

# WRITING AND PRESENTING IN TODAY'S COMPETITIVE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

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This self-study tutorial is a brief representation of a few highlights of CERGE-EI's Academic Writing 1, 2, and Combined Skills 1 courses.

CERGE-EI's study programs are for students with BA or MA degrees in economics or non-economic fields with strong mathematical backgrounds, who are interested in economic research. Students enrolled into our US MA/PhD track receive stipends.

For more information about CERGE-EI, the Academic Skills Center, and our programs, go to [www.cerge-ei.cz](http://www.cerge-ei.cz)

[www.cerge-ei.cz/phd-in-economics](http://www.cerge-ei.cz/phd-in-economics)

[www.cerge-ei.cz/ma-in-economic-research](http://www.cerge-ei.cz/ma-in-economic-research)

[www.cerge-ei.cz/masters-in-applied-economics](http://www.cerge-ei.cz/masters-in-applied-economics)



“Economists, even more than other scholars and analysts, write. Economics articles, especially empirical papers, consist mainly of text, not equations or tables...”



Dudenhefer, P. (2009) A Guide to Writing in Economics, p. 2.  
Ecoteach Center and Department of Economics, Duke University.

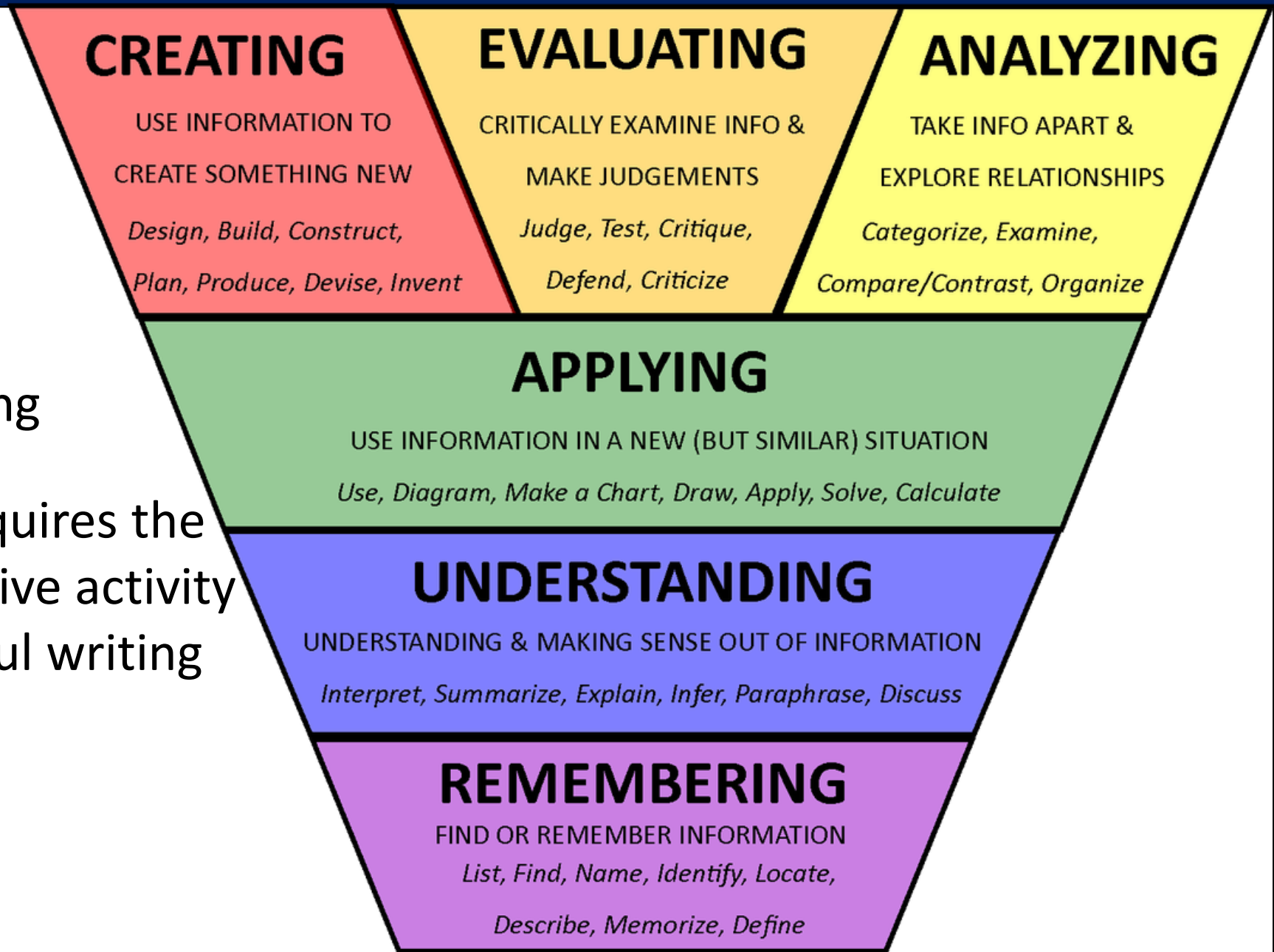
“In talking about the economist’s craft,” says Richard Schmalensee, an economist at MIT, “it is almost impossible to overstate the importance of clear and persuasive writing. Writing is as much a part of economics as are models and data sets. “



In Dudenhefer, P. (2009) A Guide to Writing in Economics, p. 2.  
Ecoteach Center and Department of Economics, Duke University.

Writing well is  
Intellectually challenging

Successful research requires the  
highest levels of cognitive activity  
– and so does successful writing



Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills



A black and white photograph of a woman with bangs, wearing a striped shirt, looking upwards. In the background is a chalkboard with several thought bubbles drawn in chalk. The largest bubble on the right contains the text 'Consciousness-raising'.

## Consciousness-raising

Many of the points raised in this tutorial may seem quite familiar to you. However, it is likely that you do not always **notice** these items when you are reading and writing in your field. It can be very helpful to **explicitly notice** them!

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graph LR; A[Research] --> B[Organization]; B --> C[Genre & Content]; C --> D[Wording]; D --> E[Avoiding Peeves]; E --> F[Revision]; F --> G[Presentations];
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Research

