

**National Research University  
Higher School of Economics**

School of Linguistics

**Syllabus for the course *Academic writing in English***

English-taught Master's programme "Applied Social Psychology"  
(37.04.01 Psychological Sciences)

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## I. Basic methodical principles

The course is **aimed** to introduce to students the international standards of academic writing in English and develop the students' writing skills. Specific aspects addressed are: international Academia and the up-to-date mechanisms of review, the basic principles of composition, the basic principles of concept design and presentation, academic style and its features.

**The main objectives** of the course are:

- To acquaint students with basic principles in the domain of international academic publications.
- To develop students' abilities to analyze and compare different writing styles, and to identify their own strengths and weaknesses both at the level of meaning and form design.
- To develop students' abilities to present their ideas, analysis results, and to organize the scientific discussion.
- To develop students' abilities to process peer reviews, as well as to meet formal requirements to the full extent.

**Methodical novelty** of the course:

- Combination of lecture sessions (which are aimed to provide theoretical and methodological basics) with discussions, analysis of unabridged academic papers, and group work (which develop students' abilities to analyze and compare different approaches, justify their ideas, and participate in the scientific discussion) makes the course diverse and interesting for students.
- Concentrated approach to course material and studying process. Each session is devoted to a specific topic and mostly includes both a lecture and a seminar session. This type of classes' organization leads to several consequences. Foremost, students come at lecture having a background knowledge that provides in turn a base for lecture information learning. Further, there is no a time gap between lecture and seminar, that reduces time for introduction part of seminar and allows to study more in depth.
- Tasks, which increase student's responsibility for the education process. For instance, students will be empowered to choose papers relevant to their area of interest, analyze the texts from various points of view, and make practice-oriented conclusions applicable to their future writing.
- Tasks that are aimed to set a connection between course materials and students' research projects. The final part of the course is designed for independent presentations, i. e. students will be able to share the outcome of their academic analysis through providing a self-written draft paper.

**Course prerequisites and formed competencies:**

The course is designed for first year master students.

Working language of the course is English (teaching and all communications). Duration of the course is 2 modules (48 academic hours, 3 credits).

## Competencies

Competence	Code	Descriptors
Vocabulary	OK-1	Mastering formal vocabulary, connecting words and transition signals; coordinating words, subordinating words, conjunctive adverbs; openings, closings, purpose statements; time, place, distance, frequency, manner, reason, result, purpose, contrast, condition adverb clauses; Latin and English academic phrases; psychological terms; citation vocabulary for
	OK-2	
	OK-13	
	OK-14	
	ПК-3	
	ПК-4	
	ПК-5	
ПК-6		



<b>Competence</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>
	ПК-7 ПК-9 ПК-11	writing academic texts in English and passing the Academic Writing component of the IELTS English language test
<b>Grammar</b>	OK-1 OK-2 OK-13 OK-14 ПК-3 ПК-4 ПК-5 ПК-6 ПК-7 ПК-9 ПК-11	Mastering formal grammar constructions, article and tense usage in academic texts; sentence structure; punctuation (commas, semicolons, colons, quotation marks) for writing academic texts in English and passing the Academic Writing component of the IELTS English language test
<b>Socio-cultural information and skills</b>	OK-1 OK-2 OK-13 OK-14 ПК-3 ПК-4 ПК-5 ПК-6 ПК-7 ПК-9 ПК-11, ПК-41	Mastering conventions of English-language academic writing, structural, compositional, grammatical and lexical characteristics of different genres of English-language academic texts, MLA style sheet and annotated bibliography
<b>Professional psychological information and skills</b>	OK-1 OK-2 OK-13 OK-14 ПК-3 ПК-4 ПК-5 ПК-6 ПК-7 ПК-9 ПК-11, ПК-23	Learning to create and edit psychological abstracts, article critiques, research papers; using psychological corpora and dictionaries.



## II. Course contents

### Novelty of the course:

1. Scientific. Course materials combine both basic theoretical approaches and practical advice in the field.
2. In comparison with international standards. On the one hand, this course is designed in accordance with the expectations faced in the international Academia, hence it meets international standards. On the other hand, course materials have been modified and adjusted to "Applied social psychology" Master's programme needs and structure. Thus, the course provides international standards for domestic Master's programme.
3. In comparison with domestic syllabuses. This course has no full analogues due to its structure flexibly tailored to students' needs and areas of interest. On top of that, the scope of the course is not limited to paper design, but provides an insight into academic paperwork in English as well.

