



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE

DISEI

Dipartimento di
Scienze per l'Economia
e l'Impresa



Writing an essay and presentation

... some few basic rules



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AGENDA

I. WRITING AN ESSAY

1. PAPER AND ESSAY: THE DIFFERENCE

2. BACKGROUND OF ESSAY

3. BRAINSTORM YOUR OWN IDEAS

4. PLAN YOUR ESSAY

5. WRITE YOUR ESSAY

6. BIBLIOGRAFY AND REFERENCES

AGENDA

II. PRESENTATION

1. TYPES OF PRESENTATION
2. BACKGROUND OF PRESENTATION
3. THE STRUCTURE
4. ERRORS

PAPER

- An academic paper is an article written in the context of university or college research.
- The writer often has the task to compare information from different sources. It requires research and control of sources in order to understand the specific topic and to develop an analysis.
- The information is restructured according also the viewpoint of the writer.

ESSAY

- Essays require less information and they are usually shorter in length. Some people may find them easier to write since a complete understanding of the subject matter is not needed.
- Thoughts are presented in a logical manner.
- Academic essays have to be based on specific literature. The writer evaluates what s/he reads, summarizes details, and tries to clarify critical points.
- Personal thoughts of the writer may be included.

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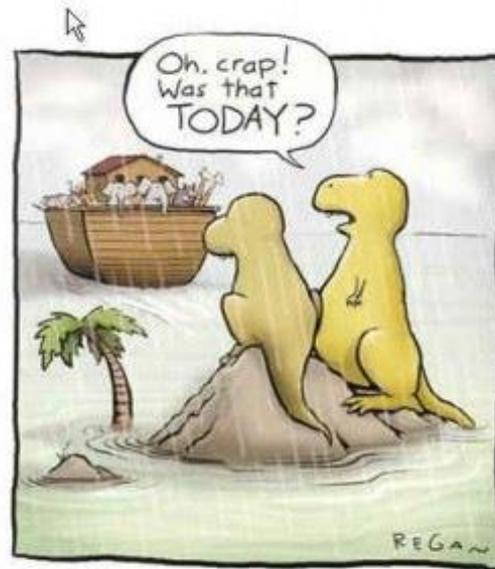
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WHY IS TO WRITE AN ESSAY SO IMPORTANT?

- When you write an essay, you develop your ***thinking in a logical way***. This also helps to communicate with your audience more easily.
- Learning how to organize an essay is an important skill for anyone who uses the written word to elaborate and diffuse his/her own theses.
- Writing a clear and powerful essay requires careful thought, outlining and attention to sentence structure.

Take your time:

- Start early. The earlier you handle on your essay's organisation, the easier it will be to write the essay. The multiple stages of an essay have to be planned carefully.
- Take detailed notes. You need to keep track of which facts come from which sources. Write down your sources in the correct citation format. This way, you don't have to go back and look them up again later.



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Do research, it is necessary

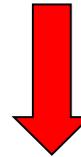
You cannot begin to organise your essay until you have some knowledge about the topic chosen. If your argument or analysis requires outside research, make sure you do it before you start to write!!

Where to find useful information?

- Teacher's reading list (compulsory and suggested)
- Go online: Wikipedia? Find papers on academic databases and search engines: e.g. Google Scholar!
- Go to the library.

Diversity of views

- Different opinions are not easy to organise.
- However, a good essay writer is able to contemplate different, even contrasting views, argument on relative validity, and alters his/her point of view accordingly.



***Never ignore facts and claims only
because they seem to disprove your
original idea or claim***

*Citations of papers with different point of view
reinforce your idea*

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Brainstorm your own ideas

- One mistake beginners often make is to try and outline their essays before they have done any brainstorming. This can leave you frustrated because you do not yet know what you want to say.



Trying a few brainstorming techniques can generate enough material for you to work with.

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How can you do brainstorming?

- **Try freewriting.** With freewriting, you do not edit or stop yourself. You just write (say, for 15 minutes at a time) about anything that comes into your head about your topic.
- **Try a mind map.** Start by writing down your central topic or idea, and then draw a box around it. Write down other ideas and connect them to see how they relate.
- **Try cubing.** With cubing, you consider your chosen topic from 6 different perspectives: 1) *Describe it*, 2) *Compare it*, 3) *Associate it*, 4) *Analyze it*, 5) *Apply it*, 6) *Argue for and against it*.

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HOW DO I HAVE TO WRITE MY ESSAY?

