

Experimental economics

Lecture 9: Effective writing

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References:

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Economics and writing

- What does writing have to do with economics?
- Economists, as much or even more than other scholars and analysts, write.
- Economics articles, especially empirical papers, consist mainly of text, not equations or tables. Writing is as much a part of economics as are models and data sets.
- Writing is a highly complex cognitive and scholarly process. It is sophisticated, unpredictable, and time-consuming.
- But although writing a paper can be stressful, it can also be one of the most intellectually exciting, satisfying, and challenging enterprises you will undertake as a student.

Writing is thinking

- We write to learn what we want to say.
- For many inexperienced writers, writing, they imagine, is something you do only after you figure out what you want to say. Students often see writing as the final activity of a linear process, that happens after you have conducted your research and formulated your ideas.
- But in reality, researching and thinking and writing are all of a piece. Start writing something—anything—before you have finished your research.
- Write even before you know what you want to say. Indeed, it is often only by writing that we work out and discover what we truly want to say and how to say it, or if what we thought were brilliant, lucid arguments are actually only confused and ill-formed ideas.

Writing takes time

- Writing a paper—a good paper—takes time. By a good paper, I mean a paper that fulfills its potential, meets the expectations established by you, the writer, and, most important, communicates with its intended reader.
- You cannot pull an allnighter and write a good paper, a paper that represents the best that you can do. In addition to requiring lots of time, writing a paper involves a recursive process: one step forward, two steps back, and certain steps—drafting, researching, revising, outlining, etc.—are repeated and revisited.
- Start early. That means today. Make a list of possible topics. Compile a bibliography of books and articles on your topic. Take notes as you read. Keep track of your sources as you work out your ideas on paper. Do not rely on your memory!
- Good writing is an exercise in perspective taking. Before you start writing, first determine which audience you are addressing. Are you writing for a highly specialized professional audience of academics? In which discipline do these academics work? Or will you be writing for a lay audience? Next, imagine what your readers know about your research question, about previous research, and especially what they do not know. Are the concepts you are using familiar? Explain a new or potentially controversial concept or definition the first time you use it in your text. Do not argue about controversial concepts before you have defined them. Use the conventional jargon in the field to which you are contributing.
- Your goal is to write a valuable contribution to the scientific record. Research is more valuable when: 1. You answer an intriguing, relevant and timely research question; 2. You develop a set of theoretically grounded hypotheses; 3. You thoroughly test these hypotheses; 4. You suggest guidelines and actions for policy and practice.
- Once you are done with your empirical work, check what you promised in the description of the design of your study. Do not mislead your readers or disappoint them by asking a different question than you are able to answer. To some extent, this is a matter of planning: reformulate your research question again and again, until it is capturing your research perfectly. If your research changes along the way, reformulate your original question.

Structure of an empirical paper

- Abstract: A brief summary of the whole paper
- Introduction: Pose an interesting question or problem and explain your motivation
- Literature Review: Survey the literature on your topic
- Methods/Data/Design: Formulate your hypothesis and describe your data
- Hypotheses / Theoretical predictions
- Results: Present and interpret your results with the help of graphs and charts
- Discussion: Critique your method and/or discuss any policy implications
- Conclusions: Summarize what you have done; pose questions for further research
- List of references

Writing Introduction

- If there is one section of an economics paper that seems to give writers the most trouble, it is the introduction. Every economics paper contains an introduction, a section that brings your reader into your paper.
- A good introduction gives your reader a context, a frame, for ordering and understanding the information you present in the body of your paper.
- Introductions should normally answer the following questions:
 - What is the purpose of the paper? That is, what does the paper “do”?
 - What important economic question does it try to answer, or what issue does it try to shed light on?
 - What contribution does the paper make, and how does it relate to previous work on the topic?

Writing Introduction

- The introduction includes at least the following elements: a. The research question you will answer. b. Arguments about relevance: why it is important to know the answer to the research question. c. Some historical and local context for your research. d. A literature review, summarizing the key theories or hypotheses that could help answer the question, and an assessment of previous research. e. Your contribution to the theory, research methods and body of evidence.
- In some disciplines such as economics it is common to include the findings in the introduction, while this is not common in other disciplines.
- The research question. The first substantial piece of your research is the introduction in which you formulate your research question, and convince the reader that it is important to read further to get the answer. Make sure you do both as early as possible. So: start the introduction with a very brief formulation of your research question. This enables the reader to understand what the remainder of your text is about.
- Relevance. To convince people why they should be interested in your research, you need two types of arguments: arguments about the societal relevance and arguments about the scientific relevance. The question you should answer before you write the paragraph about the societal relevance is: who will be interested in your research outside academia, and why? The question you should answer in the paragraph about the scientific relevance is why people in academia should be interested in your research.
- Context. Describe the context of your research problem for the period covered by your empirical data. The further history may be interesting in its own right, but describe it only if it has consequences for your hypotheses or findings.