### Thematic plan

№	Topics	Total number of hours	In-class work	Out-of-class work
1.	General issues in Academic Writing	6	2	4
2.	Vocabulary	12	4	8
3.	Grammar and Punctuation	12	4	8
4.	References	4	2	2
5.	Abstract writing	10	4	6
6.	Article critique	16	6	10
7.	Research paper: planning, pre-writing	8	4	4
8.	Introduction	10	4	6
9.	Body of the paper: supporting facts, data presentation	18	6	12
10.	Conclusions	10	4	6
11.	Group work	24	6	18
		<b>Total: 130</b>	48	84

## III. Program contents

### Topic 1. General issues in Academic Writing

Thematic overview of the course and research area is presented as well as auditory classes' process, homework structure, and methods of assessment are explained. Students choose topics they will responsible for and form workgroups. Students' and teacher's expectations are discussed.



*Core reading:*

1. *Introduction to Academic Writing*. Third Edition (The Longman Academic Writing Series, Level 3). Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue, 2007, 2-21.

**Topic 2. Vocabulary**

Words and expressions matching the requirements of the academic style.

*Core reading:*

1. *IELTS Language Practice*. Michael Vince, Amanda French. Macmillan Education, 2011, 230-243.

**Topic 3. Grammar and Punctuation**

The section tackles the problem of selecting grammatical features in academic texts, as well as using punctuation marks.

*Core reading:*

1. *Writing Academic English*. Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue. 4-th revised edition. Pearson education, 2008, 280-290.

**Topic 4. References**

The main reference styles are considered: APA, MLA etc.

*Core reading:*

1. *Writing Academic English*. Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue. 4-th revised edition. Pearson education, 2008, 41-48, 304-305.

**Topic 5. Abstract writing**

The section considers parameters of the ultimate academic abstract.

*Core reading:*

1. *English for Writing Research Papers*. Adrian Wallwork. Springer US, 2011, 176, 182-183.

**Topic 6. Article critique**

The way ideas are presented in research papers is analyzed.

*Core reading:*

1. *Eleven Ways to Critique an Article*. Mike Metcalfe. Informal Logic Vol. 23, No.2 (2003) Teaching Supplement #8, pp. 26-37. [pdf](#)
2. *Introduction to Academic Writing*. Third Edition (The Longman Academic Writing Series, Level 3). Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue, 2007, 17-18, 39-40, 77-79, 162-164.
3. *Writing Academic English*. Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue. 4-th revised edition. Pearson education,



2008, 266-269.

### **Topic 7.** Research paper: planning, pre-writing

The section covers the basic principles of paper design.

*Core reading:*

1. *Writing Academic English*. Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue. 4-th revised edition. Pearson education, 2008, 271-272.
2. *Introduction to Academic Writing*. Third Edition (The Longman Academic Writing Series, Level 3). Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue, 2007. 25, 30, 33, 47, 84-85, 175, 187-188.

### **Topic 8.** Introduction

Introduction is an important part of the paper, as it allows the reader to understand the content. The section is dedicated to powerful introduction planning.

*Core reading:*

1. *Writing Academic English*. Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue. 4-th revised edition. Pearson education, 2008, 56-57, 59-63, 65-68, 147-148.
2. *Introduction to Academic Writing*. Third Edition (The Longman Academic Writing Series, Level 3). Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue, 2007. 147, 148, 150-151, 171.

### **Topic 9.** Body of the paper: supporting facts, data presentation

Argumentation is one of the essential elements of an academic paper. Various ways of justification are discussed in this section.

*Core reading:*

1. *Writing Academic English*. Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue. 4-th revised edition. Pearson education, 2008, 12-13, 39-54, 135, 198.
2. *Introduction to Academic Writing*. Third Edition (The Longman Academic Writing Series, Level 3). Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue, 2007. 38-34, 44-45.

### **Topic 10.** Conclusions

Concluding your paper with key ideas is crucial to make the reader understand and remember your ideas. The theoretical part of the course is finished here.

*Core reading:*

1. *Writing Academic English*. Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue. 4-th revised edition. Pearson education, 2008. 56-57, 72.
2. *Introduction to Academic Writing*. Third Edition (The Longman Academic Writing Series, Level 3). Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue, 2007. 47, 84, 147-148, 152-153, 173.



