Writing academic texts

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Outline

- Introduction
- Academic writing
- Research papers
- Research proposals
- Conclusion

Introduction

- Academics are untrained

- Most important types of writing:
  - Research papers
  - Research proposals
  - → Some pieces of academic writing are difficult to understand
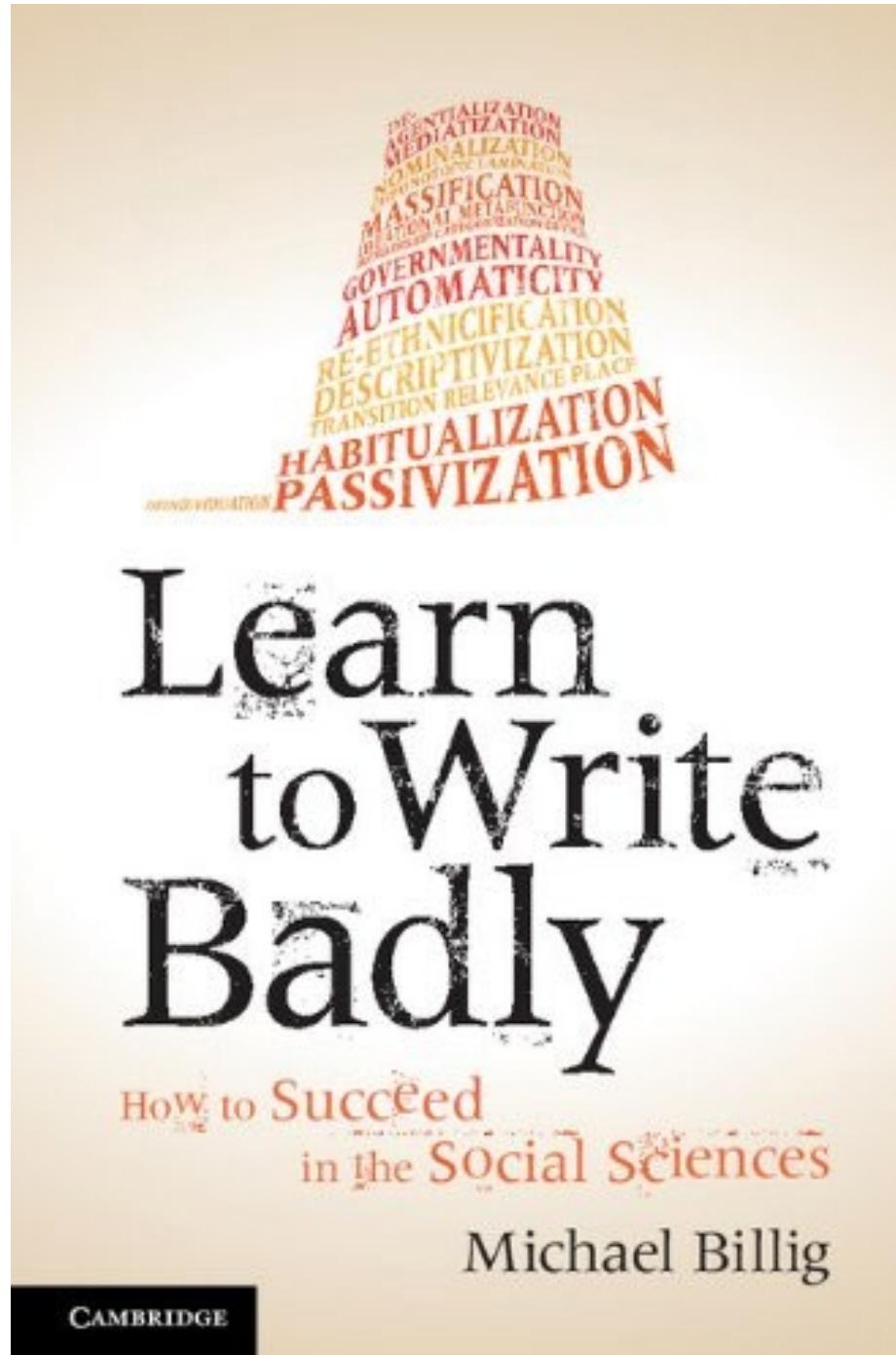
DE-ESSENTIALIZATION
AGENTIALIZATION
MEDIATIZATION
NOMINALIZATION
MASSIFICATION

GOVERNMENTALITY
AUTOMATICITY
RE-ETHNICIFICATION
DESCRIPTIVIZATION
TRANSITION RELEVANCE PLACE
HABITUALIZATION
PASSIVIZATION

