

Academic Writing

Technical Information and Communication 1DV510

Lecture 2

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Punctuality

If you are on time, you are late.

If you are early, you are on time.



1DV510 - academic procedure

Written production

Draft 1

Draft 2

Draft 3

Seminar paper

Assessment paper

Grade - A to F

Oral production

Oral presentation

Grade - pass/fail

Coding

LaTeX

Grade - pass/fail



The document is on MyMoodle

Assignments for students in technical communication, 1DV510 - English

A. The Report

The text is academic and therefore must follow the academic style regarding language use. The citations and referencing should utilise the IEEE system. You should write a maximum of 10 A4 pages including title page, abstract, table of contents and references. The report should be aimed at a potential reader who is your peer in terms of educational level, but who does not have specialist knowledge in your chosen subject. Note:

- a) The report should pose research questions. These will then be answered, discussed and a conclusion given
- b) The report is therefore NOT 'write all you know about' and you are not to present a mass of facts and figures that are not discussed.
- c) Likewise, all assertions must be proven and referenced as evidence of research.
- d) All reports are monitored electronically for plagiarism. The penalties for copy and pasting from external sources or previous student papers are severe.

Draft 1

In this first assignment, you will write a text that consists of the introduction plus research questions. The text should present the topic of your intended report and should be computer science related. Students will be given advice and feedback from the teachers as to the suitability of the subject as well as any advice to develop the report.

Students may submit in PDF or Microsoft Word readable formats.

Peer review (Draft 2)

You will read and review a draft report written by one of your fellow students. The instructions for peer review will be provided in the lecture and via separate document posted on MyMoodle.

Students may submit in PDF or Microsoft Word readable formats. Students are advised to use the template.

Draft 3

This is the first complete draft of your report. It should contain all sections and follow the guidelines laid down in the lectures: you should follow them. As well as following the structure and style of an academic report, you should also make sure that your spelling and grammar are up to standard. You will be given feedback at this stage to prepare for the next stage.

Students are advised to submit in PDF format and use the template.

The seminar version (Draft 4)

This draft of your report should complete and take into account the feedback from draft 3. You should be ready to defend your report at the seminar.

Students are required to submit in PDF format and use the template.



Communication



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Communication

Think about the readers. Who are they?

Imagine they are your peers, but not necessarily computer scientists

Consider that they may be investors, shareholders, the press

Assume a reasonable level of knowledge

Introduce, explain, justify and provide proof in the report



In an academic text..

Never address the reader directly

Do not use personal pronouns

The scientific method



1DV510 - academic procedure

Student written production

Feedback

Draft 1	Teacher
Draft 2	Peer
Draft 3	Teacher
Seminar paper	Peer and teacher
Assessment paper	Grade



