SEMINAR 1 Presenting (online) Reader-focused writing

Vallwor

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Adrian Wallwork

English for Presentations at International Conferences

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Adrian Wallwork

English for Writing Research Papers

Second Edition

Deringer

Deringer





SPRINGER NATURE



Me and you



True or False?

I know exactly why I am doing my research, why I love it, and how it will benefit not just the scientific community, but society in general.

If I write a paper and it is published, people will read it.

Google Translate makes fewer mistakes in translating than me.

I tend to write too much.

Using synonyms and pronouns is dangerous.

Bad grammar is worse than a series of complex sentences.

OK if the reader has to make some effort to understand the text. Little to learn from TED.

Fun is not part of a professional presentation.

Don't tell readers/audience about your limitations.

Thinking about the reader (of papers) and the audience (at a conference), and making reading and listening as easy as possible for them, is probably more important than anything else. I know exactly why I am doing my research, why I love it, and how it will benefit not just the scientific community, but society in general. **TRUE ('don't know' is NOT an acceptable answer)**

If I write a paper and it is published, people will read it. FALSE Google Translate makes fewer mistakes in translating than me. **TRUE** I tend to write too much. **TRUE** Using synonyms and pronouns is dangerous. **TRUE** Bad grammar is worse than a series of complex sentences. FALSE OK if the reader has to make some effort to understand the text. FALSE Little to learn from TED. FALSE Fun is not part of a professional presentation. FALSE Don't tell readers/audience about your limitations. FALSE

Making reading and listening as easy as possible for readers/audience, is more important than anything else. **TRUE**



Getting to know each other

Ex. 50

First introduce yourselves to each other – one by one.
 For a few minutes, think about the points in orange below.

3) Explain to your group the answer to at least ONE of the points.

- why you chose your specific research

- why this research is important to you and why it makes you HAPPY

- why it is important to tell other people about your research

- what would happen if no one did your research
- what would happen if no one read about your research



Discuss THREE reasons why your papers need to be written in simply and clearly.







Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in the National Comorbidity Survey

Ronald C. Kessler, PhD; Amanda Sonnega, PhD; Evelyn Bromet, PhD; Michael Hughes, PhD; Christopher B. Nelson, MPH, PhD

Background: Data were obtained on the general Sullation epidemiology of *DSM-III-R* posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including information on estimated lifetime prevalence, the kinds of traumas most often associated with PTSD, sociodemographic correlates, the comorbidity of PTSD with other lifetime psychiatric disorders, and the duration of an index episode.

Methods: Modified versions of the DSM-III-R PTSD module from the Diagnostic Interview Schedule and of the Composite International Diagnostic Interview were administered to a representative national sample of 5877 persons aged 15 to 54 years in the part II subsample of the National Comorbidity Survey.

Results: The estimated lifetime prevalence of PTSD is 7.8%. Prevalence is elevated among women and the

as octated both PTSD are combat exposure and witnesing among neurand rate and sexual molestation among worked. Postframmatic stress disorder is strongly comorbid with other latetime DSM-III-R disorders. Survival analysis shows that more than one third of people with an index episode of PTSD fail to recover even after many years.

Conclusions: Posttraumatic stress disorder is more prevalent than previously believed, and is often persistent. Progress in estimating age-at-onset distributions, cohort effects, and the conditional probabilities of PTSD from different types of trauma will require future epidemiologic studies to assess PTSD for all lifetime traumas rather than for only a small number of retrospectively reported "most serious" traumas.

Key skill is RESPECT and **EMPATHY:** their point of view not yours



Writing and speaking clearly – <u>generally</u> with short sentences



Layout that is easy to see, read and understand



Concrete concepts with lots of clear examples

Minimum number of words, pages, slides, info



Why make it difficult to read when you could make it easy? The easier your paper is to read the more people will: understand it, remember it, and cite it in their own papers.

Has anyone ever received this letter from the editor?



Dear Dr X

We thank you for sending us your manuscript.

While the topic is undoubtedly interesting, we feel that the paper is written too clearly and that readers will understand each sentence and paragraph very easily.

For this reason, we have no other choice but to reject your paper.

An email: a quick example of lack of empathy.

Exercise 1 page 5

Where is the lack of empathy?