Writing Introduction

- Literature review. The literature review starts with a fact finding mission: what are the most important concepts and definitions and how are they connected? How have these concepts been operationalized in previous research? Which theories and hypotheses have been offered in previous research to examine the relationships between concepts? What does the evidence say about these relationships? What have we learned from these studies with respect to the validity of theoretical expectations – if any?
- Next comes a critical assessment of these studies: the conceptual confusion in definitions, the lack of clear hypotheses, the inconclusive research designs, the light weight of the evidence, the selective presentation of findings to ‘support the expectations’. The modal answer in the social sciences to a question like ‘what do we know about X’ is that we know very little with certainty.
- Contribution. The introduction should identify the research gaps in the literature. Position your work as an attempt to fill some of these gaps. Tie the contribution to the arguments about relevance: how does your study contribute to science and society?
- Do not put an ‘empty roadmap’ in your introduction. Nobody wants to read sentences like “In the introduction, I will introduce the topic” or “In the discussion I discuss the conclusions”. There is no additional value in warning the reader that after the introduction, you will discuss theories and review literature, before you present the data and methods, the results, and the conclusion and discussion. This structure is self-evident. Even when your piece has an unusual structure, there is no value in a section, paragraph or even a sentence explaining the structure of the remaining text. Readers recognize the structure from the section titles of the paper and the table of contents.

Writing Literature review

- So just what is a literature review? First, let me say what it is not. A literature review is not just a description of a series of papers; it is not a mere catalog or annotated bibliography of papers written on a subject. A series of paragraphs, each recapping or summarizing a particular paper or set of papers, in no particular order, does not a literature review make.
- Instead, a literature review has much more shape and purpose than that. A good literature review is an account of previous research that is carefully constructed to tell a particular story. The story is usually this: Here is what previous researchers have done on my subject; here is something unsatisfactory or incomplete or troubling about that research; here is how I am going to redress what is unsatisfactory or incomplete or troubling about that research.
- A literature review is, in a sense, a sales job. What is it selling? The value added by the present paper. Why should the present paper take its place among the existing literature? What does it do that is, in its own small way, different from what other papers have done? Those are the questions that should be answered in a literature review.
- A review should do at least four things. First, it should analyze critically, and organize, a body of research. Second, it should put your own study in the context of other studies. Third, your review should highlight your study's contribution. And fourth, it establishes your scholarly "bona fides" by showing you have done your homework.
- Here are some guidelines to consider when writing your literature review. Begin with comments about the body of research as a whole. This should be your assessment of the literature as a whole. Have there been many studies, or few studies? Do the studies focus on methodological issues, or data issues, or some other issue? Have the studies been mostly empirical, or theoretical, or both? Have they focused on a similar set of questions? Is there a general consensus on the major issues in the literature? What are the landmark studies? Who are the leading authorities?
- Begin paragraphs with a sentence that puts in explicit context what follows. Don't leave it to your reader to infer the point you are making. Explain the merits, and the shortcomings, of the existin studies. Be explicit about this. Do not leave it to your readers to infer this information.

Hypotheses

- A hypothesis is a statement you can test. A definition or a concept cannot be tested - it cannot be true or false. A hypothesis is a predictive statement about facts before you know them. A hypothesis is not a question. In a causal model, a hypothesis is a statement about the relationship between two variables.
- For each hypothesis you write a paragraph of text on which the hypothesis is based. The paragraph typically consists of the following three elements:
 - 1. The paragraph starts with an explanation of the argument from a theory about the influence of X on Y. If there are multiple theories about the influence, identify them and contrast the predictions from each of these theories.
 - 2. The paragraph continues with a summary of the findings of previous research on the influence of X on Y. Give an overall summary: “Seven studies have tested this hypothesis, five finding a weakly positive relationship [insert references to these studies], and two finding no association [insert references].” Next, you can go in some detail about these results, with the depth of your discussion depending on the number of words you have available. Avoid a chronological "he said, she said" structure. Instead, focus on the best study to date, and mention the others on the side.
 - 3. The paragraph ends with the literal formulation of the hypothesis. This text is often printed in italics. It helps the reader to name the hypothesis.

