

***From Research to Writing: A
Comprehensive Guide for
Master's Students***

University of Doha for Science and Technology

Introduction: The Leap to Graduate-Level Writing

Self-Reflection: Take a few minutes to individually write down:

1. One thing you find particularly challenging or difficult about academic research.
 2. One thing you find particularly challenging or difficult about academic writing.
- Share your reflections with a partner or in a small group, discussing commonalities and differences in your experiences.

Key Differences Between Undergraduate and Graduate Writing

Activity: What Makes Master's and Undergraduate Writing Different?

- Objective: To identify and discuss the distinctions between undergraduate and graduate-level academic writing.
- Instructions: Discuss the following questions:
 1. What were your expectations for academic writing as an undergraduate student?
 2. What do you perceive as the main differences in research and writing expectations at the master's level?
 3. How does the role of academic integrity and plagiarism evolve from undergraduate to graduate studies?

Feature	Undergraduate Writing	Graduate Writing
Purpose	Demonstrate understanding of course material.	Contribute to an ongoing scholarly conversation.
Audience	Primarily the course instructor.	A specialized audience of scholars in your field.
Voice	Often descriptive and summative.	Analytical, critical, and authoritative.

Sources	Reliance on a limited number of assigned texts.	Extensive engagement with a wide range of scholarly literature.
Argument	Often presents a clear, well-proportioned argument.	Develops a nuanced, original argument situated within existing scholarship.

Language Box: Stating Aims and Purpose

To show reasons: Because (of) / as / since / Given (the fact) that... / In the light of (the fact) that...
/ As is shown / implied / suggested by... / Due to / owing to

To show consequences and conclusions: If... then... / Therefore / so / consequently / As a result / consequence / Hence / Thus (very formal; more common in sciences) / For this (these) reason(s), we can say that... / This leads / points to / This suggests / implies / indicates / shows / proves that... / From this we can see / conclude / deduce that... / It can be assumed / inferred / argued that...

How to Apply This in Practice:

- Write as a participant in your field, not a student completing a task.
- Frame your arguments around what scholars are debating and position your own view clearly.
- Use disciplinary conventions (terminology, citation style, and structure) expected at graduate level.

The core of graduate-level academic writing rests on three pillars: Research, Logical Argumentation, and a Formal, Precise Writing Style. This guide will detail the essential components of scholarly work, focusing on the standards expected in higher education.

Kindly note that these guidelines may differ from your instructors' instructions. Only use it as a supplement to your thesis guidelines.

1. Choosing and Refining a Research Topic

How to Choose Your Topic:

1. Identify your broad area of interest: Consider themes from your coursework, current global issues, or topics you are passionate about.
2. Conduct preliminary research: Read recent journal articles to understand what has already been studied and where the gaps are.
3. Define a research problem: Ask yourself: what issue, debate, or question needs further exploration?
4. Refine your scope:

Too broad: "Public health in developing countries."

Refined: "Assessing the impact of community health worker programs on maternal mortality rates in rural Ethiopia."

5. Check feasibility: Ensure data, resources, and ethical approval are accessible within your time and budget.
6. Formulate research questions:

Good research questions are specific, measurable, researchable, and relevant.

Example: *How do local NGOs influence the social integration of refugees in developing countries through digital campaigns?*

7. Develop working hypotheses or objectives: Identify what you aim to test, explore, or explain.

Tip: Keep a research journal where you document evolving ideas, key readings, and potential questions.

Activity: Concept Mapping and Question Refinement

- Objective: To practice narrowing down a broad topic into specific, researchable questions.
- Instructions:

1. **Concept Mapping:** Choose a broad topic of interest. Spend 5-7 minutes brainstorming related concepts, keywords, and potential sub-topics. Create a visual concept map.
2. **Breaking Down the Question:** Select one broad research question. Practice breaking down every word in the question to ensure a clear understanding of its scope and potential interpretations. Discuss how a single word change can alter the meaning and direction of the research.
3. **Drafting Research Questions:** Draft four distinct research questions around your chosen topic, moving from broad to increasingly narrow and focused.

Example of Breaking Down a Question:

Broad Question: "What are the effects of social media on mental health?"