The structure of an academic report

Title page

- Main title
- Sub-title

Abstract - kind of executive summary

Key words

Contents Page

Introduction

Aim and research questions

Body of report

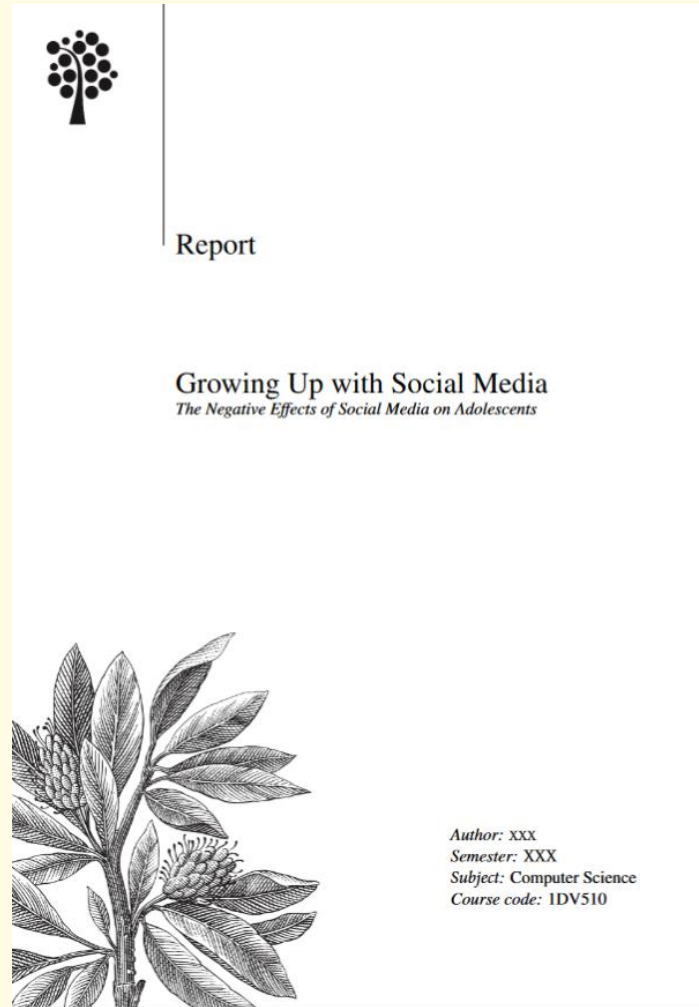
Results

Conclusions

References



For draft 1 - the title page is not required



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Draft 1 - choosing a subject & the title

Main title - the overall subject

e.g. **Artificial Intelligence**

Sub-title - narrows the field

e.g. The greatest leap in computing since the silicon chip?
 The negative effects of AI on consumer credit
 applications
 Will AI robots take over the world?



Caution

Your paper is not completely, totally, utterly, thoroughly and absolutely, **NOT:**

“Write everything you know about.”



Draft 1 - choosing a subject & self critique

Will I be able to:

1. write a 10-page report?
2. turn the subject into research questions?
3. discuss the subject?
4. provide evidence?
 - use secondary research giving citations and references
 - original research e.g. a short survey
5. arrive at a conclusion? **ANSWER YOUR RQs**
6. defend the work to opponents (peer and teacher)?

1DV510 - academic procedure

Student written production

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Draft 3	Teacher
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Draft 1 - Introduction

The briefest possible summary of:

Background

- introducing the subject, the wider context of the topic

Rationale

- what and how of the discussion, justification of relevance
- structure

Objective

- promise the reader what you will achieve with your report

Draft 1 - Aim and research questions 1

What does the report set out to do?

e.g.

The aim of this report is to expose how “Big Tech” brands such as Google, Facebook and Twitter flagrantly disregard their own stated privacy policies in order to gather and sell personal data.

Two or three RQs

Draft 1 - Aim and research questions 2

Poor questions

What is social media?

How does cybersecurity work?

Why is *Cisco Systems* software perfect?

Better questions

Have social media companies created monopolies?

Which cybersecurity methods should everyone adopt?

What is the future for the *Internet of Things*?

When do I submit Draft 1?

Monday 13th November at 08.00.

NB: Late submissions will not be read

Title: Joe Biden Draft 1
Joe_Biden_draft_1

NB: unidentifiable submissions will be read last



When *should* I submit Draft 1?

As soon as you are ready



When can I expect feedback?

All drafts are reviewed in the order that they are received.

Thursday 16th November at 12.00.

Note: That is an aim and not a promise

Suggestion: Aim to submit a day or more before Monday 13th

What kind of feedback can I expect?

1. All the first four elements of the report are present
 - Title and sub-title
 - Introduction
 - Aim
 - Research Questions
2. You have formulated research questions
 - that really are questions and not statements
 - they are reasonable
 - they do not repeat each other

Draft 1 proposal feedback

3. You will receive feedback on your chosen subject

The reasons will be explained

You will be asked to reconsider your choice and re-submit

Weaknesses in the introduction will be highlighted

Research questions will be assessed and commented upon

What kind of feedback can I expect?

4. Major language errors using a highlighter e.g.

Is it possible to write **soft wear** that will please **every one**.