Organization

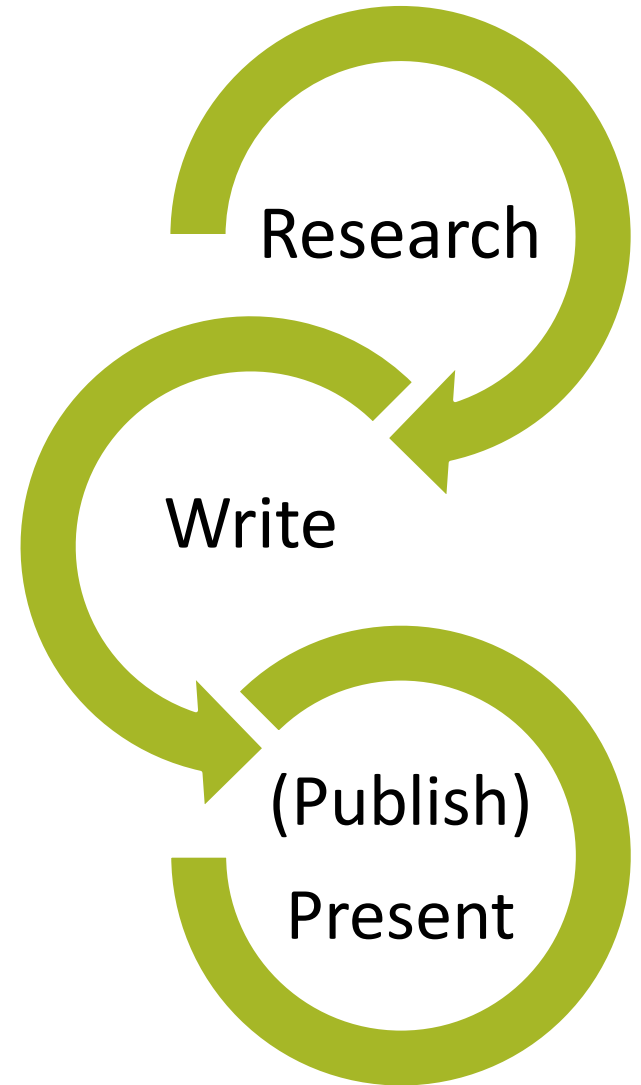
Genre &  
Content

Wording

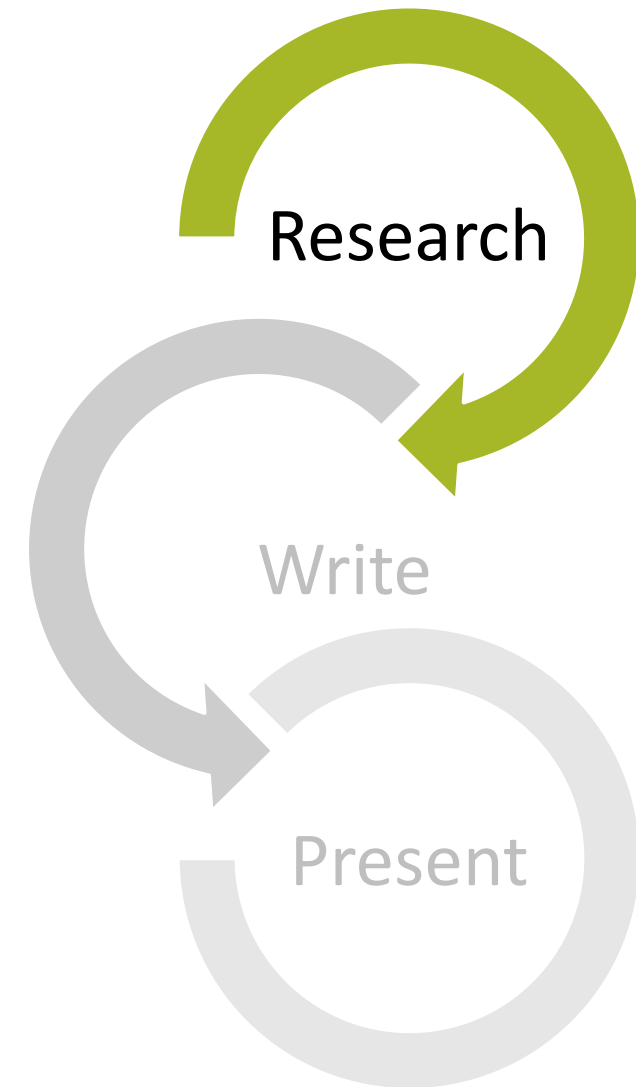
Avoiding  
Peeves

Revision

Presentations







## Narrowing your focus of interest

Health Care

Health Care Reform

Health Care Reform in the US •

The Affordable Care Act of 2014

How has the Affordable Care Act of 2014 impacted the middle class in the US?

How has the Affordable Care act of 2014 impacted the middle class in the US from an economic standpoint?

Hmm.

I only want to write a paper,  
not a whole book...

Well, this could be quite a different  
paper if I were a doctor or insurer  
instead of an economist.....

My research question!

How has the Affordable Care act of 2014 impacted the middle class in the US from an economic standpoint?



My research question

My research findings after research = my paper's aim/purpose.

“This paper argues that the Affordable Health Care Act of 2014 has not significantly impacted the middle class in the US from an economic standpoint, despite the expectations of numerous critics.”

## Initial project planning

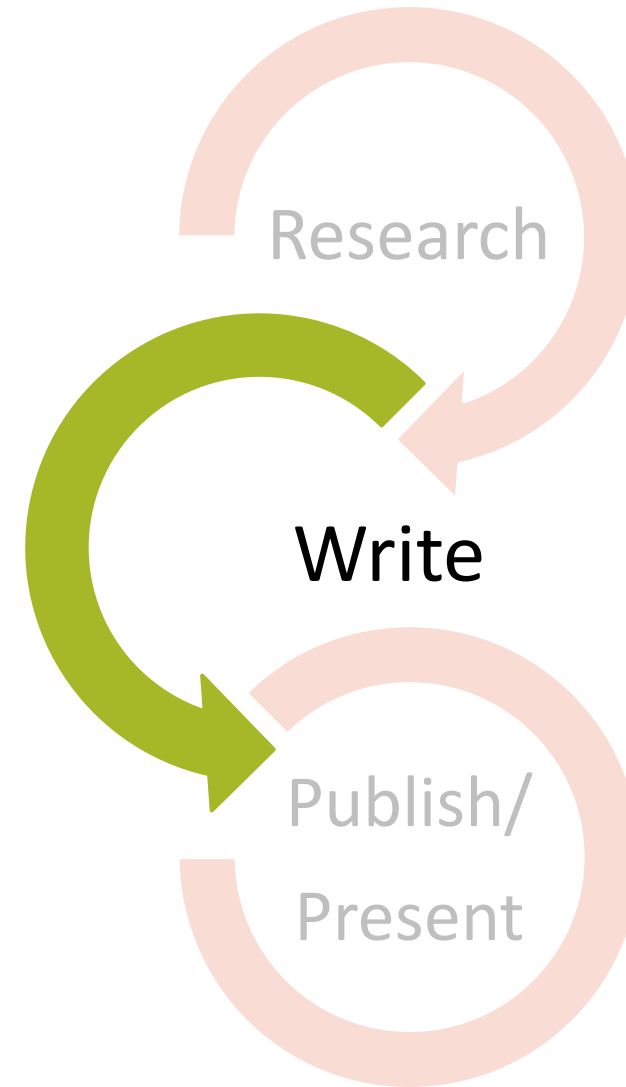
What is my proposed research question or thesis/purpose statement?

What do I expect my conclusion/s to be?

What do I already know about the topic?

What more information do I need?







Good scholarly and  
scientific writing....

...is not art.