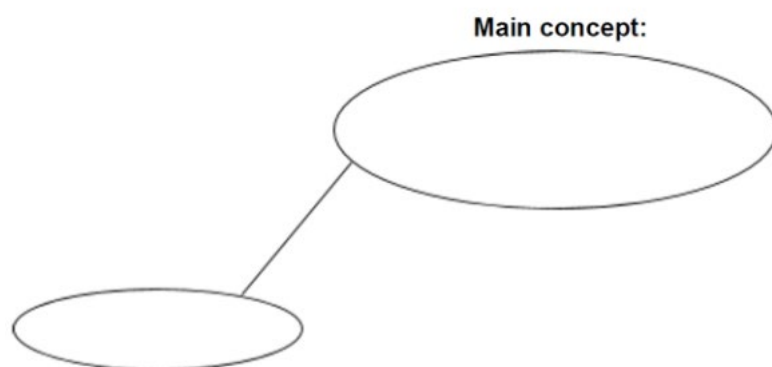
Breaking it down:

"Effects": What kind of effects? Positive, negative, short-term, long-term?

"Social media": Which platforms? For whom? General use or specific features?

"Mental health": Which aspects? Anxiety, depression, self-esteem, and cognitive function?

Refined Question Example: "How does the daily use of Instagram by adolescent girls (aged 13-18) in urban areas impact their self-esteem over a six-month period?"



2. The Literature Review: Engaging with Scholarship

Language Box: Acknowledging Sources

When integrating sources into your writing, it's crucial to acknowledge them correctly and effectively. This not only gives credit to the original authors but also strengthens your own arguments by demonstrating your engagement with existing scholarship. Consider using phrases like:

Introducing a source: According to [Author, Year]..., [Author, Year] argues that..., [Author, Year] states that...

Referring to findings: [Author, Year] found that..., The study by [Author, Year] revealed that...

Summarizing/Paraphrasing: [Author, Year] summarizes/contends/suggests that...

Direct Quotation: As [Author, Year] notes, "... " (p. X).

Synthesizing: Building on [Author, Year]'s work, it can be argued that.

Remember to vary your sentence structure and integrate sources smoothly into your prose, rather than simply dropping quotations. Focus on explaining the relevance of the source to your argument.

"gap" in the existing research that your own work will address.

How to Write a Strong Literature Review:

1. **Search strategically:** Use databases like JSTOR, Scopus, or Google Scholar. Combine keywords using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT).
Example: "refugees AND social media AND Lebanon."
2. **Evaluate your sources:** Prioritize peer-reviewed, recent, and credible research. Avoid over-reliance on news articles or blogs.
3. **Take systematic notes:** Use a literature matrix to track authors, arguments, methods, and findings.

4. **Organize by theme, not author:** Group sources around debates or theoretical perspectives (e.g., “digital participation,” “identity formation,” “policy gaps”).
5. **Compare and contrast:** Identify where scholars agree or disagree. Highlight theoretical, methodological, or empirical gaps.
6. **Identify your contribution:** End your review by clearly stating how your study fills a gap or extends prior research.

Example: “While most studies focus on male refugees, this research examines the underexplored experiences of young refugee women.”

Step	Best Practice	Common Mistake to Avoid
Search	Use strategic search techniques (e.g., Boolean operators) in academic databases like JSTOR or Scopus.	Over-reliance on Google Scholar or non-peer-reviewed sources.
Evaluation	Prioritize peer-reviewed, recent, and highly cited research.	Summarizing articles individually without connecting ideas.
Organization	Group sources by theme, theory, or argument—not by author or date.	Failing to identify relationships (agreement/disagreement) between sources.
Contribution	Clearly explain how your study fills a gap or extends prior research.	Not articulating the unique value or gap your study addresses.

Language Example:

- “Few studies have explored...”
- “Building on X’s conceptualization of digital agency...”
- “Contrary to Y’s findings, this study suggests...”

Common Mistake:

Avoid summarizing articles one by one — focus on synthesizing ideas across multiple studies.

What are Boolean Operators?

