular subject, especially for a university degree.

Academic writing is writing which is done by scholars (students or academics) for other scholars to read. It can take many forms: journal articles, textbooks, dissertations, group project reports, etc. Although students are increasingly being asked to write different types of academic text, the essay still remains the most popular type of assignment.

Essays are written by students and are likely to be read by one person only: their tutor. The essay can be set as a coursework assignment to assess a student's understanding of a module, or as an exam question.

For more information on some other types of academic writing, see Chapter 11.

The purpose of essays

Glossary

discipline
(disciplines)

N-COUNT

A discipline is a particular area of study, especially a subject of study in a college or university.

Essays are a common form of assessment, for example in disciplines such as Business, International Relations, Law, History, Geography, Theology, Communication Studies, Education and Economics.

There are many reasons why essays are still the most popular type of assignment. One of them is that they ask students to demonstrate more than just knowledge. To demonstrate the purpose of essays, let's have a look at the difference between an ordinary question and an essay question.

Ordinary question: *Why did William of Normandy win the Battle of Hastings?*

Essay question: *William of Normandy's victory at the Battle of Hastings has often been attributed to his large and well-prepared army. However, without strategy and good fortune, he might well have lost the battle. Discuss.*

The answer to the ordinary question could be a list of items, in no particular order of importance. The essay question directs the writer more: the student has to mention the size and the preparedness of the army, describe William's strategy and the fortunate circumstances, and decide how important these elements were for the victory. In order to come to a conclusion about this, the writer has to do research. This is

Glossary

attribute to
(attributes to,
attributing to,
attributed to)

VERB

If you attribute something to an event or situation, you think that it was caused by that event or situation.

seminar
(seminars)

N-COUNT

A seminar is a class at a college or university in which the teacher and a small group of students discuss a topic.

convention
(conventions)

N-COUNT

Academic conventions are traditional methods or styles of academic writing.

indicated in the language: in the first sentence 'has often been attributed to' tells the student that there are a lot of sources which she should look at to explain this point of view, and 'However' in the second sentence suggests that there is also evidence available for a contrasting opinion. The word 'Discuss' makes it clear that there are different points to be made, which should be mentioned and commented on, so that the writer can make a decision about which side she is on.

Clearly, a finished essay demonstrates more than just the knowledge students were taught about a subject. The writers will have:

- found out much more than what they were taught in lectures and seminars
- weighed up the evidence about different points of view
- developed their own point of view
- increased their knowledge and their depth of understanding
- trained their memory to remember the important facts
- undertaken activities that prepare them for their future profession.

By writing the information down in essay form, they will have:

- organized their thoughts
- practised and improved their ability to communicate in writing
- shown awareness of the reader, of academic conventions and the way others write in their discipline.

If you plan your time so that you can read up on a topic, think critically about it, follow the essay instructions, and express your view clearly in a well-organized text, you deserve a good grade.

For more information on all these aspects, see later chapters.

Analysing essay titles

Although we called the instructions in the example essay question a question, there was no question mark. The 'questions' are really titles. You will need to put the full title on your first page; don't be tempted to summarize the question and write your own title.

Your tutor may give you a long essay title, which needs to be broken down into smaller parts before it can be addressed. All essay questions will include instruction words, such as ‘discuss’. For international students, these words can be particularly tricky. If you look them up in a dictionary, you may find a large number of meanings that do not always correspond exactly to the more specific meaning in the academic context, which is also why translations into other languages you may speak are unlikely to help.

For example, this is a dictionary definition of ‘discuss’:

- 1 *to have a conversation about; consider by talking over; debate*
- 2 *to treat (a subject) in speech or writing ⇒ the first three volumes discuss basic principles*

(Source: Collins COBUILD Advanced Dictionary, 2008)

Both definitions suggest that ‘discuss’ means ‘talk (or write) about’. However, in an academic context ‘discuss’ often means something more specific: in order to discuss, you need to refer to different aspects of a topic, look at the benefits and drawbacks of different points of view, and give your own conclusion.



Exercise 1

In which of these essay questions does ‘discuss’ mean ‘write about, describe’, and in which does it mean more? Put a tick in the correct column.

	= write about, describe	= give different points of view (and your opinion)
1 Parliament today is less effective than it has ever been. Discuss.		
2 Discuss the geological history and likely method of formation of the Lewisian rocks.		
3 Discuss the circumstances that can lead to a dramatic change in the use of technology.		
4 ‘Current stem cell technology is sufficiently advanced for use in medicine.’ Discuss.		



Exercise 2

In the table below, match the instruction words in the centre column with the correct academic meanings on the left. Some of the first and/or second dictionary definitions of the instruction words on the right may help you find their academic meaning.

Academic meaning	Instruction word	Dictionary definition
a state similarities and differences and draw conclusions about them	1 show	to make, be, or become visible or noticeable
b point out weaknesses and strong points	2 compare	to regard something as similar, to examine in order to observe similarities or differences
c demonstrate with supporting evidence	3 justify	to prove to be just, valid or reasonable
d decide on the value or importance of a topic by giving reasons or evidence	4 consider	to think carefully about a problem or decision
e give information but without going into details	5 criticize	to judge (something) with disapproval, to evaluate (study) or analyse (something)
f give support for an argument	6 assess	to judge the worth, importance, etc. of, to evaluate
g briefly and clearly describe the main points	7 indicate	to point out or show
h give your views about a topic	8 analyse	to break down into components or essential features, to examine in detail in order to discover meaning, essential features
i give detailed reasons or say why something is the case	9 outline	to give the main features or general idea
j break down a topic into its different aspects and look at how they relate	10 explain	to make (something) comprehensible, to justify by giving reasons for one's actions or words

Tip ✓ Read academic texts in your own discipline to become more aware of the conventions. For example, the instruction word 'sketch' can have completely different meanings dependent on the context. To an engineer it can mean 'draw', to a theologian it is more likely to mean 'give a brief description'.

Tip