5. That you can continue with Draft 2

Draft 2 - Peer review

Your 'work in progress' will be reviewed by a fellow student

You will review your fellow student's report

Praise and constructive criticism



Draft 3 - First attempt at a finished report

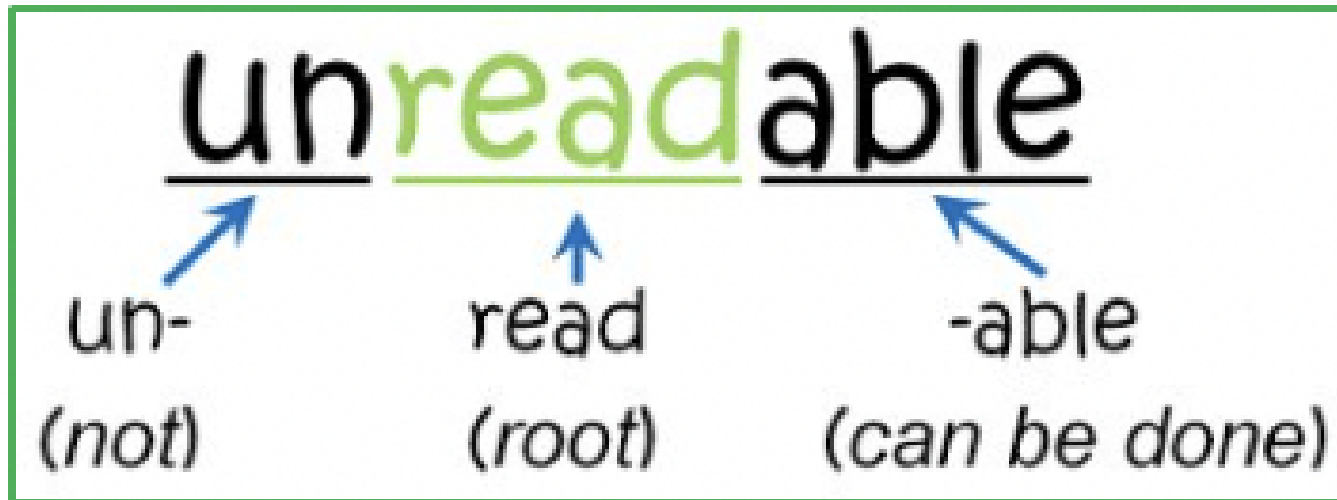
Detailed feedback

Content, style, language

Advice and help



Ask yourself, would I enjoy reading this?



1DV510 Assessment criteria

To obtain a pass on the written report:-

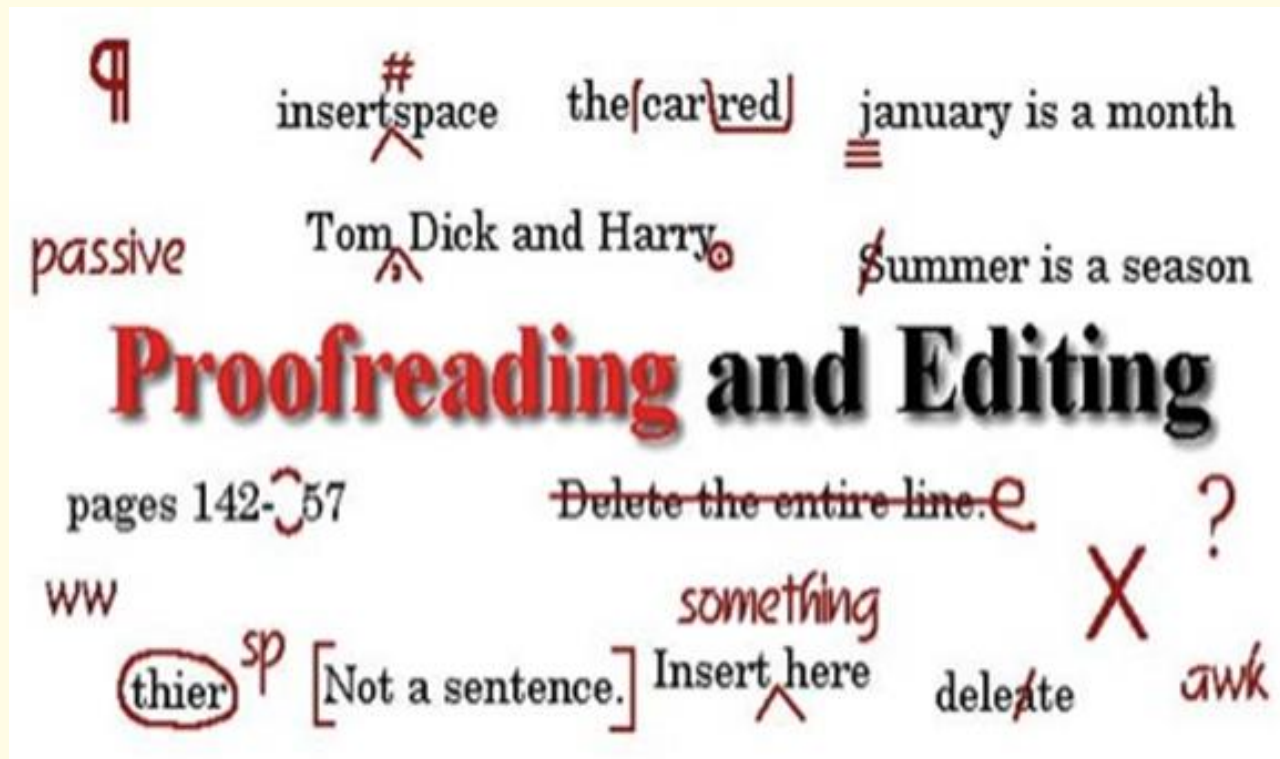
- a) all assessment criteria for at least Grade E must be met
- b) writing must be readable, coherent, intelligible and unambiguous
- c) the layout must be followed without any major issues.