Boolean operators are commands that most databases use to connect or eliminate keywords in a search. The three primary Boolean operators are AND, OR and NOT. They must be capitalized in a search to be recognized as a command.

Why use Boolean operators?

- To focus on a search, particularly when your topic contains multiple search terms.
- Connect with various pieces of information to find exactly what you're looking for.

Operator	Function	Use Example	Effect
AND	Narrows search – includes all specified terms	nanotechnology AND cancer	Fewer, more specific results
OR	Broadens search – includes any listed terms	robotics OR "automation systems"	More results, covers synonyms
NOT	Excludes unwanted terms	machine learning NOT finance	Removes irrelevant results
" " (Quotes)	Finds exact phrases	"artificial intelligence"	Precise matches only
() (Parentheses)	Groups terms and controls search order	(vaccines OR immunization) AND COVID-19	Organizes complex searches
* (Truncation)	Finds multiple word variants	genet* → genetics, geneticist, genetically	Expands coverage
? (Wildcard)	Replaces one character in a word	wom?n → woman, women	Handles spelling variations

Activity: Literature Search and Thematic Mapping

- Objective: Practice searching for scholarly sources, classifying them into themes, and creating a visual literature map.
- Instructions:

1. **Source Search:** Search for five scholarly sources related to your refined research question. Use a variety of academic databases.
2. **Thematic Classification:** In your group, discuss the sources you found. As a group, classify the sources into different themes or paragraphs. Discuss the rationale for your classification (e.g., by argument, theory, methodology, or school of thought).
3. **Literature Map:** Sketch a literature map that visually represents the relationships between the themes and sources you have identified.

Literature Review Matrix Template

[illegible]

3. Research Design and Methodology

Language Box: Discussing Methods and Limitations

When describing your research design and methodology, precision and clarity are paramount. You need to clearly articulate what you did, how you did it, and why you made those choices. It's also crucial to acknowledge the limitations of your study.

Describing Methods:

"The study employed a [qualitative/quantitative/mixed-methods] approach..."

"Data was collected through [surveys/interviews/experiments/content analysis]..." "Participants were selected using a [sampling method]..."

"Statistical analysis was performed using [software/tests]..

Acknowledging Limitations:

"A limitation of this study is the [small sample size/specific demographic/short duration]..."

"The findings may not be generalizable to [broader population/other contexts] due to..."

"Future research could address these limitations by..."

"It is important to note that the study was constrained by [resource limitations/time constraints]..."

Problem Statement: Defining the Research Gap

The Problem Statement is the most critical element of a research proposal or thesis introduction, as it clearly defines the central research objectives and questions. A strong Problem Statement must demonstrate the relevance and significance of the work to the field of study.

Requirement	Description
Clear Formulation	The central research objective and questions must be specific, well-articulated, and directly address a gap in the existing literature.
Scientific Importance	Highlight the theoretical or conceptual contribution your research makes to the existing body of knowledge.
Practical Importance	Explain the real-world implications, applications, or benefits of addressing the problem.
Evidence-Based	Support the existence of the problem with credible citations, statistics, or references to prior research.

Writing your Methodology

Requirement	Description
Alignment	The chosen methods (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed) must be the most appropriate to answer the central research questions.
Transparency	Provide a clear, step-by-step description of all procedures, data collection, and data analysis techniques used.
Justification	Explain and support methodological choices with relevant literature (e.g., why a survey was chosen over interviews).
Rigor	Ensure the design is robust, minimizing bias and maximizing validity and trustworthiness of results. Address ethical considerations.

Quantitative Research

Purpose: To test objective theories by examining the relationship among variables.

Data Collection: Variables are measured using instruments, and the data collected is numerical.

Analysis: Statistical analysis is used to test hypotheses and draw conclusions.

Focus: Emphasizes generalizability, prediction, and causal relationships.

Approach: Typically employs deductive reasoning, moving from general theories to specific observations.

Examples of Strategies: Surveys and experiments.

2. Qualitative Research

Purpose: To explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

Data Collection: Data is collected in the participants' natural setting, often through open-ended questions, interviews, and observations. The data is non-numerical (words, images).