Describing your methodology/design

- Describe your experimental design in detail and also justify the decisions that led you to choose specific design elements.
- You should also define your variables and describe any assumptions you are considering in your design.
- Sample Description. The sample description should include a description of the process used to recruit participants into the sample, the criteria under which participants will be included in the research sample, and the criteria under which participants will be excluded from the research sample. In the context of excluding participants or their data, it is also important to address the issue of outliers, i.e. to think through the basis on which the data will be considered outliers and subsequently excluded. In addition to outliers, it is also appropriate to specify the means by which participants who have carelessly or dishonestly filled in either part or a significant part of the test battery - e.g. by quickly marking different response options without consideration - will be excluded. Such careless responses may significantly bias the results.
- Tools. It is crucial that only reliable and validated tools are used to test the assumptions formulated in the hypotheses. The appropriateness of using particular methods must also be discussed.
- The inclusion of outcome-neutral controls must also be a necessary and essential component. What is it? An outcome-neutral control is a form of assurance that the data obtained can indeed be used to test the hypotheses formulated. The most commonly discussed example is the positive control or manipulation check. It is a variable that the experimental intervention should affect if it really worked. When an experimental intervention is part of the research, the positive control verifies that the experimental manipulation did indeed work. For example, we want to test the assumption that a change in mood affects learning. By manipulating mood, we are trying to verify this assumption. If we did not have a positive control, then if the assumption was not confirmed, i.e. there was no change in learning rate, we could conclude that the mood manipulation apparently failed. To rule out this interpretation (a potential limitation of the study), the research must also include a positive control, a check that a change in mood actually occurred (e.g., by measuring something else that must also change when mood changes).
- Another example: if we experimentally test whether the number of likes on comments affects the perception of their credibility, and we manipulate the number of likes, then questions focusing on whether the respondent actually noticed the number of likes (i.e., the assumption that likes could affect credibility was met) can be a positive control. In that case, the data would allow us to test the hypotheses. Another example: if we are testing whether a new dietary supplement really increases vigilance, then a positive control might be caffeine administration, after which it is shown = measured that there is an increase in vigilance and we are able to capture, measure, this increase. By confirming this increase, we would gain confidence that if there were to be an increase in alertness after the administration of a new nutritional supplement, we would be able to detect it.

Reporting and interpreting results

- The results section of an empirical paper is usually the longest. In an empirical economics paper, you test a model with data; in the results section, you report the outcome of that test. How Many Results Should I Report? Less is usually more. A common mistake made by virtually all novice researchers (including graduate students) is to include every parameter estimate from every regression specification that was run. However, the reader will get either lost or bored. A good general rule is to focus on the following:
- What are the answers to your research questions? What is the relationship between your dependent variable and the several independent variables you have chosen to examine? Does the model “fit” the observed data?
- In most cases, when you report the results of your analysis, you are at the same time referring the reader to a table in which the results are presented. When you present information in a table, there are at least two expectations that you need to fulfill. The first is that you explicitly introduce the table.
- The second expectation is that you should, in your narrative, identify the main points made by the data in the table, the points that most closely correspond to your research question. The table cannot, and should not be expected to, “speak for itself.” Rather, you should explicitly tell your readers the important realities that the data show.
- You may also wish to point out any counterintuitive results or results that are especially large or small. Please note, however, that you are not expected to comment on or restate every piece of information that a table contains; but you are expected to point out to your readers the “meaning” or your interpretation of the data in it. What do you most want your reader to take away from the table?
- When writing up your empirical results focus only on what is important and be as clear as possible. You may feel that you are repeating yourself and that the reader may be offended at how closely you are leading him or her through your tables and graphs but, to paraphrase John Kenneth Galbraith, both smart and dumb readers will appreciate your pointing things out directly and clearly. The dumb readers need the help, and the smart ones will take silent pleasure in the knowledge that they didn’t need your assistance!
- Don’t forget that when you use terms like ‘causes’ and ‘consequences’, ‘impact’, ‘effects’, or even when you say that something ‘increases’, ‘amplifies’, ‘enhances’, ‘reduces’ or ‘hinders’ something else, you make statements about causality. The question you should ask yourself when you use such terms is: does the research design actually allow for causal inference? Some types of research designs (e.g., experiments) are better suited to answer causal questions.