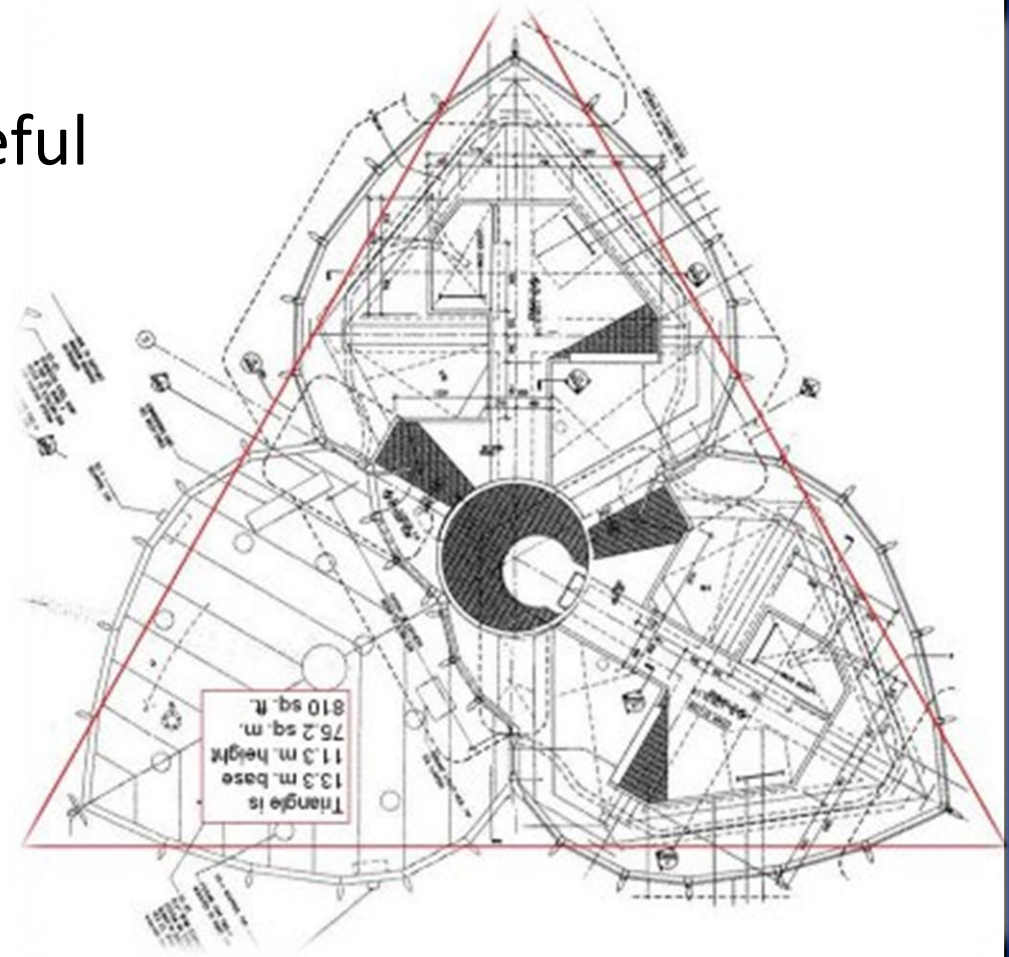
Great art can  
come from chaos.



# Scholarly and scientific writing is architecture.

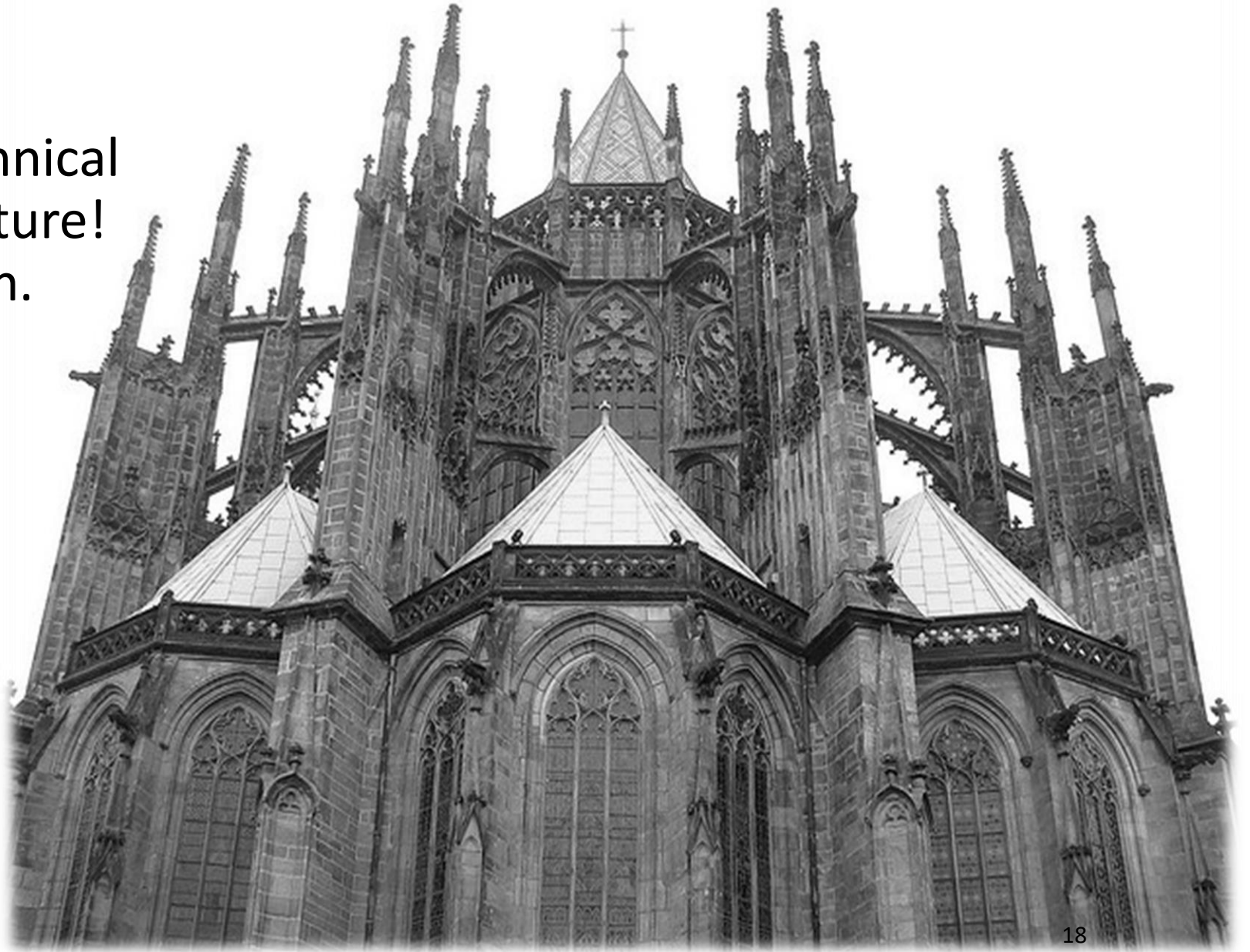
It requires planning and structuring, with a careful eye on both the big picture and on the details.

“Just start writing”  
doesn't work well in this context.





In today's world, good technical writing is modern architecture!  
Avoid much ornamentation.



Modern, functional, sleek, efficient =  
well-planned and efficiently organized  
scholarly and scientific writing.



Professors sometimes see poorly organized, repetitive, and incoherent papers written by MA and PhD students.

No one likes trying to figure these out, **even if the ideas in the papers are really good.**





## Two Key Principles:

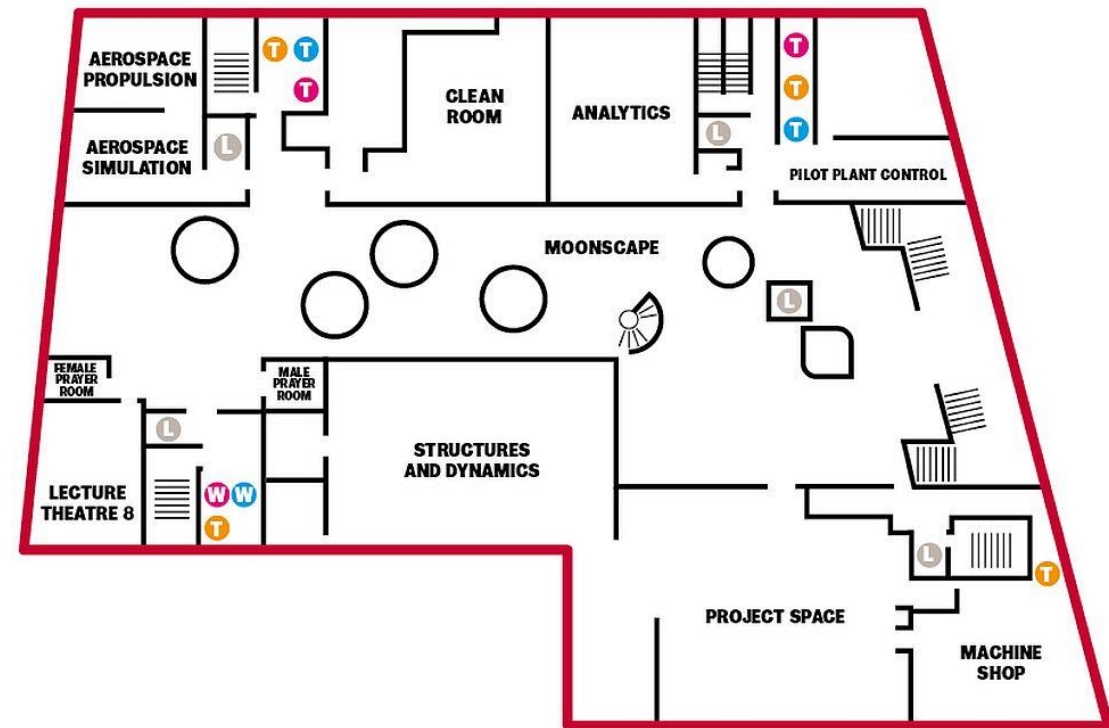
Analytical writing can be structured as a logical dialog between the writer and the reader.