Learn to Write Badly

How to Succeed in the Social Sciences

Michael Billig

(Florian Scheneider, 2020, 5m06s)

(Florian Scheneider, 2020, 7m54s)

Academic writing

- Academics are untrained
  - → Academic education pays little attention to communicative skills
  - →Students rarely receive feedback from their supervisors

(Florian Scheneider, 2020, 8m32s)

Academic writing

- Academia is mostly consumed in English
  - → Lack of fluency or understanding
  - → Wrong translations

Academic writing

- Complex writing
  - → Lack of understanding
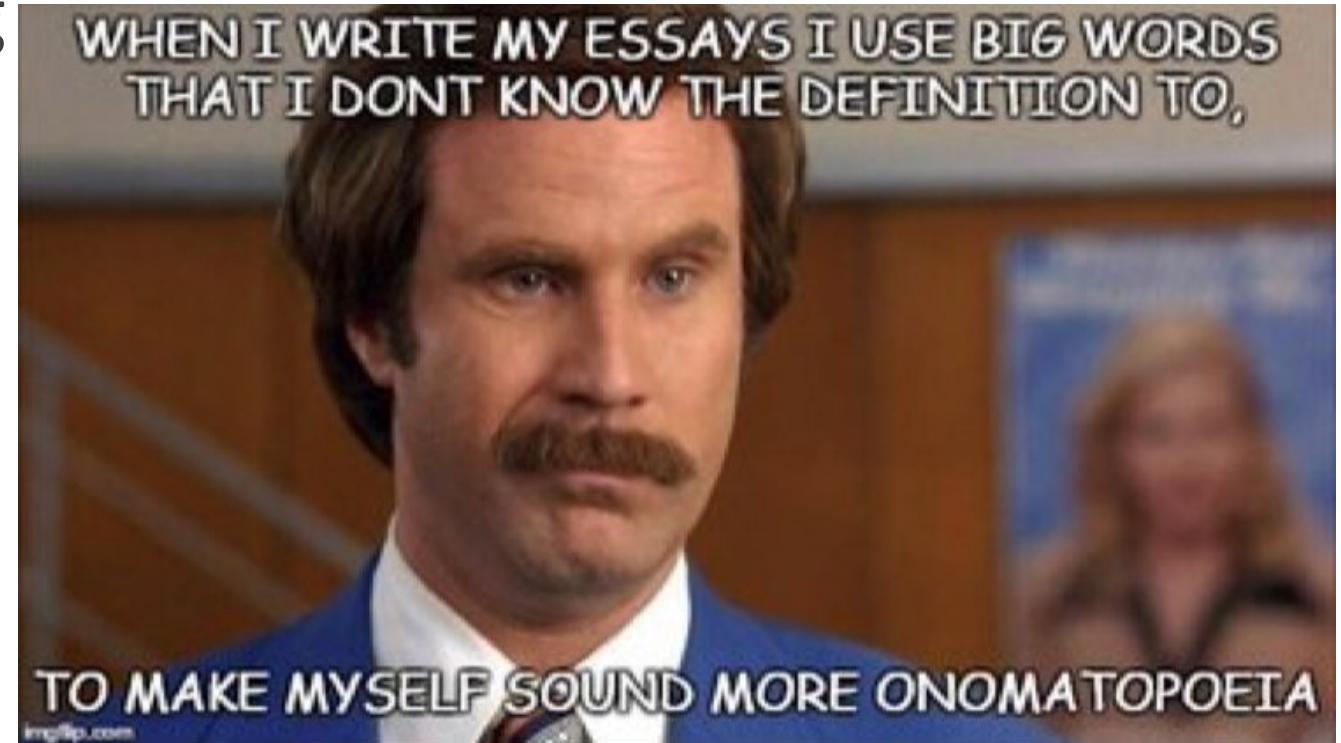
Academic writing

- Complex writing
  - → Lack of understanding

- Passive sentences
  - → Creation of complicated sentence structures

Tips

- Make short sentences
- Obvious agents of the actions
- Use verbs, not nouns
  - *Researchers conducted an analysis* ⟶ **Researchers analyzed**
- Avoid unnecessary jargon

(Florian Scheneider, 2020, 13m11s)