- You need to think about **length** here: do not write pages and pages if your teacher wants just a few paragraphs
- In your case you have to prepare an essay of 2000 words

An essay **should not:**

- ask a question;
- be written in first person ("I");
- roam off-topic;
- be combative.

An essay **should:**

- have a narrow focus;
- include both your topic and what you plan to present.

- Essentially, let the reader know **where** you are going and **why**.

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- Write authoritatively on your subject: sounding authoritative means using the right words (as opposed to just any old words), relying on solid evidence from other sources, and believing in your own ability to write.
- Do not apologize for your ideas or use heavily qualifying language.
- Revisit your thesis. Once you have done your research and brainstorming, you may find that you have a new perspective that informs your argument. Go back and change your thesis accordingly.

Essay Template

- TITLE;
- INTRODUCTION;
- BODY SECTIONS (2-3 no more, no less): strongest point, examples and explanation;
- CONCLUSIONS;
- REFERENCES;
- NOTES.

TITLE, INTRODUCTION and CONCLUSION at the last.

WHY?

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BODY SECTIONS

- Each body sections should start with a specific title, contain one controlling idea, and have sentences to support this.
- Create coherence for your essay by using transitional words that connect each sentence to the one before it (e.g. however, therefore and so on)



Shuffle things around



Cut where necessary



Save your work every time without to delete old version

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WHY SHOULD I CUT AND SHUFFLE THINGS AROUND?

THE GOAL IS TO PRESENT A TOPIC IN A LOGIC WAY!!

- Cut where necessary. It can be super painful, but sometimes, that beautiful paragraph you worked so hard on just does not belong to a new organisation of the essay. Do not get so married to your ideas. Cut what needs to be cut for logic, flow, and argument.
- Shuffle things around: Do not commit yourself to your original outline. You may find, after reverse-outlining, that some paragraphs would make better sense elsewhere in your essay.

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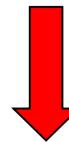
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CONCLUSION: an important part of your work

To craft an effective conclusion is hard work for everybody

- Think of the conclusion as the bow on a beautifully wrapped gift. It ties everything together and presents your essay as a polished, *cohesive whole*. Your conclusion should briefly sum up everything you talked about in your essay.
- Consider the “**So what?**” question.
- Keep new material **out** of the conclusion. Now is not the time to introduce new ideas or content.



It's the time to step back and focus on *the big picture*.

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AND WAIT...

- You have to read your work more and more times. However it is useless to do this in a very short lapse of time.
- Read the essay out loud to catch inconsistencies or choppiness. You may find that your essay abruptly changes direction or some of your paragraphs contain unnecessary sentences or information. Use a highlighter or pencil to mark places that do not sound right, and then go back to correct them.

REMEMBER TO INSERT THE NUMBER TO THE PAGES!

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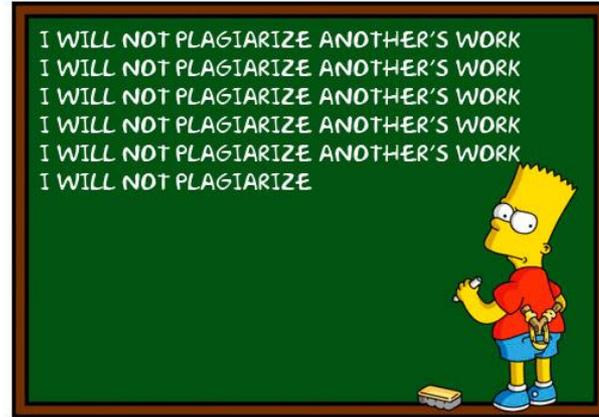
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PLAGIARISM... BE CAREFUL!!!



- Use the arguments of others to back up what you want to say and **cite them**.
- However resist the urge to quote. There is usually no need to clog up your essay with quotations.

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In-text quotations may take the form of:

- footnotes (at the bottom of the page of your writing);
- endnotes (that appear at the end of the written text of your essay);
- or bracketed references
- Quotations need to clearly appear as such and to be referred to their sources of publication. Various systems for references: **Harvard system** usually only requires the author's surname and date of publication, with page numbers provided if a short direct quotation is included:
“an intermediate ‘architecture of systemic conditions’ to external economies lies upon and above the cooperative nexus”
(Bellandi 2009, p.715)

In-text Citation Exercise

Its motto is:—*The many in the one, the one in the many*. Many tendencies have gone to the making of each industry and each economic institution: therefore a thorough realistic study of any part of the economic field, calls for some reference to the interaction of many diverse tendencies, and gives occasion for some care in analysis. And, conversely, almost every important tendency is so far modified by the conditions under which it operates, that an exhaustive study of it may need to range over many fields of work. This motto supplements the motto of my *Principles* which is:—*Natura non facit saltus: i.e.,* economic evolution is gradual and continuous on each of its numberless routes.