Analysis: Involves interpreting the data to identify themes, patterns, and categories.

Focus: Emphasizes in-depth understanding, context, and the subjective experiences of participants.

Approach: Typically employs inductive reasoning, moving from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories.

Examples of Strategies: Ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, and narrative research.

3. Mixed Methods Research

Purpose: To integrate both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a more complete understanding of a research problem.

Data Collection: Involves collecting and analyzing both numerical (quantitative) and non-numerical (qualitative) data.

Analysis: The two forms of data are mixed, integrated, or connected in various ways, such as sequentially or concurrently.

Focus: Seeks to leverage the strengths of both quantitative (generalizability) and qualitative (in-depth context) research.

Approach: A pragmatic approach that uses the best methods to answer the research question.

Examples of Strategies: Sequential designs (e.g., collecting qualitative data first to inform a quantitative survey) and concurrent designs (e.g., collecting both types of data simultaneously).

Activity: Outlining a Research Design

Objective: Develop a rough research design for a given research question, considering methods, samples, and limitations.

Instructions:

1. **Research Question Selection:** Select one of the refined research questions developed in the previous activity.
2. **Methodology Discussion:** Discuss the different types of research methodologies (qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods). Decide which approach is most suitable for your chosen research question and why.
3. **Design Outline:** Outline a rough research design for your question. This should include:
 - **Unit of Analysis:** What or who will you be studying?
 - **Data Collection Methods:** How will you gather your data? (e.g., surveys, interviews, experiments, document analysis)
 - **Sampling Strategy:** Who will be your participants or what will be your data sources?

- Data Analysis Techniques: How will you make sense of your collected data?
- Potential Limitations: What are the weaknesses or constraints of your proposed design?
- Ethical Considerations: What ethical issues might arise, and how will you address them?

Outcome: You should present the proposed research design, justify choices, and discuss potential challenges.

Data Source	Type (Primary/Secondary)	Reliability/Relevance	Notes
1			
2			
3			

4. Academic Writing Foundations: Building a Strong Argument

Language Box: Building and Refuting Arguments

Academic writing is fundamentally about constructing and defending arguments. This involves not only presenting your own case but also engaging with and responding to opposing viewpoints. Mastering the language of argumentation is key to persuasive writing.

To show reasons (supporting your argument): * Because (of) / as / since / * Given (the fact) that...
* In the light of (the fact) that... * As is shown / implied / suggested by... * Due to / owing to

To show consequences and conclusions (from your argument): * If... then... * Therefore / so / consequently * As a result / consequence * Hence / Thus (very formal; more common in sciences) * For this (these) reason(s), we can say that... * This leads / points to * This suggests / implies / indicates / shows / proves that... * From this we can see / conclude / deduce that...
* It can be assumed / inferred / argued that...

Anticipating Counter-Arguments: * Opponents/Critics of this position (may, might, etc.) argue that... * Another argument against X is ... * It may be objected that.. * One possible objection is that... * Several questions come to mind: ... * One might ask/wonder whether... * Certain objections must, of course, be considered: ... * Smythson (1995) has recently argued against...on the ground(s) that... * It is true that...

Refuting Counter-Arguments: * But.. * On the other hand... * However,... * Nevertheless... * This is merely... * While this may be true in cases where..., it does not apply to... * While this is valid for part-time staff, it surely does not apply in the case of full-time workers

Activity: Sentence Transformation and Analytical Writing Practice (Group Activity)

Objective: To practice rewriting sentences for clarity and conciseness, and to distinguish between descriptive and analytical writing.

Instructions:

1. Rewriting Bad Sentences: In small groups, rewrite the following sentences to make them clearer, more concise, and more academic in tone.

Original: "The results were kind of interesting and showed that there might be a connection between the two things we were looking at."

Original: "It is a fact that many people believe that climate change is a big problem."

2. Descriptive to Analytical: Discuss the difference between descriptive and analytical writing. Then, transform the following descriptive statement into an analytical one.

Descriptive: "The study found that 75% of participants who used the new learning app reported higher levels of engagement."