Readers generally prefer to descend from higher level ideas to details.



# These principles apply at every level of the text

When building your paper, don't neglect its interior rooms and spaces: sentences, paragraphs and sections.

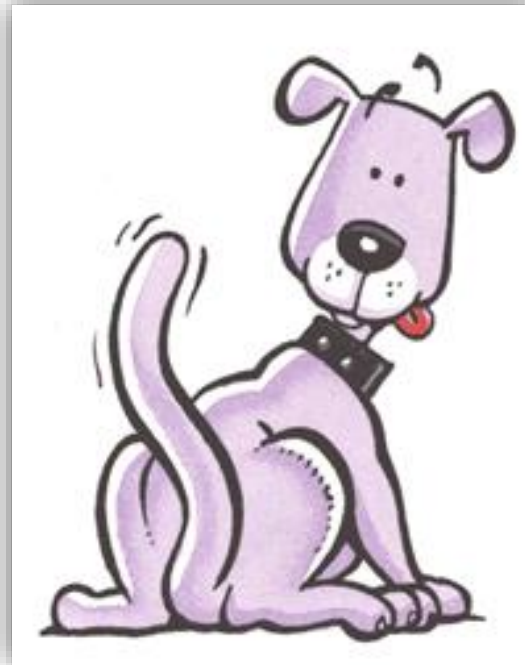


## Starting at sentence level

A sentence should mean something to a reader as s/he reads it. Each word should help the reader see the idea more clearly.

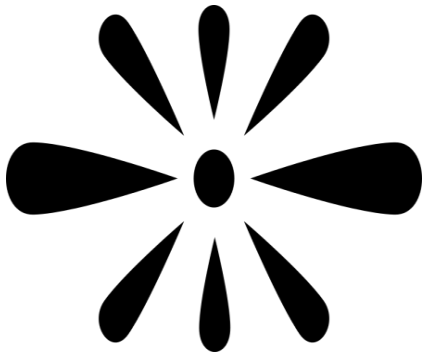
Consider:

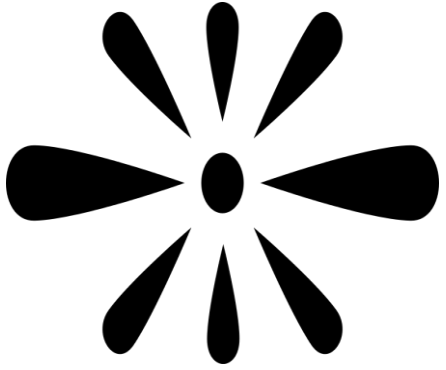
Its tail wags the dog. X  
The dog wags its tail. ✓



English sentences are structurally different from Slavic language sentences in many cases. Word order is often different.

The Subject-Verb-Object sentence structure is predominant in English. However, Russian and Ukrainian, for example, can use either SVO (The dog wags its tail) or SOV (The dog its tail wags.)





Word order also *matters more* in English:

English is classified as an *analytic* language: relying on word order and definite and indefinite articles (a/an/the) to convey meaning.

Slavic languages are classified as *synthetic*, and rely more on word *forms*.

For an introduction to the features of analytic and synthetic languages, go to:  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/analytic-language>

A useful rule of thumb for word and idea order in both simple and complex English sentences:



'loose'  
sentences

English sentences **usually put the main ideas at the beginning** of a sentence, though sometimes they appear **at the end** for special emphasis.



'periodic'  
sentences

The University of Ottawa Writing Center. Building Sentences. Retrieved 29 May, 2018 from:  
<https://arts.uottawa.ca/writingcentre/en/hypergrammar/building-sentences>



A loose sentence example:

**“I am willing to pay slightly higher taxes for the privilege of living in Canada, considering the free health care, the cheap tuition fees, the low crime rate, the comprehensive social programs, and the wonderful winters.”**

A periodic sentence example:

**“Considering the free health care, the cheap tuition fees, the low crime rate, the comprehensive social programs, and the wonderful winters, I am willing to pay slightly higher taxes for the privilege of living in Canada.”**

## Use periodic sentences rarely:

“An occasional periodic sentence is dramatic and persuasive: even if the readers do not agree with your conclusion, they will read your evidence first with open minds.

Used once or twice in a piece of writing they can be very effective; but used any more than that, they can make you sound dull.”

## Clauses – how many are too many?

Consider the number of clauses in your sentences. Here is an example of a very complex sentence, which is difficult for a reader to process.

On the other hand, if government provides very little amount of UI, as was the case for Estonia in early nineties (Jurajda & Terrell, 2002), workers will soon deplete savings and will accept a job offer which may not correspond to their qualifications, resulting in lower wages, that would as such generate lower return from taxes.



(Used anonymously by kind permission of the CERGE-EI student who wrote it😊)

A good rule of thumb is to consider breaking your long sentence up when it reaches more than three clauses. A few sentences with more than three clauses are ok, but try to avoid long sections of them!

## Optional Self-Study:

An efficient and useful review of sentence structure types in English:

The University of Ottawa Writing Center. Building Sentences.

<https://arts.uottawa.ca/writingcentre/en/hypergrammar/building-sentences>



We have looked at sentence level – now let's consider paragraphs.

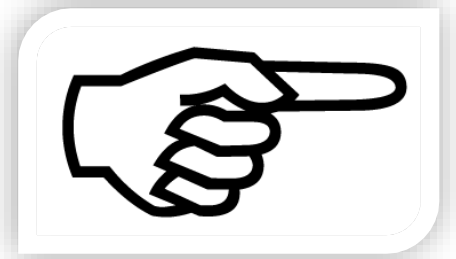
We noted that analytical writing can be structured as a logical dialog between the writer and the reader, and that readers generally prefer to descend from higher level ideas to details.



Read this excerpt from a research paper:

“G fluctuates between 5 and 7 percent. A 1 percent increase in J increases H by 6 percent. In the data, a 1-percent increase in J increases H by close to 12 percent. The correlation between F and K is 0.35. The correlation is expected to be above 0.7. In the data, G is seen to move between 2 and 10 percent.”

Ok, now go to the next slide.





## What can you say that you learned from the paragraph?

“Most people learn very little. They do not comprehend as they read, so they cannot remember much. Even when they remember fragments, they do not know what the fragments mean as a whole.”