Writing Discussion

- Many of the topics that interest economists have real world policy implications. Your own research may present strong findings about the effects of existing or proposed policies.
- While this is fine, you should not conclude that “this should be done” or “this should not be done.” You should avoid making value judgments and rely instead on economic facts and analyses.
- Even when you have reached your own conclusions about which policy is desirable, your reader should be able to consider the facts and make the policy decision for himself or herself.
- In the discussion of your result, you should also point out the limitations of your research, say the relatively small number of observations you have or the simplicity of the functional form you have tested. In an undergraduate term paper such limitations are expected.
- In general, it is better to show your instructor that you understand the limits of your method than make broad claims you do not support. You can also suggest questions or alternative approaches for further research.

Writing Discussion

- In the discussion section, you do two things: you discuss the quality of your research, and you discuss the implications of your research. In the discussion about the quality of your research, revisit the shortcomings of the design of your study which you have already talked about in the data and methods section.
- Describe what you have done to limit the limitations. Also discuss the strengths of your research design, data and methods. The stronger the design of your research, the higher the quality of your data, and the more stringent the tests you conducted, the less likely your results can be explained as a result of its shortcomings.
- When you write this part of your discussion section, envision the fiercest critic you may encounter. What would be the arguments against your conclusions in your worst nightmare? When you write about the implications of your research, envision two types of audiences: people who may want to use the conclusions of your study to change things, and people who may want to build on your research in the future. This means you revisit the arguments you made in the introduction about the societal and scientific relevance of your study. How does your research contribute to solving a social problem, help improve policy, explain anomalies, solve mysteries, open black boxes?
- When you make recommendations for policy and practice, remember that your findings are essentially out of sample predictions about the consequences of a change in X, assuming that the effects on Y in the future are similar to the ones you observed in the situation you studied. You should discuss whether this assumption holds. Will the results you obtained also be valid in future situations that you have not examined? You do not want to make recommendations for future policy or practice in situations in which your recommendation is likely to result in different consequences.

Writing Conclusion

- Just as introductions are often written after the body of the paper has been developed, so are conclusions. Your conclusion should function in tandem with your introduction. Indeed, conclusions are, in a way, upside-down versions of introductions: whereas in introductions you usually build up to your thesis statement, in conclusions you usually begin with it.
- Conclusions recap what has already been said in the paper. You may use your conclusion to restate your research question or purpose and to restate your principal findings. You may discuss the policy implications of your results. You may identify ways in which your present project can be extended or improved.
- The conclusion is your chance to sum up your argument in a clear and concise manner, and in a way that does not simply repeat, word for word, what has been already said. It is also the place to suggest other lines of inquiry or broader implications of the topic and findings that you didn't have the space to explore.
- The conclusion helps answer the question, "So what?" That is, why should readers care? Why should they find your subject important?
- I would suggest reading your introduction and your conclusion side by side. They should be consistent with one another: the thesis or question or conclusion you state in your introduction should be the one you state in your conclusion.
- But the conclusion should be more than just a mirror of the introduction. Consider that whereas the introduction speaks to the contents of the paper that are actually to come, the conclusion should speak more to issues slightly beyond the paper. In other words, while looking back at the paper just presented, the conclusion should also look ahead.

Writing Abstract

- Most economics articles contain abstracts, a paragraph-long condensation of the main elements and features of a given paper. Abstracts are by definition brief—usually 150 words or less. The content of an abstract can vary, but they often state what the paper does, the data and methodology used, and the principal findings.
- What you choose to put in your abstract should depend on the contribution of your paper. If you had only 150 words to say something about it, what would you say? What you choose to include in an abstract depends on your interpretation of the paper's important or interesting features and its contribution or what distinguishes it from other papers.
- You should begin to write the abstract only after you have fully completed writing your conclusion and discussion section. The abstract is a brief summary of your thesis that contains all essential elements.
- A fairly universal structure for your abstract answers the following questions:
 - 1. What is your question?
 - 2. Why did you run the study?
 - 3. What did you do?
 - 4. How did you do it?
 - 5. What did you find?
 - 6. What does it mean?