**Teaching and learning materials:  
textbooks, designed materials, Internet resources, Recommendations**

**Textbooks:**

**Required materials:**

- 1) *Writing Academic English*. Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue. 4-th revised edition. Pearson education, 2008.
- 2) *Introduction to Academic Writing*. Third Edition (The Longman Academic Writing Series, Level 3). Alice Oshima, Ann Hogue, 2007.
- 3) *English for Writing Research Papers*. Adrian Wallwork. Springer US, 2011.
- 4) *IELTS Language Practice*. Michael Vince, Amanda French. Macmillan Education, 2011.
- 5) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*

**Additional materials:**

- 1) *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*. John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak. The University of Michigan Press, Ann-Arbor, 2008.
- 2) *The Essentials of Academic Writing*. Derek Soles. Second edition. Wadsworth, 2010.

**Useful Internet resources:**

**Academic Writing resources:**

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> - Purdue University Online Writing lab (useful writing tips for academic writing, style sheets, APA and MLA formatting standards and style guides, interactive online exercises)

<http://ocw.usu.edu/English/introduction-to-writing-academic-prose/index.html> - Utah State University online free course on Academic Writing (different writing styles and genres, "offensive" writing, writing in different contexts, stages of writing, readings, MLA format and documentation, annotated bibliographies, plagiarism, thesis writing)

<http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/foreign-languages-and-literatures/21f-228-advanced-workshop-in-writing-for-social-sciences-and-architecture-els-spring-2007/lecture-notes/> - Massachusetts Institute of Technology Online Academic Writing course (academic language, word choice, grammar tips, paraphrasing, transitions, punctuation, writing definitions, writing in different genres: resumes, cover letters, summaries, proposals, abstracts, research papers)

**Online dictionaries and corpora:**

<http://dictionary.reference.com/> - a multi-dictionary site (includes Oxford, Random House, Collins and Etymology dictionaries)

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/> - Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus

<http://www.ldoceonline.com/> - Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/> - Corpus of Contemporary American (COCA)

<http://www.academicwords.info/> - COCA resource for academic writing and reading (academic vocabulary list based on 120 million words of academic texts with various search and statistics options)

<http://www.wordandphrase.info/academic/> - COCA resource for academic writing and reading (academic words and phrases list based on 120 million words of academic texts with various search and statistics options)

<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/> - British National Corpus



### Grammar and Vocabulary exercises:

<http://eolf.univ-fcomte.fr/index.php?page=academic-reading-and-writing-exercises> – Academic Reading and ESL/EFL interactive exercises

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/llc/academic-writing/> - Academic Writing exercises

<http://www.parapal-online.co.uk/eap.htm> - Academic Writing exercises

### Academic Writing IELTS preparation

[http://www.examenglish.com/IELTS/IELTS\\_writing.htm](http://www.examenglish.com/IELTS/IELTS_writing.htm) - IELTS Academic Writing Practice

<http://www.ielts-exam.net/IELTS-Writing-Samples/ielts-writing.htm> - sample IELTS Academic Writing tests

[http://www.ieltshelpnow.com/academic\\_writing\\_test\\_1.html](http://www.ieltshelpnow.com/academic_writing_test_1.html) - IELTS Academic Writing test preparation

### Instructional materials:

Guide to writing a paragraph with self-editing and peer review sheets (see Appendices).

## IV. Methods of assessment

Assessment	Forms of assessment	Parameters
Ongoing assessment	Homework (problem-solution essay, abstract) Class participation	Problem-solution essay - 500 words Abstract – 150 words
Midterm assessment	Report (article critique)	1000 words
Final assessment	Conference thesis	Representative and comprehensive thesis based on the student's research project (dissertation). The thesis must cover and justify all key aspects within the theoretical framework, in line with the principles discussed during the course. The student is to present their thesis to the group in the format of a conference talk (10 minutes). Each presentation is followed by a round of peer discussion (10 minutes).

### Formula for the final grade

The final grade consists of several parts:

- Final exam (thesis and group work) – 50%, which includes:
  - Thesis (th) – 25%



- Presentation and answers to the group's questions (pr) – 25%
- Accumulated mark (during the course process) – 50%, which includes:
  - Homeworks (hw) – 25%
  - Class participation (class) – 25%

Formula for the final grade:

$$O_{\text{final grade}} = 0.5 * (0.5 O_{\text{th}} + 0.5 O_{\text{pr}}) + 0.5 * (0.5 O_{\text{hw}} + 0.5 O_{\text{class}})$$



## Appendix 1. Paragraph-writing Guide

### TOPIC SENTENCES

A well-organized paragraph supports or develops a single controlling idea, which is expressed in a sentence called the topic sentence.

### PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

Most paragraphs in an essay have a three-part structure—introduction, body, and conclusion.

**Introduction:** the first section of a paragraph; should include the topic sentence and any other sentences at the beginning of the paragraph that give background information or provide a transition.

**Body:** follows the introduction; discusses the controlling idea, using facts, arguments, analysis, examples, and other information.

**Conclusion:** the final section; summarizes the connections between the information discussed in the body of the paragraph and the paragraph's controlling idea.

### COHERENCE

In a coherent paragraph, each sentence relates clearly to the topic sentence or controlling idea, but there is more to coherence than this. If a paragraph is coherent, each sentence flows smoothly into the next without obvious shifts or jumps. Some techniques that you can use to establish coherence in paragraphs.

**Repeat key words or phrases.** Particularly in paragraphs in which you define or identify an important idea or theory, be consistent in how you refer to it.

**Create parallel structures.** Parallel structures are created by constructing two or more phrases or sentences that have the same grammatical structure and use the same parts of speech.

**Be consistent in point of view, verb tense, and number.** If you shift from the more personal "you" to the impersonal "one," from past to present tense, or from "a man" to "they," for example, you make your paragraph less coherent.

**Use transition words or phrases between sentences and between paragraphs.** Transitional expressions emphasize the relationships between ideas, so they help readers follow your train of thought or see connections that they might otherwise miss or misunderstand.

### A LIST OF USEFUL TRANSITIONS

**Addition:** again, and, also, besides, equally important, first (second, etc.), further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, moreover, next, too

**Exemplification:** for example, for instance, in fact, specifically, that is, to illustrate

**Similarity:** also, in the same manner, likewise, similarly

**Contrast and concession:** although, and yet, at the same time, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, still, though, yet

**Conclusion:** all in all, in conclusion, in other words, in short, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to sum up

**Consequence:** accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this reason, hence, if, otherwise, since, so, then, therefore, thus



## Appendix 2. Self-editing and peer review sheet (paragraph).

### Content and Organization

1. My paragraph begins with a topic sentence that has both a topic and a controlling idea.
2. My paragraph contains specific and factual supporting sentences that explain or prove my topic sentence.
3. How many supporting sentences does the paragraph have? Most paragraphs have around six supporting sentences.
4. Unity: All sentences are on the topic.
5. My paragraph ends with an appropriate concluding sentence.
6. Coherence: My paragraph flows smoothly from beginning to end.
  - I repeat key nouns where necessary.
  - I use pronouns consistently.
  - I use transition signals (*in addition, furthermore, however, yet, on the contrary, accordingly* and others). How many?
  - My sentences are in some type of logical order.
  - I explain the necessary terms.

### Mechanics

I checked punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Punctuation:

Commas

Introducer commas (*As a result, ...*)

Coordinator commas (*It is a grave problem, yet...*)

Inserrer commas (*Autism, however, remains...*)

Tag commas (*Asperger syndrome remains a frequent diagnosis, too*)

Semicolons

Independent clause; independent clause

Independent clause; connector, independent clause

Colons

Before lists (*Depression results in the following problems:...*)

Before appositives (*Schools face a very grave problem nowadays: drug abuse*)

### Grammar and Sentence Structure and the Number of Errors

I checked my paragraph for verb tense errors.

I checked my paragraph for subject-verb agreement.

I checked my paragraph for pronoun errors.

I checked my paragraph for articles.

I checked my paragraph for the absence of contractions (*won't => will not, didn't => did not*)

I checked my paragraph for informal quantifiers (*not..any => no, not...much => little, not...many => few*)

### Vocabulary

I checked my paragraph for unsophisticated vocabulary (*small, big, good, bad*).

I checked my paragraph for informal expressions (*really, great, just, a lot of*).



I checked my paragraph for conversational phrasal verbs (*get rid of - eliminate*).

### **Peer Review Sheet**

Is the paragraph interesting? Circle what is interesting.

Do you understand everything? Circle what you do not understand.

Identify the topic sentence; circle the topic and underline the controlling idea.

How many supporting sentences are there?

What kind of supporting details are used (facts, examples, quotations, statistics)?

Is there an example?

Would you like more information about anything?

Is anything unnecessary or off-topic?