Analytical Example: "The high level of engagement (75%) reported by participants using the new learning app suggests that its interactive features and personalized feedback mechanisms are effective in fostering student motivation. This finding challenges the traditional lecture-based model by demonstrating the potential of technology to create more active and participatory learning environments."

Outcome: Each group will share their rewritten sentences and their analytical statement, explaining the changes they made and why.

5. Drafting the Paper: From Outline to submission

Language Box: Expressing Caution

Academic writing requires you to present your findings and arguments with appropriate caution, acknowledging the limitations of your research or the tentative nature of your conclusions. This is known as hedging. Using hedging language demonstrates academic rigor and avoids making overly strong or unsupported claims.

Modal verbs: must / should / may / might / could

Full verbs: appear to / seem to, suggest, point to

Adverbs: apparently / perhaps / possibly / potentially, relatively / comparatively, arguably

Nouns: possibility, potential, (on the) evidence (available)

Adjectives: possible / potential / plausible / probable / likely / not impossible, reasonable to assume

Example: *Instead of*: "The results prove that social media causes anxiety." **Consider**: "The results suggest that social media may contribute to increased anxiety among certain user groups, although further research is needed to establish a causal link."

Activity: Chapter/Section Planning and Introduction Drafting

Objective: To practice outlining a paper's structure and drafting effective introductions for different sections.

Instructions: Chapter/Section Planning: Choose a research topic. Develop a detailed chapter or section plan for a master's level paper. Consider the logical flow of arguments,

where evidence will be presented, and how each section contributes to the overall thesis.
Discuss the balance of information across sections.

Drafting Introductions: Based on your chapter/section plan, draft an introduction for one of the main chapters or sections. Focus on:

Hook: How will you grab the reader's attention?

Research Gap/Problem: Clearly state the gap in existing literature or the problem your section addresses.

Objectives: Outline the specific aims or objectives of this particular chapter/section.

Example: Introduction Structure (Short Essay/Section)

General Orientation: Broad statements on the importance of the topic, background information, reference to recent developments/previous work.

Focus on Your Paper: Content (aims/thesis), structure (what will be covered).

Example: Introduction Structure (Longer Assignment/Dissertation)

Stage 1: Orientation: General statements, background information, reference to previous studies.

Stage 2: Justification: Indicating gaps, questions/problems, and value of further discussion.

Stage 3: Focus on Your Paper: Content (aims/thesis), structure, limitations, means (method), evaluation

6. Editing and Proofreading: Polishing Your Work

Language Box: Conclusion and Summary

When writing your conclusion, it is essential to effectively summarize your findings, restate your thesis in a new light, and discuss the implications of your research. Use these phrases to guide your concluding remarks:

Restatement of Purpose: * The aim / purpose / objective of this study was to... * This study was intended / designed to... * Among the aims of this study was the (investigation) of... * Our research investigated / examined / explored whether...

Summary of Findings: * The results showed /were that... * We found that... (X) increased / decreased significantly when.. * We found that the majority of British parents are in favour of.... * The findings (do not) support the hypothesis that... * These findings are (in)consistent with previous research * The findings run contrary to the conventional view that...

Possible Explanations and Speculation: * It may be that the findings were affected / influenced by... * (X) may be due to... * It could be that... * If these results are confirmed by other studies, we may have to...

Limitations and Future Research: * We need to be cautious about these findings, because... * ... there was no control group * ... the study was based on a limited number of ... * ... the survey was conducted only among inexperienced lawyers * Future research could explore... * This study opens avenues for further investigation into...

Activity: Editing and Proofreading

Objective: To identify and correct common errors in academic writing, focusing on clarity, grammar, and consistency.

Instructions:

1. **Error Identification:** In small groups, each member will bring a short paragraph (5-7 sentences) from their own draft or a provided sample text. As a group, read each paragraph aloud and identify areas that are unclear, poorly expressed, repetitive, or illogical. Focus on grammatical errors, awkward phrasing, and lack of conciseness.
2. **Collaborative Revision:** Revise and edit each paragraph. Discuss potential improvements in:
 - Clarity:** Is the meaning unambiguous?
 - Conciseness:** Can any words or phrases be removed without losing meaning?
 - Grammar and Punctuation:** Correct any errors.
 - Academic Tone:** Ensure the language is formal and objective.
 - Flow and Cohesion:** Do sentences and ideas connect smoothly?