Good morning

My name is Pinco Pallino and I am enrolled in the first year of the PhD course in Terrestrial Vehicles and Systems of Transport. Since it is only now that I have made my online enrolment to the course "Scientific English", I am not in the list of students of either the first course or the second course of lessons. I would like to know whether, despite my delay in enrolling, I can still participate in the course: if possible I would like to follow the first session. However, for reasons that unfortunately I cannot change, which are related to my activity as a PhD student, I will not be in Pisa in concomitance with the first lesson of the first session.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Dr Pinco Pallino

PS My girlfriend wants to do an online English course, please could you send me recommendations ... and also for a good English grammar (preferably with Italian explanations).

- Very long why should I dedicate so much time?
- Written from his point of view not mine
- What does he want?
- Ridiculous requests (girlfriend, grammar)

An empathetic email, i.e. a reader-oriented email

Dear Prof. Wallwork

Am I too late to take part in the first session of your Scientific English course?

Thanks in advance.

Pinco Pallino

However if the person you are writing to expects a longer and more formal email, then ...

IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON # 1

Being POLITE (*educato*) and FORMAL does not automatically equal being reader-oriented, respectful, or empathetic.

However – to some extent it depends on the culture of the person you are writing to. Dear Prof. Wallwork

Am I too late to take part in the first session of your Scientific English course?

Thanks in advance. Pinco Pallino

1 Think about what your reader really needs to know - don't include information that is of interest to **you** but no interest to **him / her**.

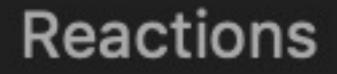
2 The reader is in a hurry (è di fretta) – help them find what they want quickly and easily.

3 Write less and you make fewer mistakes.

How many of you have had a paper published in an international journal?







How does the publishing process work?

You finish writing your manuscript.

You upload it on the journal's website, and receive a manuscript number.

The editor sends your ms to 2-3 reviewers who write an assessment.

You receive acceptance 'subject to revisions'.

You modify your ms and respond to the referees' report. You pray it will be accepted.

Imagine you upload your paper but receive no ack from the editor. You email him/her twice .. And still nothing.

You finish writing your manuscript.

You upload it on the journal's website, and receive a manuscript number.

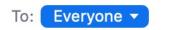


Subject line: Dear Blah blah blah Best regards





When I have terminated the Breakout room, please paste your email into the 'chat'. Post it to 'everyone'.



Type message here...

Typical example. What is the problem in terms of content? NB the English is not perfect.

Subject line: Paper submission- reply urgently!!

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is XX and I submitted my paper to you several months ago and I am still waiting for your judge.

This is the third email I write to know if my paper was admitted or not. Please answer me in any case.

Best regards

What are you trying to achieve?

- 1) Have your paper published?
- 2) Make the editor really really angry?

3) Offend the editor and ruin your chances of having your paper published?

Are you doing the editor a favor by sending him/her your paper? a) yes b) no c) don't know





IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON # 2

The other person (e.g an editor who has not replied to your email) is not **by default** an idiot.



How does this email show empathy?

Subject line: Manuscript 1453

Dear Helena Smith // Dear Dr Smith // Dear Editor

I was wondering if you had received my email sent *date* (see below) regarding the submission of my manuscript (1453).

Please could you let me know whether the review process has begun and when I can expect the reviewers' comments..

Attached is a copy of the paper for your convenience.

Best regards

EIGHT EXAMPLES OF EMPATHY

Subject line: 1) Manuscript 1453

Dear 2) Helena Smith

I was wondering (3) if you had received my email sent *date* (4) **see below**) regarding the submission of my manuscript (1453).

5) Please can you let me know if the review process has begun and when I can expect the reviewers' comments.

Attached is a 6) copy of the paper for your convenience.

Best regards

- 7) Minimum number of words
- 8) Clear layout



BAD! Minimal effort by writer, maximum effort for reader.

Human memory can be subdivided into **sensory memory** (by which we see a film as a continuous scene rather than a series of still images), **short-term memory** (as used for example when you mentally calculate 3 x 7 x 4), **declarative-learning long-term memory** (i.e. conscious recollection, for example of last week's English class), and **procedural-learning long-term memory** (of *how* to do something, for example play the piano).

GOOD! Minimal effort for READER, more effort by writer.

There are **four main types** of human memory. **First**, sensory memory, for example we see a film as a continuous scene rather than a series of still images. **Second**, short-term memory, this helps for example when you mentally calculate 3 x 7 x 4. **Third**, we have declarativelearning long-term memory. This means conscious recollection, for example, of last week's English class. **Finally**, procedural-learning long-term memory reminds us *how* to do something, for example play the piano.