“Some kind readers (especially graduate students) attribute this to personal shortcomings: I am a slow learner, maybe I don’t know enough about the subject, etc. But this is doing the writer no favors, as other readers may not be as kind.”

Now read the same text with some structure imposed upon it:

“The fit of the model is weak along three dimensions. First, it does not generate patterns of G observed in the data: it predicts that G fluctuates between 5 and 7 percent, in the data, G is seen to fluctuate between 2 and 10 percent. Second, H is less responsive to J in the model than in the data: a 1-percent increase in J only increases H by 6 percent, while in the data the number is closer to 12 percent. Third, the correlation between F and K is low at 0.35; typically it is expected to be above 0.7.”

This time, even if you know nothing about G or H, you still understand that the author is suggesting that the fit of a particular model is weak. You also see that s/he offers three pieces of evidence to support this claim.

Notice that the same pattern found in *loose sentences* applies to this *paragraph*: the main message appears at the beginning, and provides a framework for interpreting the rest of the message.

“The fit of the model is weak along three dimensions. First, it does not generate patterns of G observed in the data: it predicts that G fluctuates between 5 and 7 percent, in the data, G is seen to fluctuate between 2 and 10 percent. Second, H is less responsive to J in the model than in the data: a 1-percent increase in J only increases H by 6 percent, while in the data the number is closer to 12 percent. Third, the correlation between F and K is low at 0.35; typically it is expected to be above 0.7.”

“The fit of the model is weak along three dimensions.”

“The first sentence of the paragraph provokes a question: Which three dimensions?” The rest of the paragraph answers the question, allowing us to descend step by step to the details.

The first sentence in this case also tells us *how* to engage with the details we will encounter. We know from the start that we must decide for ourselves whether or not the three pieces of evidence add up to the author’s claim that the fit of the model is weak.”

Using a pyramidal structure of information:

A main message leads the way to multiple details through logical questions:

The fit of the model is weak along three dimensions.

Which three dimensions?

First, it does not generate patterns of G observed in the data.

How so?

It predicts that G fluctuates between 5 and 7 percent, in the data, G is seen to fluctuate between 2 and 10 percent.

Second, H is less responsive to J in the model than in the data.

How so?

A 1 percent increase in J only increases H by 6 percent, while in the data the number is closer to 12 percent.

Third, the correlation between F and K is low.

How so?

At 0.35, typically, it is expected to be above 7.



With a disorganized structure, there is no clear hierarchy of information, and the reader's crucial questions go unanswered.

In the data, G is seen to move between 2 and 10 percent.

So what? ?

G fluctuates between 5 and 7 percent.

So what? ?

A 1-percent increase in J increases H by 6 percent.

So what? ?

F and K are expected to have a correlation of above 7.

So what? ?

The correlation between F and K is 0.35.

So what? ?

In the data, a 1-percent increase in J increases H by close to 12 percent.

So what? ?

“We have seen how structure matters in a single paragraph. Now imagine how much it matters over the course of multiple paragraphs....six poorly organized paragraphs and we have lost the reader.”

“That is why, when we think of writing ...any analytical [text] that people need to be able to learn from, it helps to have a structural framework in mind...”

Let's look higher up. This is a diagram of a paragraph.  
What might the related *section heading* be?

The fit of the model is weak along three dimensions.

Which three dimensions?

First, it does not generate patterns of G observed in the data.

How so?

It predicts that G fluctuates between 5 and 7 percent, in the data, G is seen to fluctuate between 2 and 10 percent.

Second, H is less responsive to J in the model than in the data.

How so?

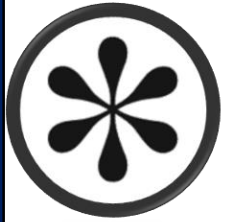
A 1 percent increase in J only increases H by 6 percent, while in the data the number is closer to 12 percent.

Third, the correlation between F and K is low.

How so?

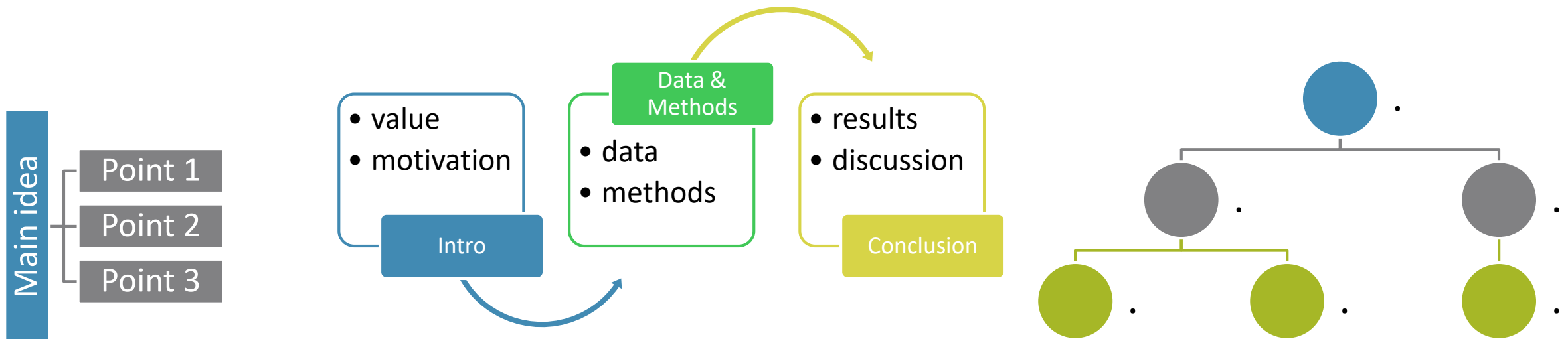
At 0.35, typically, it is expected to be above 7.





A strategy you can use to plan and analyze your own work:

- PLAN the sections of your paper in terms of function and content using a map or diagram
- ANALYZE the draft/s of your paper and the content of the sections using a map or diagram



“Any piece of *analytical* writing can be organized as a descent at various levels: [sentences,] paragraphs, sections, and the whole paper. At each level, the reader should first encounter the main message for that level.”

“Of course, descending structure is not appropriate for all types of writing. It is appropriate in professional settings where the reader must process complex details in a limited amount of time.”

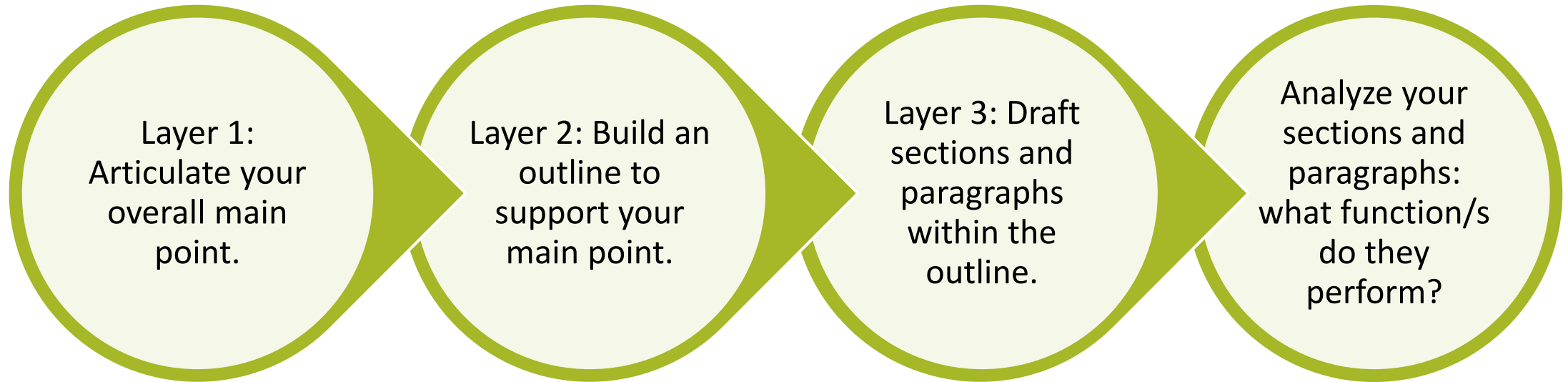
“It is less appropriate when the reader is on vacation with a murder mystery. Few people on vacation want their murder mystery to begin, “The butler did it. Here is how.”