Example of Revision:

Original Sentence: "Although it's value may be difficult for British teaching assistants to perceive, the effects it is having on Karelian teachers and the students is definitely showing."

Revised Sentence: "Although its value may be difficult for British teaching assistants to perceive, the program's effects on Karelian teachers and students are clearly evident." (Corrections: 'it's' to 'its', 'is definitely showing' to 'are clearly evident' for conciseness and formality, 'effects...is' to 'effects...are' for subject-verb agreement).

Outcome: Write down one original and one revised paragraph, explaining the changes made and the rationale behind them.

7. The Role of AI in Graduate Research

The use of GenAI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini) must be handled with extreme caution and complete transparency. Unauthorized or undisclosed use may constitute a violation of academic integrity.

Ethical Requirement	Best Practice
Disclosure	All use of GenAI must be disclosed to the student's committee or supervisor. This is non-negotiable.
Attribution	Cite the GenAI tool used according to your discipline style guide (e.g., APA, MLA).
Responsibility	The student remains fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of all content, even if AI tools were used.
Ethical Boundaries	Use GenAI only for support tasks (e.g., brainstorming, editing, transitions), not for generating substantive content presented as original work.

Activity: Ethical AI Use in Research

Objective: To discuss the ethical implications and best practices for using AI tools in academic research and writing.

Instructions: Think about the following scenarios:

1. A student uses an AI tool to generate an entire literature review. What are the ethical concerns?
2. A student uses an AI tool to rephrase sentences to avoid plagiarism. Is this an ethical use of AI? Why or why not?
3. A student uses an AI tool to brainstorm research questions and outline their paper. What are the benefits and potential pitfalls?
4. How can universities and students establish clear guidelines for the responsible use of AI in academic work?

Outcome: Draft one ethical guideline believed to be most important for master's students using AI in their research.

8. Useful Words and Phrases for Academic Writing

Contrast and Comparison

When presenting differing viewpoints or highlighting distinctions, consider using phrases such as however, although/though/even though, whereas, in contrast, on the other hand, nevertheless/nonetheless, despite/in spite of, instead, and rather than. These terms are crucial for indicating a shift in argument or drawing a clear comparison between ideas.

Cause and Effect

To explain reasons and results, employ conjunctions and phrases like because/since/as, due to/owing to, therefore, thus, consequently, as a result, leading to, and resulting in. These expressions help establish logical connections and demonstrate the causal relationships within your analysis.

Addition and Emphasis

To add further support, evidence, or to emphasize a point, integrate words such as moreover, in addition, furthermore, also, what's more, equally important, and not only...but also. These phrases allow you to build upon previous statements and reinforce your arguments.

Examples and Clarification

When clarifying a point or providing evidence, use phrases like for example/for instance, such as, namely to illustrate, that is/i.e., and in other words. These are essential for making abstract concepts concrete and ensuring your reader fully grasps your meaning.

Time and Sequence

In descriptions of research studies, processes, or timelines, sequential markers are vital. Use first(ly), second(ly), then/next/afterwards, eventually, finally, at the same time, meanwhile, and subsequently. These terms provide a clear chronological or logical order to your narrative.

Attitude and Opinion Markers

To signal the author's opinion, stance, or evaluation, or to attribute ideas to others, utilize phrases such as it seems/it appears, it is likely/unlikely, surprisingly, importantly, unfortunately/fortunately, remarkably, critics argue/some suggest/others claim, and according to [name]. These expressions help convey nuance and academic objectivity while acknowledging different perspectives.