EMPATHY in presenting info in simplest and most logical way possible

The clearest way is not necessarily always the shortest / most concise way

Human memory can be subdivided into sensory memory (by which we see a film as a continuous scene rather than a series of still images), short-term memory (as used for example when you mentally calculate 3 x 7 x 4), declarative-learning long-term memory (i.e. conscious recollection, for example of last week's English class), and procedural-learning longterm memory (of how to do something, for example play the piano).

67 words

There are **four main types** of human memory. First, sensory memory, for example we see a film as a continuous scene rather than a series of still images. Second, short-term memory, this helps for example when you mentally calculate 3 x 7 x 4. Third, we have declarativelearning long-term memory. This means conscious recollection, for example, of last week's English class. Finally, procedural-learning long-term memory reminds us how to do something, for example play the piano. 76 words

IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON # 3

By helping the

- readers of your paper
- recipients of your emails
- audience of your presentation

you are also helping yourself.

Giving Presentations Online ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Adrian Wallwork

English for Presentations at International Conferences



In this course I am teaching how to present at a conference ...

NOT how to present in front of your professors.





What are the pros and cons of **GIVING** and WATCHING online presentations?





Cons

technical difficulties and wasting time

you can't see your audience as a whole - detached from reality (talking to yourself) TELL AUDIENCE TO TURN VIDEO ON you can't see if they are nodding, following, losing attention

TELL AUDIENCE TO TURN VIDEO ON

holding audience attention is more difficult as you lose the dynamism of your body movements

harder for the audience to be involved in what you are saying

on a laptop your camera is looking up at your face

Pros

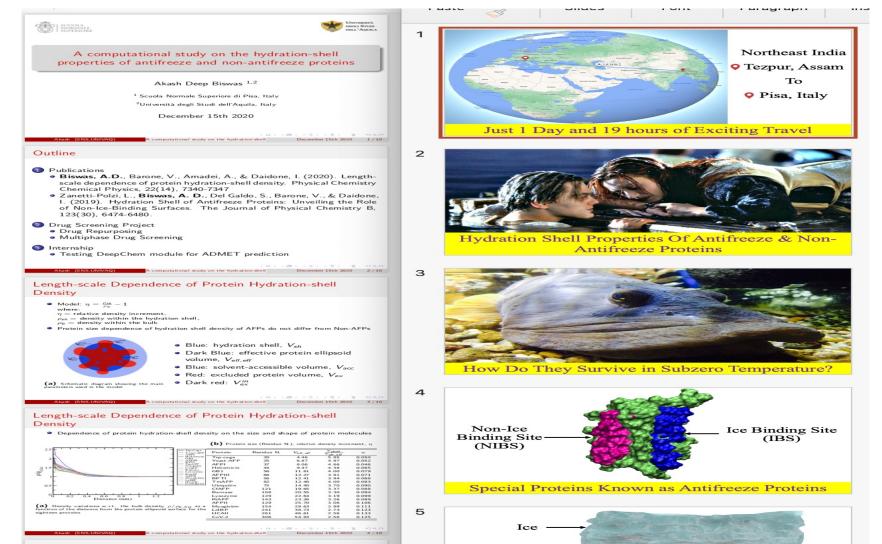


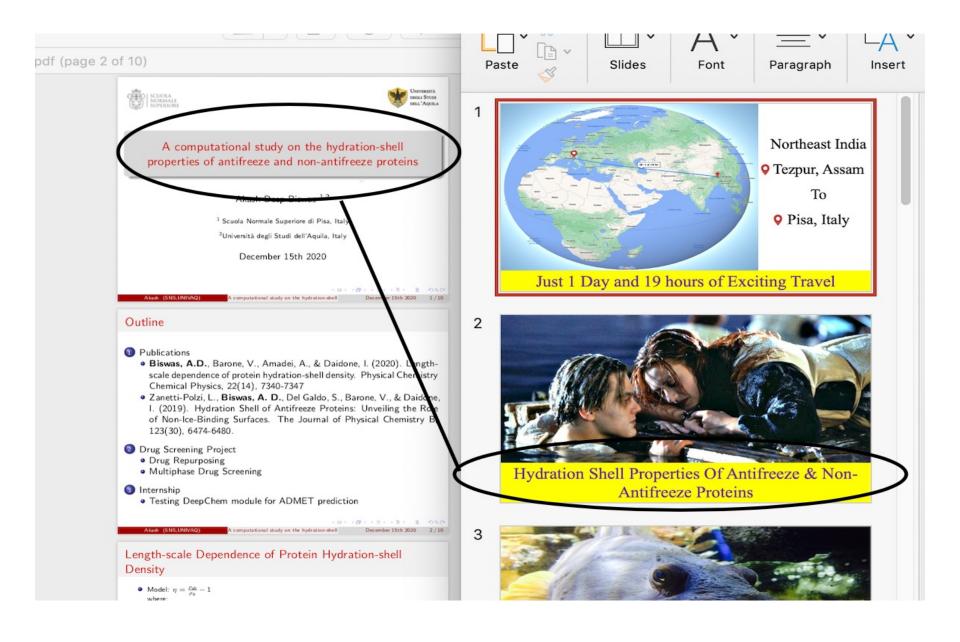
As a participant, you can get out of bed 5 minutes before the start