Chaubey, V. (2018, p. 16) The Little Book of Research Writing. Amazon Distribution.



## Steps to building a paper with a descending structure:



Chaubey, V. (2018, p. 16) The Little Book of Research Writing. Amazon Distribution.

**Pro Tip:** It is usually most effective to leave writing the introduction and conclusion to your work until last. This is because the content of these sections is driven by what you do, how you do it, and what you find (literature, methods, and results).

## A few more tips for writing

Organize the work with the reader in mind:  
avoid sending the reader backwards and forwards

“As we will see in Table 6”

“Recall from section 2”

“this result previews the extra analysis of section 4”

...all often mean you didn't put things in the right order.”



Avoid sending the reader backwards and forwards.

This also applies to tactics like 'the former' and 'the latter',

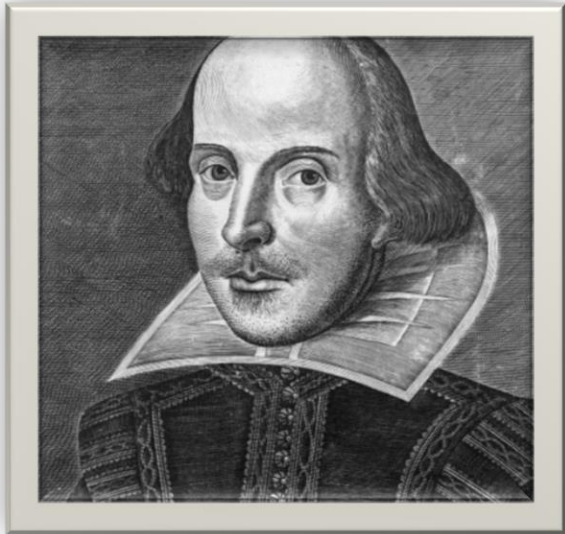
former



latter

## Good news!

“You don’t have to be a great “writer” to produce good economics writing. This is because economics writing is different from many other types of writing. It is essentially technical writing, ....”



Neugeboren, R. and Jacobson, M. (2005) Writing Economics.  
The Harvard Writing Project; The President and Fellows of Harvard University.



“....the goal is not to turn a clever phrase, hold the reader in suspense, or create multi-layered nuance, but rather to achieve **clarity**. Elegant prose is nice, but clarity is the only style that is relevant for our purposes.”



Neugeboren, R. and Jacobson, M. (2005) Writing Economics.

The Harvard Writing Project; The President and Fellows of Harvard University.

## Genre matters!

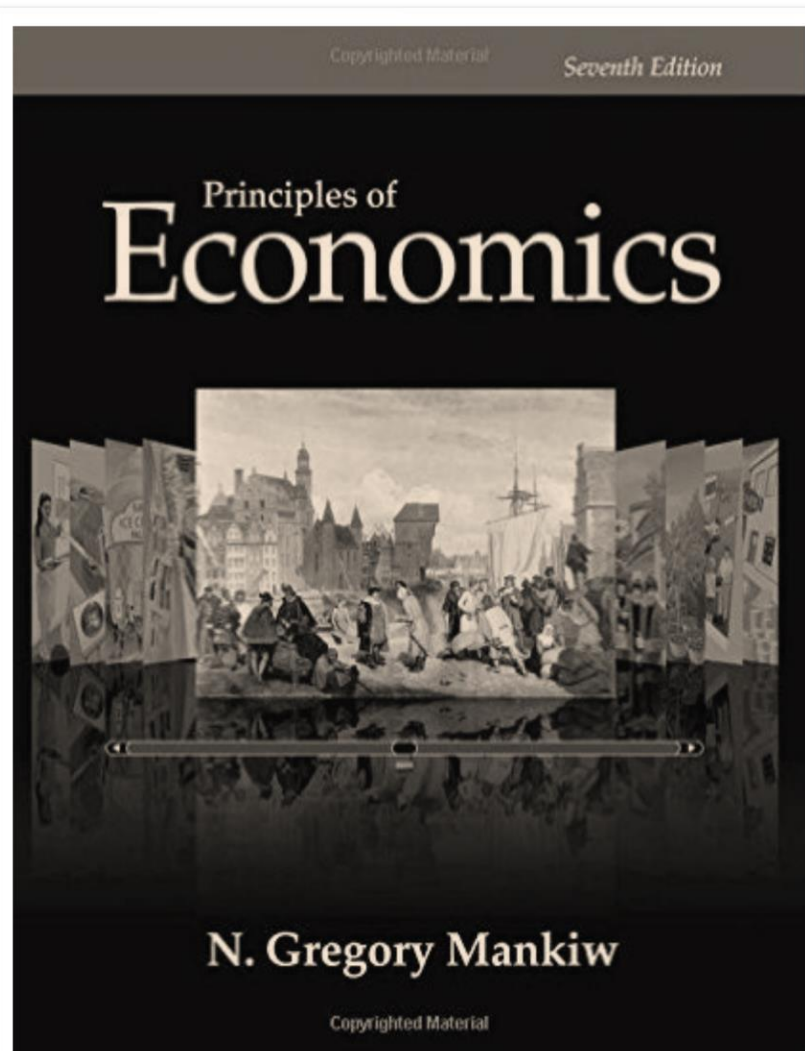
Students sometimes write in the style of the academic texts they may be most familiar with – textbooks. But textbooks and articles from popular press are different from academic papers in some significant ways that impact content, organization, and wording.



Consider ways that academic and scientific papers are different from (and the same as) textbook writing and the writing in articles from popular press:



These are all Economics texts. Which type is closest to PhD papers?



# Textbooks

Reader &  
Purpose

Written by experts for students, who read them because they must.  
Designed to bring students into the field by providing established knowledge/ideas.

Content

Information is usually broader and deeper than other text types.

Organization

Main ideas not presented at the beginning of a chapter, but emerge gradually through the text.

Language

Rhetorical questions are often used in textbooks.  
Items like “the purpose of this chapter is to deepen the reader’s understanding/provide the background needed to...” may appear.

# Articles from Popular Press

## Reader & Purpose

Written by experts for a general audience, usually aimed to interest, inform, and possibly influence the reader.

## Content

Background information is usually minimal and technical information omitted.

## Organization

Main ideas are presented first, and the story comes second.

## Language

Usually less technical, more common language, and may be more emotive.

# Journal Articles

Reader &  
Purpose

Written for a professional audience; to communicate new/extended information in the context of established knowledge; or to further support established knowledge; or to challenge established knowledge.

Content

Carefully contextualized in the current literature on the topic, and includes clear descriptions of the methods and contribution of the work.

Organization

Because they are read by professionals in the field, they explicitly present main ideas/conclusions at the beginning.

Language

Technical terms and jargon are used – the writer is communicating with peers.