Assessment criteria	A	C	E
Abstract	Should adhere to the guidelines.		
Aim and research questions (RQs)	The aim and RQs are focused and concise. The answers to all RQs are critically discussed.	The aim is overarching for the RQs. The answers to all RQs are discussed.	The aim and RQs are clear and related to each other. RQs are answered.
Contents and structure	There is a clear progression from introduction to conclusion guided by the aim and RQs.	All parts of the report are relevant to the aim and RQs.	All parts of the report are present and the text is related to the aim and RQs.
Conceptualisation	A high degree of critical thinking.	Critical thinking is sustained.	Some critical thinking is evident.
Language use	Academic writing with very few irregularities.	Academic writing is maintained with some minor irregularities.	The standards of academic writing are generally maintained.
IEEE	The IEEE reference system is used for in-text references, reference list and illustrations.		
Use of references	References are used to write a synthesis of the state-of-the-art in the chosen topic.	References provide a comprehensive overview of the chosen topic.	References are provided in-text. All references are included in the reference list.
Scope of references	The number and origin of references are reasonable given the topic of the report.		
	Most of the references are peer-reviewed.	The majority of references are peer-reviewed.	Some references are peer-reviewed.

Grades B and D are awarded to reports exceeding the criteria for grades E and C, but not meeting those for grades C and A, respectively.



Before you submit each draft



consider proofreading a **printed** copy

Proofreading and editing

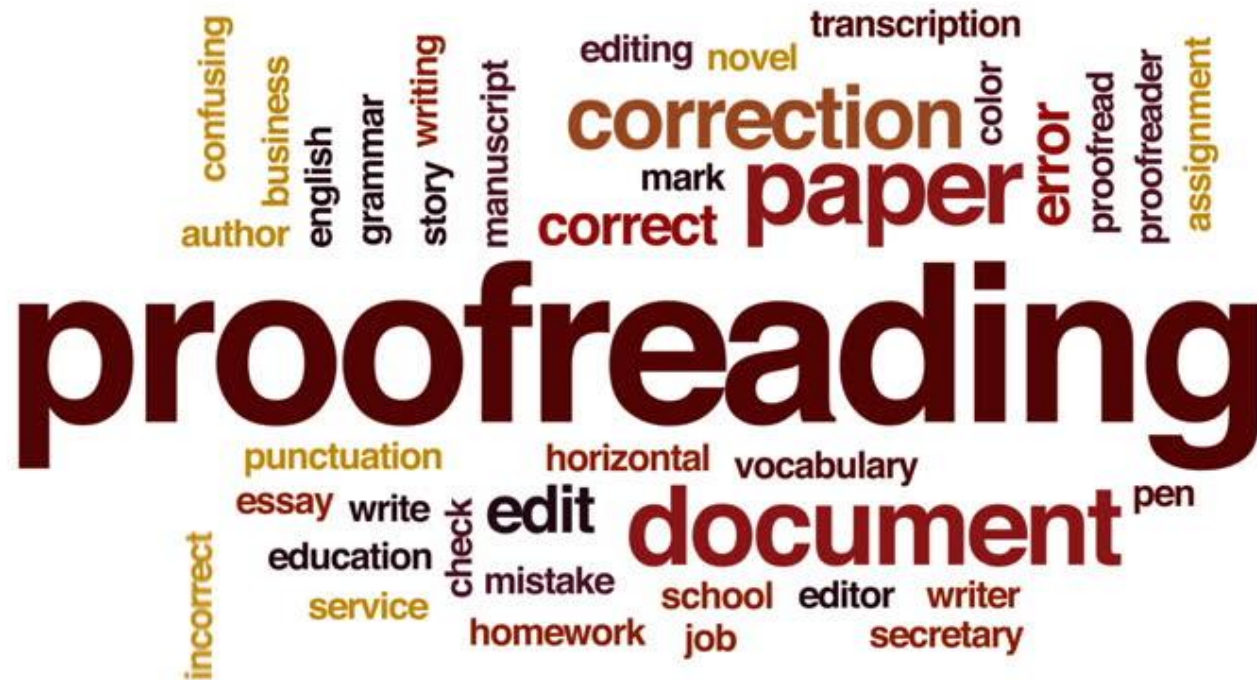
Editing - checking and making major changes to your writing