I would like to copy part of this text in my essay.

What should I do?

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In-text Citation Exercise 1

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I would like to copy part of this text in my essay.

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..... *“Natura non facit saltus: i.e., economic evolution is gradual and continuous on each of its numberless routes”* (Marshall 1920, p. 7)

.....

In-text Citation Exercise 2

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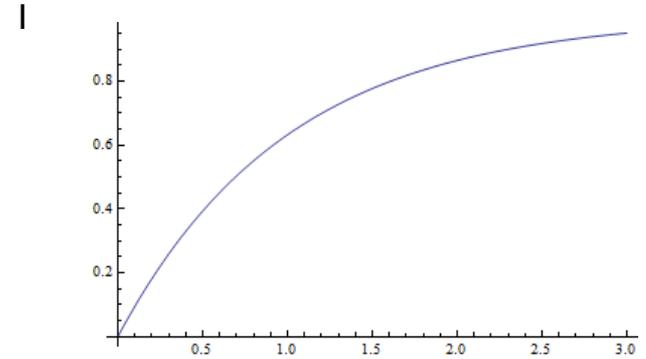
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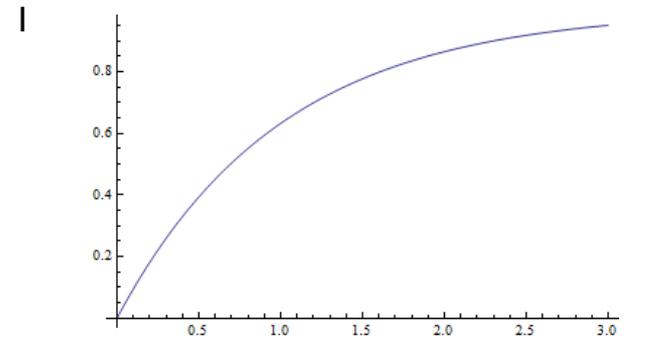
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Who is the author? Me, You?



LTK

No, he is Antonelli and the audience has to know it!



LTK

Source: Antonelli 1999

If you are the author: “*Source: author elaboration*”

What is the difference from Bibliography and List of References?

- The term '*Bibliography*' is the term used for a list of sources used to write an essay. It usually includes all the sources consulted even if they are not directly cited (referred to) in the essay.
- The '*References*' is the term used for a list of sources that only includes those items you cite in your writing.

In what order should items be presented?

- At the end of the essay, on a fresh page, items should be presented in alphabetical order by author's surname.

DO NOT list books, articles and websites in separate lists!

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British Standard Example

. Winter Sidney G., 'Evolutionary Theorizing in Economics', *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 16(2), pp. 23-46, 2002.

. G.Becattini, M.Bellandi, L.De Propriis (eds.), *A Handbook of Industrial Districts*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2009.

Harvard system Example

. Winter Sidney G. (2002), *Evolutionary Theorizing in Economics*, *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, **16**(2), pp. 23-46.

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PRESENTATION

- Presentations are a great way to support a speech, visualize complicated concepts or focus attention on a subject.



- However, a bad presentation can achieve the opposite result. Badly designed slides with too much text or bad graphics can distract or worse, irritate the audience.

II. PRESENTATION

1. TYPES OF PRESENTATION

2. BACKGROUND OF PRESENTATION

3. THE STRUCTURE

4. ERRORS

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There are different types of presentations :

- Quick 1-minute “what I do” talk;
- 25 minute conference paper presentation;
 - Project presentation;
 - Thesis defense;
 - Job talk.

However, they are characterized by common rules:

- Never enough time to talk about everything
- All of them need practice/polish
- Focus on a clear goal and message for each one of them.

It is the art of telling your story...

- There are many reasons for giving a presentation or talk, but never lose sight of your objective.
- It is useful to write down the objective you have, so you can use this as a constant reminder while you prepare the presentation.
- Before getting too caught up in making your slides beautiful and full of pictures of cats, first think out the flow, order and shape of your presentation. A good presentation has a natural flow where each slide leads into the other.



So you need to have a story to tell!!