Citations and references

- Citing the sources you use when you write a paper in economics is a matter of honesty, credibility, and courtesy. When you indicate to your reader that a fact or theory derives from a source, you are being honest by giving credit where it is due, i.e., not falsely claiming to have originated the fact or theory yourself.
- You are gaining credibility by showing your readers that you've done your research. And you are behaving courteously by letting your readers know where they can find the same information, in case they want to do further reading on the topic.
- When deriving a theory or fact from a source, cite the source in the text of your paper. Your in-text citation will contain the name of the author(s) and the year of publication. The way this information is formatted depends on (1) whether you wish to draw attention to the source and (2) whether you have referred to the author(s) previously in your paper.
- If you wish to acknowledge the source of an idea explicitly, cite the name of the author(s) in the body of your sentence and place the publication date in parentheses. The first time you cite the name of the author(s), provide both first and last names.
- When readers want to know more about a source – what its title is, where it was published, when it appeared – they will look at your list of references at the end of your paper. The bibliographical information there makes it possible for readers themselves to track down the source.

Tips and tricks

Keeping track of your sources

- Your first encounter with your sources should be carefully recorded: you should document your findings and give proper credit to the sources you use. Take down the complete bibliographic record (authors, title, journal, year, pages, etc.). Software (e.g., Mendeley) can be very helpful.
- Keep a file of notes on each article you read. This should include the main points of the article and any important results. Make sure to clearly set off direct quotations by using quotation marks. Avoid paraphrasing, because it will be difficult to separate the original wording from your own later on. You can add your own comments afterwards, but it is important to keep an accurate record of your first encounter with the source.
- Taking good notes will accomplish several things. First, you will have all your references at hand when you are writing the paper, so you won't have to go searching for a quote or chart when you're in your dorm room and the article you need is in the library. Second, you will leave a clear record for your readers to follow, so that they can go to the originals for more information or to see the facts for themselves.
- Finally, you will leave signposts for yourself so that you can know where you have been and separate your own ideas and results from those you found in your sources.
- This will help you avoid plagiarizing, which can happen inadvertently as your own ideas blur into what you have "learned" from others. The unacknowledged use of another writer's words or ideas is plagiarism, whether intended or not. Poor note taking and sloppy documentation mechanics can lead to plagiarism, but such mistakes are easy to correct and avoid.

Achieving clarity

- The goal of your paper is not to turn a clever phrase, hold the reader in suspense, or create multi-layered nuance, but rather to achieve clarity.
- Good economics papers just don't "happen" without time spent on preparation; you cannot hide a lack of research, planning and revising behind carefully constructed prose.
- Start presenting the facts motivating the question. Next explain the existing theories behind this relationship. Then clearly and simply state your question. Next cite more of the related literature. Finally propose how they seek to answer this question.
- Clear writing is easy to read but hard to write. It rarely occurs without considerable effort and a willingness to revise and rework. Here are some additional tips to achieving clarity.
 - Use the Active Voice
 - Put Statements in Positive Form
 - Omit Needless Words
 - Generally Stick to One Tense
- Edit yourself, remove what is not needed, and keep revising until you get down to a simple, efficient way of communicating.
- Do not worry about these while you are drafting a paper. When you are drafting, the aim is to get words and ideas down, period, without worrying about being correct or elegant or accurate. Treat these principles as tools to use when you or your readers think a sentence or passage could be improved. If there is a passage that you or your readers have trouble with, then just maybe one or more of the principles can help you out.

Easy to read

- Make your paper easy to skim. Your readers are mostly busy and impatient. It is quite unlikely that the reader will ever read the whole article from start to finish. Instead they skim.
- Say explicitly what are you trying to achieve. This essay will (first) examine... outline... address... demonstrate... argue... focus on... ... and will then/attempt to ascertain... establish... clarify... show... judge... prove...
- The following are important aspects of all body paragraphs:
 - A clear topic sentence
 - Specific evidence or supporting detail
 - Transitions between sentences and paragraphs
 - Examples
 - Unity and cohesion
 - A concluding sentence that ties the evidence or details back to the main point and brings the paragraph to a close
- Ask someone who is not of your specialization to proofread identify whether your paper is easy to understand for all.