- content
- structure and form
- style

Edit

- self-critique
- peer review
- teacher feedback





Proofreading and editing

Proofreading - editing that removes errors

Proofreading is “*tidying up*”

- spelling (typos), punctuation and grammar
- syntax

Proofread

- self-critique
- peer review
- teacher feedback



Proofreading

Possible strategies

Distance yourself from your work

Proofread more than once

- sentence by sentence
- each paragraph
- at the end

Read your work out loud

Allow sufficient time to proofread

Take a break between writing and proofreading

Be ruthless

Use technology - but DO NOT rely upon it

Get proofreading buddies

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Proofreading buddies 1

Tech assistance

Spell and grammar checker

Thesaurus

Do not

- a) over rely on technology
- b) use translation programmes



Proofreading buddies 2

Human help

Fellow 1DV510 participant

Someone not on the course

A native speaker

Important Listen to all advice, but make your own calls





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Informal peer response

Read out loud to somebody else or let somebody else read

Why?

- identify ideas which need to be developed
- spot repetition, contradictions, irrelevant information etc.
- suggest improvement in language use

Provide positive feedback

Make suggestions for improvement

Before each deadline, seek peer response and use it to improve the text



Some features of academic writing

A system for conveying information and taking part in a discussion

Specialised formats, genres and text types

An issue or research question to explore

Aim and research questions

Results

Supported claims

Not just reporting; a way of working, a way of thinking

Allows for peer review

Avoid misunderstanding through precision, coherence and clarity



What is required for good writing?

Specialised knowledge

- master the subject

Knowledge about the writing process and strategies

- awareness of different stages of writing and ways of working

Knowledge about genres

- following the specific requirements and expectations suited to the type of text

Discourse domains

Academic domain

Academic language
and scientific
knowledge

Professional domain

Professional language
and specialised
knowledge

Everyday domain

Everyday language
and practical
knowledge

cf Macken-Horarik et al. 2006: Blåsjö & Wittek 2017



Academic language

Precision

Formal style

Structure (Lectures 3-7)



Accuracy

- language accuracy
- factual accuracy
- accuracy in references



Academic language - precision

Text level: precise, unambiguous and easy to follow

Sentence level:

The aim of this text is to write about computers

The aim of this text is to describe the role of computers in modern day motor vehicles

Word level:

Discipline-specific vocabulary, e.g., terminology

– use but define and explain them

Tables, figures, diagrams: Introduce, Present, Comment

Formal style

Formal language (informal words and structures avoided)

Complete word forms. No contractions - 'there's', 'don't' or 'can't'
Instead : 'there is', 'do not' and 'cannot'

Complete sentences (no fragments)

Often fairly long and complex sentences

See further pp. 98- 99 in Björk et al. 1997

Features of academic writing

Of interest to the general public and academia

Low risk of misinterpretation

Relating to previous research

Various genres: essays, reports, research proposals, research theses etc.



Formal style

Nominalisation - impersonal tone and information density

Compare:

The government banned smoking in public places in 2007. Since then, fewer people have been admitted to hospital for smoking-related diseases.

The ban on smoking in public places in 2007 has led to a fall in hospital admissions for smoking-related diseases.