## Genre

So, your papers should read more like a:

- Textbook
- Article from popular press
- Journal article



## Deciding what to include, and what to leave out

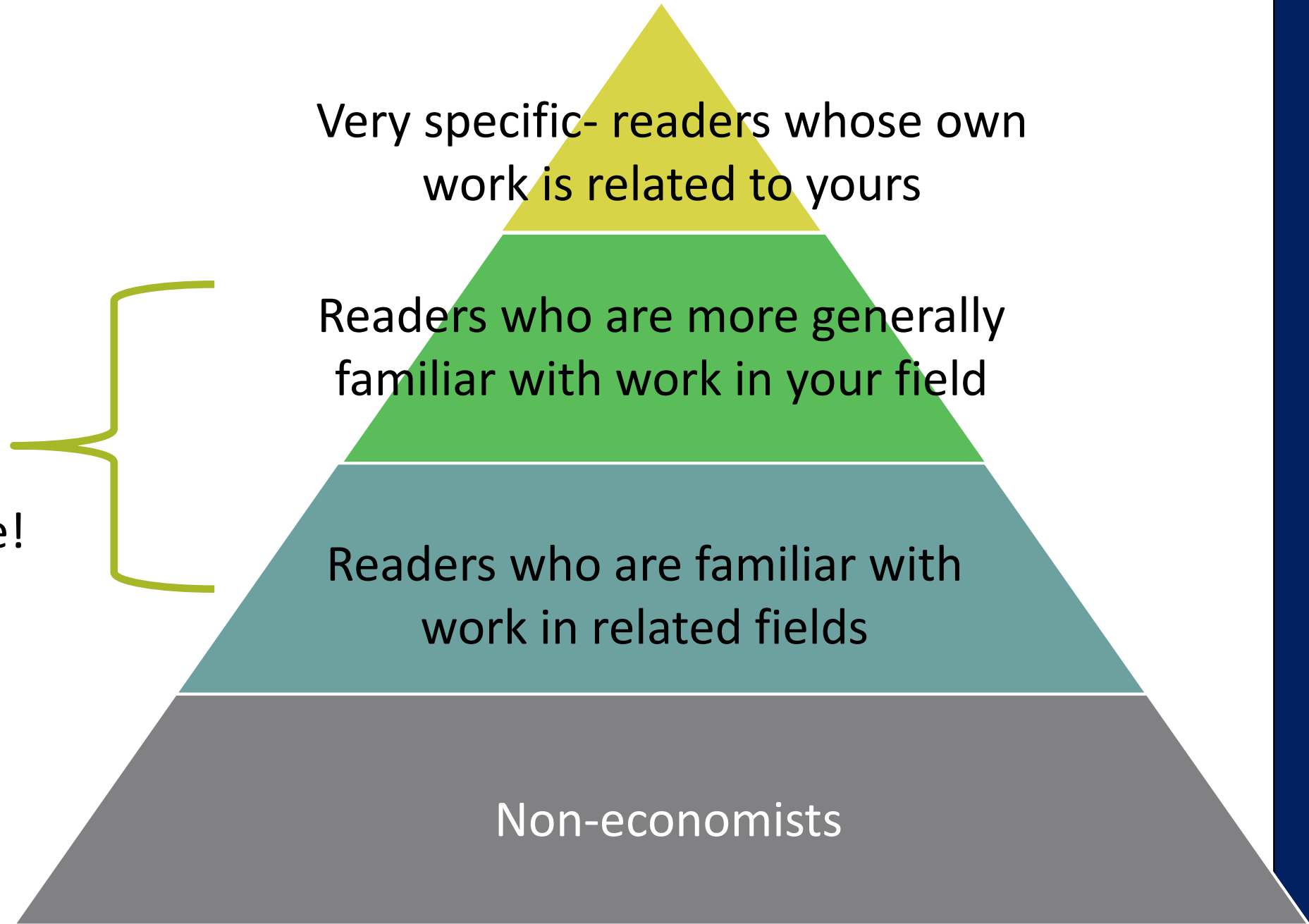
Think about your intended reader.

Will you limit your text to be comprehensible to a reader who is specifically familiar with your exact field of study? To a wider readership? How wide?

It is up to you to decide how widely accessible your work will be.



Usually somewhere  
here is about right –  
consider who your  
target readers will be!



# Wording your content clearly



In general:

“Use simple short words, not big fancy words.

*Use*, not *utilize*. *Several*, not *diverse*.

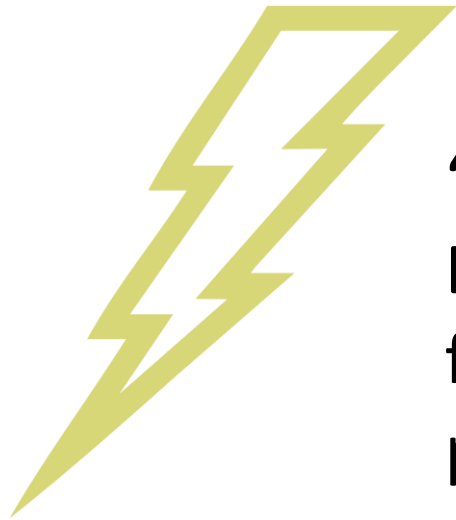
*And*, not *as well as*.”

Cochrane, J. (2005) Writing Tips for PhD Students. University of Chicago



**Pro tip:** Remember, good writing in the field is about showcasing your ideas – not about showing off your vocabulary!

## NEWS FLASH: As well as is not the same as and



“The algorithm can process text *as well as* binary files.”

Does this mean that it can process **not only** text **but also** binary files **OR** does it mean that it processes text **equally as well as** it processes binary files?

“The university focuses on education, research, and development, *as well as* dissemination.”

This is incorrect if all four areas are equally important and none should be emphasized. The **divergence from parallel structure highlights** ‘dissemination’.

Don’t imagine that *as well as* is a more formal *and*.

**Be confident writing *and* in almost every case!!**

**and** ✓

## A special note about ‘such as’ versus ‘including’

***Such as*** means ‘things like these’

“I like doing stuff with my friends, *such as* going to films, concerts, and parties.”

*Such as* rarely appears in formal writing (except when it is used incorrectly instead of *including* 😊)

***Including*** means ‘exactly these things.’

“We investigate the influence of individual personal characteristics **including** region of origin, age, education, and relatives outside of Ukraine on remittance inflows.”

In English, 'shortly' means SOON.

'Briefly' means SHORT.

(We realize this is illogical, but it's the case anyway!)

*shortly*  
versus  
*briefly*

Briefly, we will take a break (means our break will be short) 😞

Shortly, we will take a break (means our break will be soon). 😊

✗ Shortly, the paper describes...

✓ Briefly, the paper describes.....

So, *shortly* rarely appears in academic texts, though it is usual in presentations.



## Nouns: solid stuff

Scholarly language often prefers nouns and noun phrases to verbs.

*credit limits vs. limiting the amount of credit*

Why?



## Why?

...because once a (repeated) noun string of whatever length has been established in a text (or in a field), readers process it as one easily identifiable chunk, leaving them more cognitive resources to concentrate on the other complex ideas around the noun string.



Noun phrases are also often preferred to possessive forms:

rural communities' development

X

Georgia's poor households

development of rural communities

✓

rural community development

poor Georgian households

Except in citation:

The study of Munich (2010) shows

X

The results of Kališkova indicate...

Munich's (2010) study shows...

✓

Kališkova's results indicate that....

Adjectives: in most cases, don't use them to describe your own work

Not: “striking results” “very significant” coefficients, etc.

If the work merits adjectives, the world will give them to you.

If you must use adjectives, don't use double adjectives.

Results are certainly not “very novel.”



In general, keep it short

“Every word must count. As you edit the paper ask yourself constantly, “can I make the same point in less space?” and “Do I really have to say this?”