Clear writing

- Keep your complete grammatical subjects short - readers like to get past the subject to the verb as quickly as possible. Therefore, as much as possible, structure your sentences so that they have complete grammatical subjects that are short.
- Express key actions as verbs - that may sound obvious, but we often do not express key actions as verbs. Rather, we often “hide” key actions in abstract nouns or, as they are also called, nominalizations—noun forms of words that can also be verbs.
- Begin sentences with “old” information. Clear writing is writing that flows, and the best way to create flow is to begin sentences with old information. Old information is information— names, words, phrases, and their equivalents—that your reader has already encountered or can reasonably anticipate; it is information that refers back to something already stated.
- End sentences with new information. Just as it is wise to begin sentences with old information, it is wise to end them with new information. New information is just that: information that your reader has not encountered yet or could not anticipate. Generally speaking, new information is the most important in a sentence; it thus should receive the most emphasis, and the place of most emphasis in a sentence is at the end.
- Make the subjects of your sentences the person, place, or thing that the sentence is about.
 - 1. Gary Becker was awarded the Nobel Prize for economics in 1992.
 - 2. The 1992 Nobel Prize for economics was awarded to Gary Becker.
 - 3. The year 1992 saw Gary Becker win the Nobel Prize for economics.
- If I were writing a biographical note on Gary Becker, sentence 1 would be best. If I were writing a story about the Nobel Prizes awarded in 1992, sentence 2 would be best. And if I were reviewing the events of the year 1992, I’d pick sentence 3.

Designing tables

- Tables are excellent for presenting a large amount of data in a concise, easy-to-read form. A well-designed table can communicate in brief what may otherwise take several paragraphs if presented textually, and can do so more clearly.
- The main parts of a table are the following.
 - Table number. Every table should have a number, and the tables should be numbered consecutively throughout a document.
 - Title. The title should be brief but descriptive. It should not be a complete sentence, but a collection of words that indicate the subject of the table.
 - Column heads. Every column of information should have a column head, a word or phrase that identifies the information.
 - Stub. The stub is the very left-most column in a table.
 - Footnotes.
 - A source note that identifies either the source of the data used in the table or, if the table was reproduced without change from a published work, the published work (it is possible that both things need to be identified).
- Rules. Rules are the lines that visually separate the table into parts. In general, only horizontal rules should be used. Vertical rules may in some cases be necessary, but current publishing norms require that they be avoided whenever possible.
- Not all data need to be presented in a table. Sometimes there is simply not enough information to justify a table. A good rule is that a table should contain at the very least two columns and at least six cells of information: two columns and three rows, or three columns and two rows. (Please note: the left-most column, called the “stub,” does not count as a column for this purpose.)
- The notes to your table should be extensive enough so that the reader does not have to look back at the text to understand what is being presented. Don't worry about repeating yourself in the text and the notes – this will often be necessary so the reader can understand your table without looking back at the text. You should present enough information in total so that a researcher could replicate your results. For very detailed projects, this may require a data appendix.

Writing about numbers

- Economics writing also involves numbers.
- Establish the context. It does no good to report that one million teenagers dropped out of high school in 2006. How does that number compare with numbers in other years? How does it compare to the total population of high school students? What other contexts might be needed to fully understand the number?
- Report and interpret. When you write about your findings, you should do more than just report numbers. You should also interpret the numbers. What do they mean with respect to your thesis or research question?
- Use magnitudes that make sense or are easy to comprehend. The U.S. national debt is over twelve trillion dollars. In most contexts, that number is too large for anyone to comprehend. But by putting it in per-capita terms—almost forty thousand dollars a person—the number may be better understood.
- Specify the direction and magnitude of an association. Suppose you find that education is associated with voting. Yes, but in what direction? Are people more likely to vote as their education goes up? Or the opposite? Make sure you specify the direction of any association you report. Similarly, specify the magnitude of the association. By how much does the likelihood of voting increase (or decrease) as education increases by a certain amount?
- To sum up the advice about writing about numbers, keep in mind that numbers cannot speak for themselves. A statement such as “The average American earned \$38,500 in 2007” does not mean much at all on its own. Numbers must be put in context and interpreted and expressed in the proper units and magnitudes.

Examples

- Make sure to support your statements with examples.
- Examples are important in your academic writing for proving your statements or providing better understanding to the reader.
- You can provide statistics, quotations or narratives as examples.
- If you use examples from published sources or a corpus, make sure you provide a clear reference to the source that will be discussed further.
- Beware of generalizations.
- Generalizations can create inaccuracies. Use of the words “always”, “all”, “every”, “everyone”, “many”, “never”, “nobody”, “none” can create inaccurate statements, and even factual errors. When you make a general statement, make sure it’s true in EVERY case.