(e.g. the topic of your essay)

II. PRESENTATION

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Oral communication is different from written communication

- Keep it simple and focus on a few key points;
- Repeat key insights;
- Be sensitive to your audience;
- The same talk may need to be adjusted for a different audience;
- Make the audience want to learn more.

Before preparing material for a presentation, it is worth considering your

Expectation



Reality



II. PRESENTATION

1. TYPES OF PRESENTATION

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4. ERRORS

Presentation is not a movie

- You should manage the time on your hands.
- Often there will be no flexibility in the time of day that a presentation is made.
- The audience needs time to assimilate concepts.
- More slides reduce the time for each slide.

Presentation is very important:

You present your self and your work!!!!

II. PRESENTATION

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Compulsory slides

II. PRESENTATION

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Cover: Title, author, affiliation, date of presentation

Outline/Agenda/Summary

3 Things to Remember!

Background

Results

Regards and contacts (e.g. email address)

Take Home Message

II. PRESENTATION

1. TYPES OF PRESENTATION

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- Your presentation' structure has to be able to convey you message, your story or your discovery.
- Images are key elements of every presentation. Your audience has ears and eyes – they'll want to see what you're talking about, and a good visual cue will help them to understand your message much better.
- So use contrast. If you want to play with colors, keep it easy on the eyes and always keep good contrast in mind, so that your readers do not have to strain to guess what you have typed on your slide.

THE FORMAL STRUCTURE

- Use Consistency: Consistently use the same font face and sizes on all slides
- You may use your company logo, highlight headers, create a special frame for figures/images or the whole slide but do not overload your slides with these elements
- Pick an easy to read font face
- Carefully select font sizes for headers and text
- Decorate scarcely but well

You have to maintain consistency of your theme throughout.

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1. TYPES OF PRESENTATION

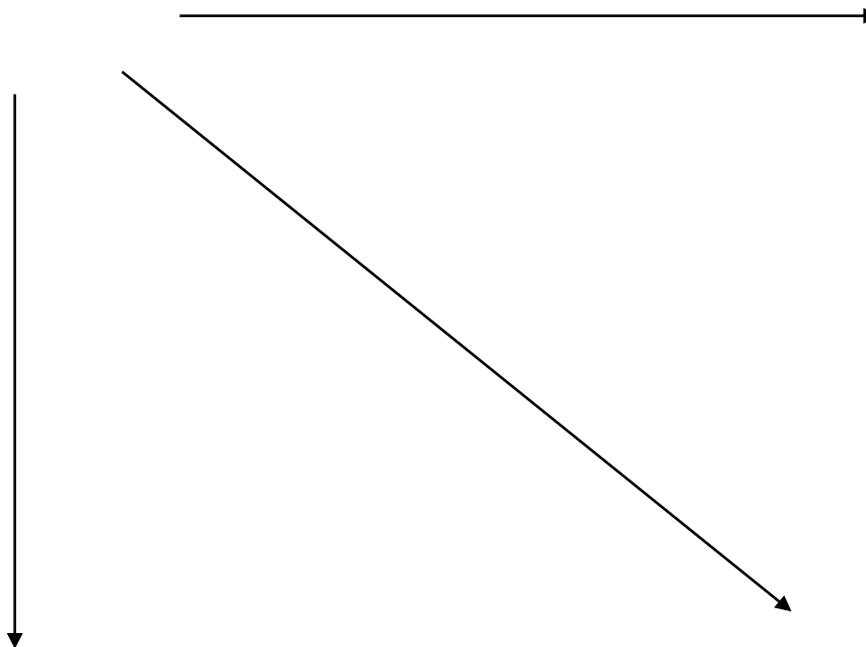
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- Keep the design very basic and simple. It shall not be diverting attention;
- Restrict the room your design takes up, **do not ever let the design restrict your message.**
- Avoid trying to cram too much into one slide.

You can use the slide space in every direction but in a consistent way



II. PRESENTATION

1. TYPES OF PRESENTATION

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- *Sharing detailed information* is not a good use of a presentation. Audiences will not remember detail. You can use a presentation to inform an audience about a major change or initiative, but use written forms of communication for the detail;
- Don't mastery your slides;
- Very long sentences: you can't read and listen at the same time;
- Speak too fast, without confidence;
- Don't maintain eye contact with the audience;
- Thinking: if it is easy to understand, people will think it's trivial ;
- Don't include the date in the first slide.

What's wrong here?



THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

ANY QUESTIONS?

ASK ME OR WRITE

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