Tips

- Formal writing

ACADEMIC TRANSLATOR

What academics say	What they mean
Various sources	I forgot the name and author of that one paper
We are grateful to the two anonymous peer reviewers for their constructive comments	God help them if I ever find out who they are
A promising area for an initial study	I have to do this to get funding
Widely discussed in the academic community	I accidentally ended up in the middle of a heated Twitter argument
The notes were meticulously transcribed	I was drunk and missed out at least seven pages
An extensive literature review	A quick Google search
A complex phenomenon	I don't understand
Has long evaded the understanding of scientists	I don't understand why I don't understand
Is impossible to summarise simply	I still don't understand
Approaching the traditional threshold for statistical significance	Not significant
More research is required	I need funding

Tips

- Formal writing
  - → [Academic Phrasebank 1](#)
  - → [Academic Phrasebank 2](#)

Writing an academic text

- **Planning, drafting and revision**

- Narrow down your ideas

Soft skills → academic writing → structuring an academic paper

- Plan an outline

(Where Do I Begin? - Purdue OWL®, n.d.)

Writing an academic text

- Start writing!

- Identify potential areas for improvement

- Edit and proofread

(Where Do I Begin? - Purdue OWL®, n.d.)
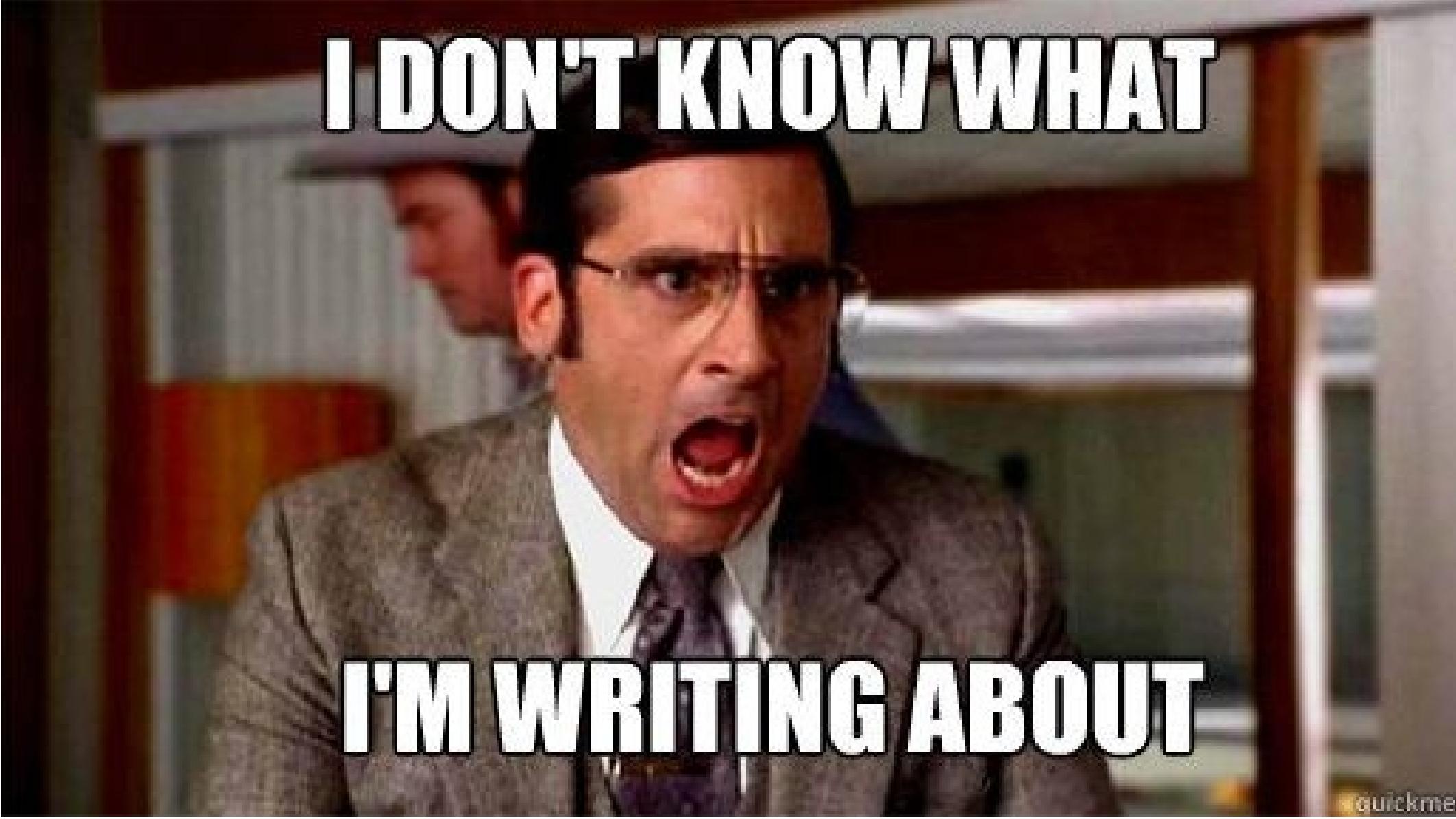
I DON'T KNOW WHAT
I'M WRITING ABOUT