Two versions of you presentation

READERS

WATCHERS





What language is this? Does it seem like a simple or complex language?

Second Person Pronoun

Singular Plural Case Dual Nominative bū git gē Accusative incit, inc þēc,þē ēowic, ēow Genitive bīn ēower incer **Dative** bē ēow inc

- and a state of the state o

scriptio continua in the beginning ... no space and no punctuation



The first written languages

FEATURES

- No spaces between words
- No punctuation
- No standard word order

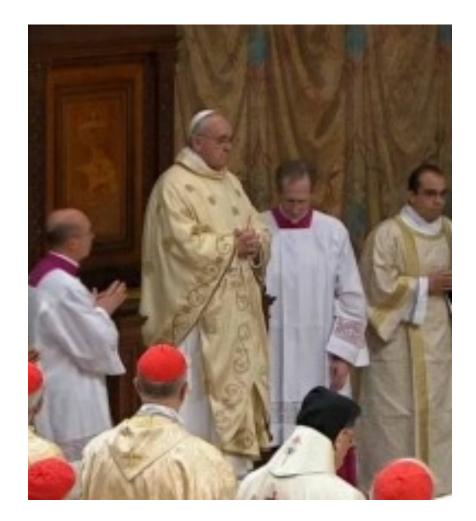
RESULTS

- Very hard to read
- Required intense
 concentation
- Required a lot of time

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So who took advantage of the difficulties of reading and writing?

- Clerics and nobility
- Written texts = ideas + knowledge = **power**.
- Best way to retain knowledge and power: write in a complicated way.



Complex writing created power distance, unwarranted respect, and non-transparency.

Knowledge deliberately kept from the people.

Knowledge only available through an intermediary: i.e. the church.



Newspapers were hard to read + expensive. Kept knowledge from the masses.





A reason to design the second



Emails Tie Top Christie Aide to Lane Closings, Despite Denials

By KATE ZERNIKE 13 minutes ago A series of emails shows that a deputy chief of staff to Gov. Christ christie of New Jersey gave a signal to close lanes on the George Washington Bridge, in what appeared to be political retribution.

#18 Comments

Despite Fears Over Al Qaeda, Saudis Back Syrian Rebels

By ROBERT F. WORTH

The Saudis are bent on ousting Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, and his patron, Iran. But their only real means of fighting them is through a proxy war using fighters over whom they have almost no control.

114 Comments

· Qaeda Leader in Syria



DANGER ZONE Mount Sinabung sent smoke over western

Indonesia Wednesday. Local reports said tens of thousands of people had been displaced by the volcano's eruptions.

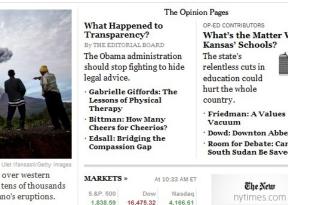
To Our Readers

The New York Times introduces today a new design for NYTimes.com, its first since April 2006. The images are larger, the layout and typography are cleaner and the site navigation is better. More enhancements will follow. • About the New Design »

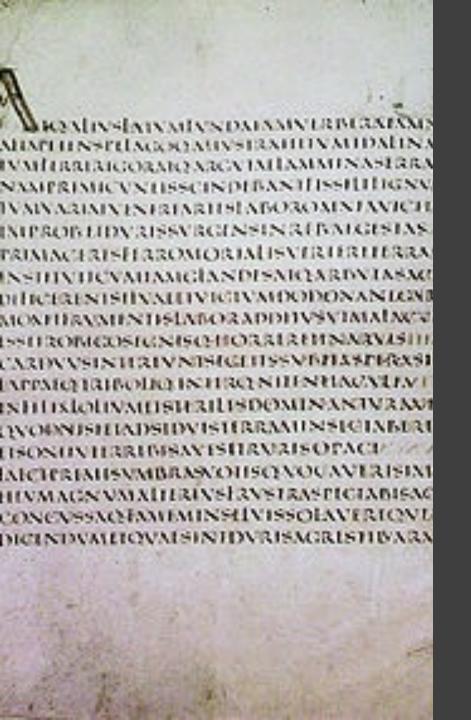
U.S. Criticizes Zero-Tolerance Policies in Schools By MOTOKO RICH 56 minutes ago

The Obama administration on Wednesday recommended that public schools emphasize positive behavior.