Counter-Argument and Refutation

Anticipating Counter-Arguments: * Opponents/Critics of this position (may, might, etc.) argue that... * Another argument against X is ... * It may be objected that.. * One possible objection is that... * Several questions come to mind: ... * One might ask/wonder whether... * Certain objections must, of course, be considered: ... *

Refuting Counter-Arguments: * But.. * On the other hand... * However,... * Nevertheless... * This is merely... * While this may be true in cases where..., it does not apply to... * While this is valid for part-time staff, it surely does not apply in the case of full-time workers

Expressing Caution

Modal verbs: must / should / may / might / could

Full verbs: appear to / seem to, suggest, point to

Adverbs: apparently / perhaps / possibly / potentially, relatively / comparatively, arguably

Nouns: possibility, potential, (on the) evidence (available)

Adjectives: possible / potential / plausible / probable / likely / not impossible, reasonable to assume

Conclusion and Summary

To signal a final point or main message, use concluding phrases like in conclusion, overall, to sum up, in summary, ultimately, in the end, and overall. These phrases effectively transition the reader to the concluding thoughts of your paper.

Contrast and Comparison

When presenting differing viewpoints or highlighting distinctions, consider using phrases such as however, although/though/even though, whereas, while, in contrast, on the other hand, nevertheless/nonetheless, despite/in spite of, instead, and rather than. These terms are crucial for indicating a shift in argument or drawing a clear comparison between ideas.

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To explain reasons and results, employ conjunctions and phrases like because/since/as, due to/owing to, therefore, thus, consequently, as a result, leading to, and resulting in. These expressions help establish logical connections and demonstrate the causal relationships within your analysis.

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Conclusion and Summary

To signal a final point or main message, use concluding phrases like in conclusion, overall, to sum up, in summary, ultimately, in the end, and on the whole. These phrases effectively transition the reader to the concluding thoughts of your paper.

9. Wrap-up and Action Plan

Successful academic writing is a process that requires planning, consistent effort, and engagement with resources. To maximize your success:

Create an Individual Timeline: Develop a realistic timeline for your research and writing process, breaking down large tasks into smaller, manageable steps.

Seek Academic Coaching: Utilize resources like academic coaching sessions to discuss your progress, address challenges, and refine your strategies. Book on **Navigate 360**

Continuous Learning: Academic writing is a skill that improves with practice and feedback. Continuously seek opportunities to refine your writing through workshops, academic coaching, peer review, and self-reflection.

Mistake	Fix It
Hedging	Swap “it seems” for strong evidence-based statements.
Descriptive Only	Ask “So what?” Connect and compare sources.
Passive Voice	Use active voice: “Researchers did...”
Vague Pronouns	Replace “it/this/which” with the specific noun.
Over-Quoting	Paraphrase most, quote only when necessary.
Informal Tone	Keep it formal and scholarly.

10. Thesis Defense

Category	What to Look For
Research Skills	Original work, good understanding of the topic, and sound methods.
Thesis Quality	Clear, well-organized, meaningful, and professional.
Presentation Skills	Communicates ideas clearly, answers questions, and defends work confidently.
Professional Engagement	Shows respect, professionalism, and maturity.

Essay Revision Checklist

The Introduction

- ☐ Have you explained the importance of the topic?
- ☐ Have you provided background information?
- ☐ Does the introduction make clear the structure of the essay?
- ☐ Is it clearly separated from other sections?
- ☐ Is it concise?

The Argument

- ☐ Have you included all the key points?
- ☐ Is your sequence of points clear and logical?
- ☐ Have you considered possible counter-arguments?
- ☐ Is the relationship between the points clear?

The Evidence

- ☐ What sort of evidence have you used? (Text, statistics, graphical data)
- ☐ Have you shown how the evidence is relevant to your argument?
- ☐ Have you clearly separated others' reported views and your own views?
- ☐ Have you evaluated the strength of the evidence?
- ☐ Do you make any claims? Are they justified?
- ☐ Have you acknowledged all your sources?
- ☐ Have you integrated direct quotations into your own text?

The Conclusion

- ☐ Does it summarize the ground covered?
- ☐ Does it explain your final position on the question?
- ☐ Does your final sentence provide a strong and concise ending to the essay?

Proof-reading

Have you carefully checked your text for errors in:

- ☐ Spelling / punctuation / word-processing
- ☐ Grammar (e.g. verb forms, article use, singular / plural nouns)
- ☐ Style (e.g. avoiding informal vocabulary and contractions)
- ☐ Bibliography and in-text citations

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