How to write a research paper

Tips

- Structured paragraphs:
  - → Unified
  - → Coherent
  - → Relevant

(McCombes, 2022)

Tips

- Structured paragraphs:
  - → Topic sentence
  - → Relevance
  - → Evidence
  - → Explanation
  - → Conclusion

(McCombes, 2022)

Lack of access to reading and writing put blind people at a serious disadvantage in nineteenth-century society. Text was one of the primary methods through which people engaged with culture, communicated with others, and accessed information; without a well-developed reading system that did not rely on sight, blind people were excluded from social participation (Weygand, 2009). *While disabled people in general suffered from discrimination, blindness was widely viewed as the worst disability, and it was commonly believed that blind people were incapable of pursuing a profession or improving themselves through culture (Weygand, 2009). This demonstrates the importance of reading and writing to social status at the time: without access to text, it was considered impossible to fully participate in society.* **Blind people were excluded from the sighted world, but also entirely dependent on sighted people for information and education.**

Topic sentence   Presenting evidence   Interpreting evidence   Concluding the paragraph

Introduction

- What am I writing about?

- Why is it important?

- What do I want the reader to know about it?

(Ammon, 2023)

Introduction

- It should establish the topic with a strong opening

- Don't go too in-depth

(Ammon, 2023)

Introduction

- ## What is the topic and why it is relevant

"[The] Introduction commonly describes the topic under investigation, summarizes or discusses relevant prior research, identifies unresolved issues that the current research will address and provides an overview of the research that is to be described in greater detail in the sections to follow"

(Pan, n.d.)

Introduction

- An introduction might include
  - ✓ Focus
  - ✓ Scope
  - ✓ Problem statement
  - ✓ Research questions
  - ✓ Hypotheses/Objectives

(Ammon, 2023)

Literature review

- A revision of prior published research

- Shows the relevance of the topic and the paper

- Highlights a gap in the literature

Methods

- Data collection and analysis procedures for a research project
    - ➤ What did you do?

- Demonstrate the integrity of your study

(Method Sections for Empirical Research Papers, n.d.)

Methods

- Research design
- Ethical approval (if needed)
- Setting (location)
- Participants/sample/subjects
- Instruments/Measures
- Procedure(s)/Intervention
- Data Collection
- Data analysis/Statistics/Statistical analysis

Results

➢ What did you find?

Discussion

- Significance of your results

- Relate the results to the initial objectives

- Expand upon the implications of the study

(Pan, n.d.)

Conclusion

- Highlight significant aspects and results

- Evaluate the findings

- Limitations and future research

So what?

(Fuster-Márquez & Gregori-Signes, 2015; Pan, n.d.)

Conclusion

- Avoid making statements that are not supported by evidence

- Do not introduce new information

- The conclusion must match the introduction

- Be critical and evaluate your research

- Do not downplay the results you obtained

(Fuster-Márquez & Gregori-Signes, 2015; Pan, n.d.)

How to write a research proposal

Research proposal

- Establishes whether there is expertise to support your research

- Used to assess your application

- Starting point: your research is likely to (slightly) change

(Pan, n.d.)

Structure

- **Title:** clear indication of your approach or question

- **Background and rationale:**
  - Background and issues
  - Discipline
  - Literature review
  - Key debates and developments

(How to write your research proposal, n.d.)

Structure

- **Research questions**

- **Research methodology**
  - ➤ Theoretical resources
  - ➤ Theoretical approach
  - ➤ Research methods
  - ➤ Advantages and limits of the approach

- **Expected outcome:** hypotheses

(How to write your research proposal, n.d.)

Structure

- **Plan of work and schedule**

- **Bibliography**
  - Articles and texts in your proposal
  - Appropriate sources which haven't been mentioned

(How to write your research proposal, n.d.)

Conclusion

- Exercise in continuous improvement

- Keep writing!

- Practice is the best teacher

- Understanding of critical thinking and formulation of arguments

(Survey of English Usage, University College London, n.d.)

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