Pregnant, and Forced to Stay on Life Support



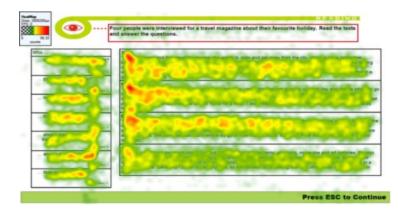
+0.71 -55.62 +13.43 +0.04% -0.34% +0.32% Get Quotes | My Portfolios > GET HOME DELIVERY AND THE DIGITAL COMES FREE LESS THAN C5 PER WEEK FOR THE FIRST 8 WEEKS SUBSCRIBE NOW > International Xew Ploth Elines NY Times style today: written so that a 17-year old can understand



In ancient times, medieval times, and probably until the advent of the internet, people **started** reading from the **top of page 1** and read **each word and sentence horizontally** across the page.

They made a **lot of effort** while reading. They felt it was **their responsibility** to understand.

Intense concentration



Scanning / Browsing



Today you **CANNOT CONTROL**:

- Where readers will start or finish
- How they move their eyes horizontally or vertically
- Whether they will read everything that you have written
- Whether they will read chronologically



The point is **not** complexity and 'elegance'. The point is **not** good vs bad. The point is: is this text **effective** or not?



REFEREES TO ACCEPT YOUR PAPER

READERS TO

UNDERSTAND YOU

YOUR CV TO BE READ AND UNDERSTOOD (SO THAT YOU GET A JOB)

PEOPLE TO REPLY TO

YOUR EMAILS

YOUR RESEARCH **PROPOSALS TO BE** FUNDED

" " **USE SHORT SIMPLE** SENTENCES AND SHORT PARAGRAPHS. NOT JUST IN ENGLISH **BUT IN YOUR OWN**

LANGUAGE TOO.



There is a direct correlation between poor "writing skills" and lower chances of publication.

List five things that you think represent 'poor English' and/or 'poor writing skills' that would cause a research paper, project, or CV to be rejected.





NATIVE SPEAKING reviewers and readers do NOT want

Unnecessary effort (long sentences, poor organization, <u>redundancy</u>)

Findings that are not highlighted

Ambiguity / Unclear sentences

Contribution / Innovation not clear

Spelling mistakes

Unneccesary effort (long sentences, poor organization, redundancy)

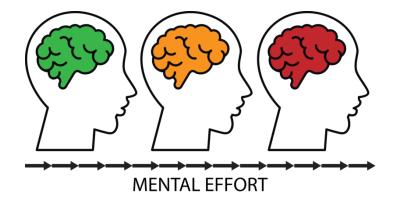
Findings that are not highlighted

Ambiguity / Unclear sentences

Contribution / Innovation not clear

All these show lack of empathy for the reader. The reader is forced to try to make sense of poorly written work Papers and projects are NOT normally rejected for a few grammar or vocabulary mistakes. But CVs are rejected even for just one mistake.

Projects and papers ARE rejected because they require too much mental effort by the reviewers.



Moral of the story so far:

Part 1

In your papers, emails, presentation slides, and applications for jobs always think about the **audience**. What do **they** want to:

- know?
- read first?
- hear first?

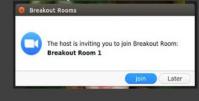
Think in terms of *them them them* NOT *me me me* How can I make it easier for **them**?



Moral of the story so far: Part 2 Question everything

- Question what you've always done.
- Question what you see others doing.
- Question what your profs do.
- Question what I tell / teach you.

Breakout



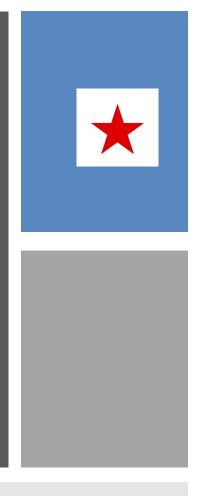






We all have different perspectives

Trend today in English: seeing things from the audience's point of view rather than your point of view (i.e. empathy).



••••

List the top THREE things you learned today.

Then discuss them with your group.

.

....

Paste your answers into the chat for me to see.