Lecture events

With Sergej

Lecture 6 Report Structure

Lecture 7 Unity and Coherence

With Nicholas

Lecture 8 Writing discussion, conclusion
and references

Lecture 9 Academic Writing, Peer Review

With both

Lecture 3 Introduction, CT and RQs



First deadline

Draft 1 - Title, introduction aim, research questions

Monday 13th November 08.00



Contact

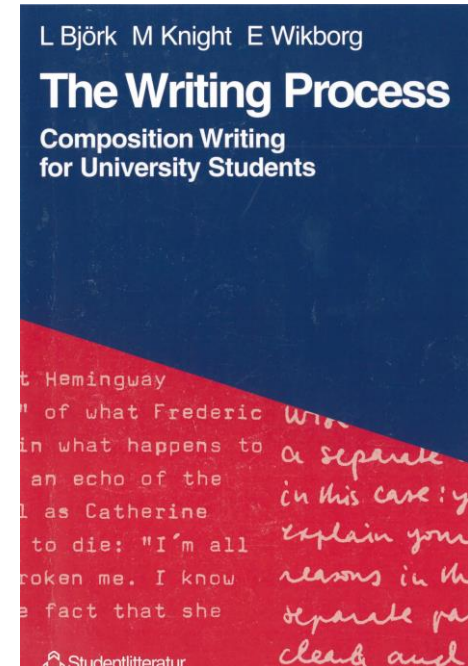
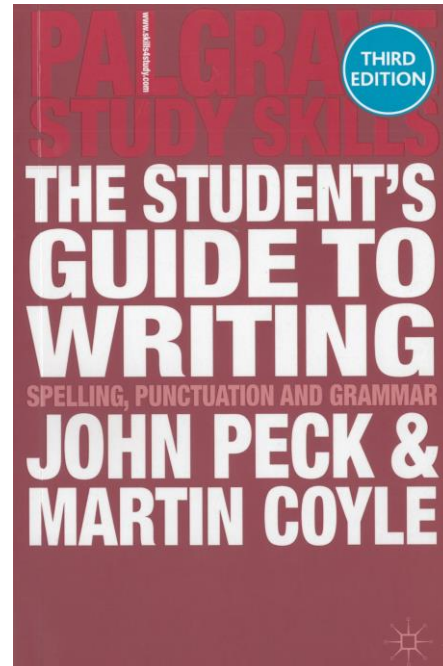
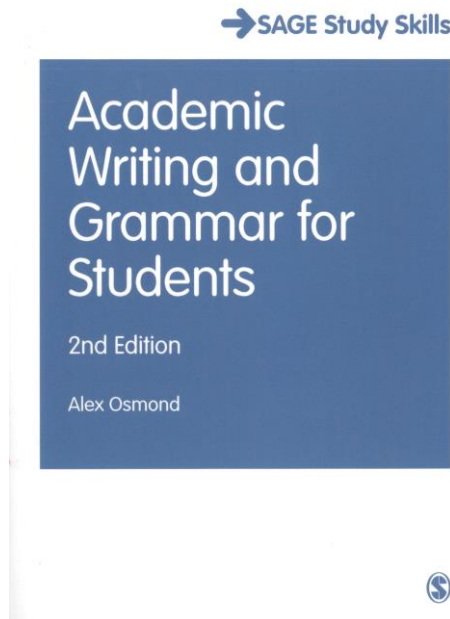
All *information* will be on **MyMoodle**

Contact Nicholas **MyMoodle** or, **e-mail**

Checked early and late, **Monday to Friday**

Generally, replied to **straightaway**

Course references



Essential reading

Essential Reading List 1DV510

Essential Reading List 1DV510

There are three reference books.



A. Osmond A. (2nd ed 2016). *Academic Writing and Grammar for Students*. London: Sage ISBN 978-1-4739-1936-5

B. Peck J., Coyle M. (3rd ed. 2012). *The Student's Guide to Writing*. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan. ISBN 978-0-230-37388-4

C. Björk, L., Knight, M., Wikborg, E. (2nd ed. 2011). *The Writing Process: Composition Writing for University Students*. Lund: Studentlitteratur ISBN 978-91-44-28222-0

This is merely to guide you towards some essential points. You may be given other references during lectures. It certainly won't harm your studies if you read more of the three reference books more extensively.

Lecture 2. Academic Writing

- A. Ch. 1 pp 9-32 Basic Conventions of Academic Writing
- A. Ch. 2 pp 64-80 on sentences
- A. Ch. 4 pp 91-109 about paragraphs
- B. Ch. 1 pp 3-18 more on sentences
- C. II pp 29-38 Developing and Growing Ideas.
- C. IV pp 71-72 Draft to Final Version (an overview)

Lecture 5. Report Structure

- C. V pp 98-100 Formal and Informal

Lecture 6. Unity and Coherence

- B. Ch. 7 pp 97-122 Writing an Essay
- C. III pp 47-69 Unity and Coherence

Lecture 9. Academic Writing and Peer Review

- A. Ch. 5 pp 110-121 Critical Thinking
- B. Ch. 7 pp 134-165 Conciseness and Clarity

Lecture 11. Rhetoric and Oral Presentations

- C. pp 15-17 Written and Spoken English





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