# CITATION

in-text citation



Patterson (2009) found that citing is fun. It could also be said that "citing is sometimes perplexing" (Patterson, 2009, p. 23).



parenthetical citation

*with a page number because  
of the direct quotation*

## **The authors....**

Students tend to over-rely on this one simple way to cite a source. This does not demonstrate good writing skills.

Using a variety of citation types demonstrates greater control over the process of writing.



Which of these citation types do you think is **usually** better, and why?

The advantage of using authentic data is that learners encounter target language items in the kinds of contexts where they naturally occur (Nunan, 2008). ← Parenthetical

↓ Integrated

Our results support Nunan's (2008) idea that the advantage of using authentic data is that learners encounter target language items in the kinds of contexts where they naturally occur (Nunan, 2008).

Citation shows your views.

Citation is not only necessary for giving credit to the original author.

Effective citation also shows your stance towards the work you are citing, and how it fits in to your own work.



*As Surowiecki (2011, p. 51) writes,* “you cannot flip a college degree the way you can flip a stock, or even a house”.



Does the author who cited Surowiecki agree with this statement? How do you know?

*Rothstein and Rouse (2011) provide evidence that* student debt burden decreases the likelihood of choosing a lower-paid career, such as becoming a K-12 teacher.



Does the author who cited Rothstein and Rouse think they've proven that student debt burden decreases the likelihood of choosing a lower-paid career? How do you know?

*According to Avery and Turner,* accumulated debt amounted to more than \$800 billion as of June 2010, surpassing credit card debt for the first time (2012).



Do you think that the author is in agreement with Avery and Turner? What is the chance that the next sentence begins with something like ‘However,...’?

*As Surowiecki (2011, p. 51) writes,*  
“you cannot flip a college degree the  
way you can flip a stock, or even a  
house”.



How could you change the citation to  
indicate that you do NOT agree with  
Surowiecki?

*Rothstein and Rouse (2011) provide  
evidence that* student debt burden  
decreases the likelihood of choosing  
a lower-paid career, such as  
becoming a K-12 teacher.



How could you make the citation  
indicate that you think Rothstein and  
Rouse have *proven* that student debt  
burden decreases the likelihood....?

When investing in human capital,  
comparable security can not be  
attained because, in the case of default,  
the individual can not be sold  
(Friedman, 1962).



Does this citation give less  
information than the other examples  
here? In what way?  
In what types of texts would this  
citation be preferred?

## HEDGING: What is the problem with these statements?

The income gap in the United States cannot be solved by tax policy.

Market deregulation improves welfare.

The problem is that it would be easy to argue with them! For this reason, they should be ***hedged***.

*To limit or qualify (something) by conditions or exceptions.  
"experts usually hedge their predictions, just in case"*

See the next slide for different ways to do this.



The use of seat belts prevents injuries in car accidents.

The use of seat belts reduces injuries in car accidents.

prevents>reduces (weaker verb)

The use of seat belts may reduce injuries in car accidents.

reduces>may reduce (probability)

In some circumstances, the use of seat belts may reduce injuries in car accidents.

In some circumstances (limiting scope)

In some circumstances, the use of seat belts may reduce certain types of injuries in car accidents.

certain types of injuries (limiting scope)

According to simulation studies, in some circumstances, the use of seat belts may reduce certain types of injuries in car accidents.

According to simulation studies (adding distance)

How could you hedge this sentence to make it more accurate?

Market deregulation improves welfare.

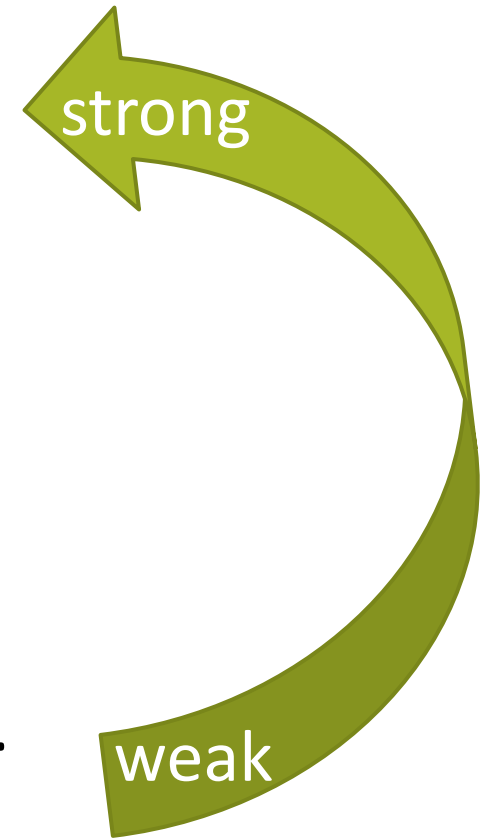


Sometimes you need to strengthen your statements.

Our research results strongly indicate that...

Our research results support the idea that....

It may be that the results of our research could be applied to...



Hedges make your statements less arguable.

Boosters intensify the certainty of what you say.

CONSIDER: Because they carry authorial judgements, hedges and boosters can actually convey the major content of a section of text.

## **Notice** hedgers and boosters

“According to Englander (2013, p. 32), “[n]on-native speakers of English may focus so much on principle content that they simply do not notice the writing itself. If they do not notice the impact of a hedge within the sentence, it is difficult to recreate the desired level of certainty in their own texts.”

“...based on both direct and indirect mention, students noticed hedges and boosters in only 50 of 210 possible cases, a ratio of 24%. Boosters tended to be more visible than hedges.”

# AVOIDING PEEVES

NOUN

*peeves* (plural noun)

1. A cause of annoyance.

2. “My peeve is people writing *it’s* when they mean *its*”.

3. *synonyms*: irritant · source of irritation · source of vexation · annoyance

1. Avoid addressing readers directly:

“**You can see** the data in Table 1.”

“The data appears in Table 1.”

2. Avoid rhetorical questions.

“What can be done to improve the state of the economy?”

“This paper studies ways to improve the state of the economy.”



## AVOIDING PEEVES

3. Avoid phrasal verbs; they are appropriate in speech but not writing.

“Researchers have **found out** that....”

“Researchers have found that...”

4. Avoid ‘big’ and ‘a lot of’; they are imprecise and can sound childish.

“This caused a **big** reaction.”

“This caused a significant/measurable/noticeable reaction.”

“**A lot of** researchers...”

“Many researchers....”



## AVOIDING PEEVES

5. Avoid **'get'** in almost all cases. It is highly imprecise!

“The study **got** the following results.”

“The study obtained...”

“Students hope to **get** a degree.”

“Students hope to earn a degree.”





FYI, here are just some of the many meanings of 'get', so that you can see why it's considered imprecise:

To Get +	Meaning	Example
To get at	Try to express	I think I see what you're getting at
To get away with	Escape punishment for a bad action	I can't believe you got away with cheating!
To get by	Manage financially	Sam doesn't earn much, but we get by.
To get down	Depress, descend	This rain is really getting me down.
To get off	Leave a form of transport (train, bus)	We got off the train before the bomb.
To get on (1)	To enter or sit on a form of transport (bicycle, bus, train)	He got on his bicycle and rode off.
To get on (2)	To have a positive relationship with someone	Amy and I get on really well.
To get along		Amy and I get along really well.
To get on with	To proceed	I'd better get on with this task.
To get out of	Avoid doing something, especially a duty	She got out of doing the washing up every day.
To get over	Recover (from an illness or surprise)	Have you gotten over your cold yet?
To get through	Use or finish the supply of something	We've got through all the sugar.
To get up	Leave your bed	He gets up at 6.00 every morning.
To get up to	Do something (usually bad)	I wonder what the children are getting up to.

## OVERALL: A useful strategy:

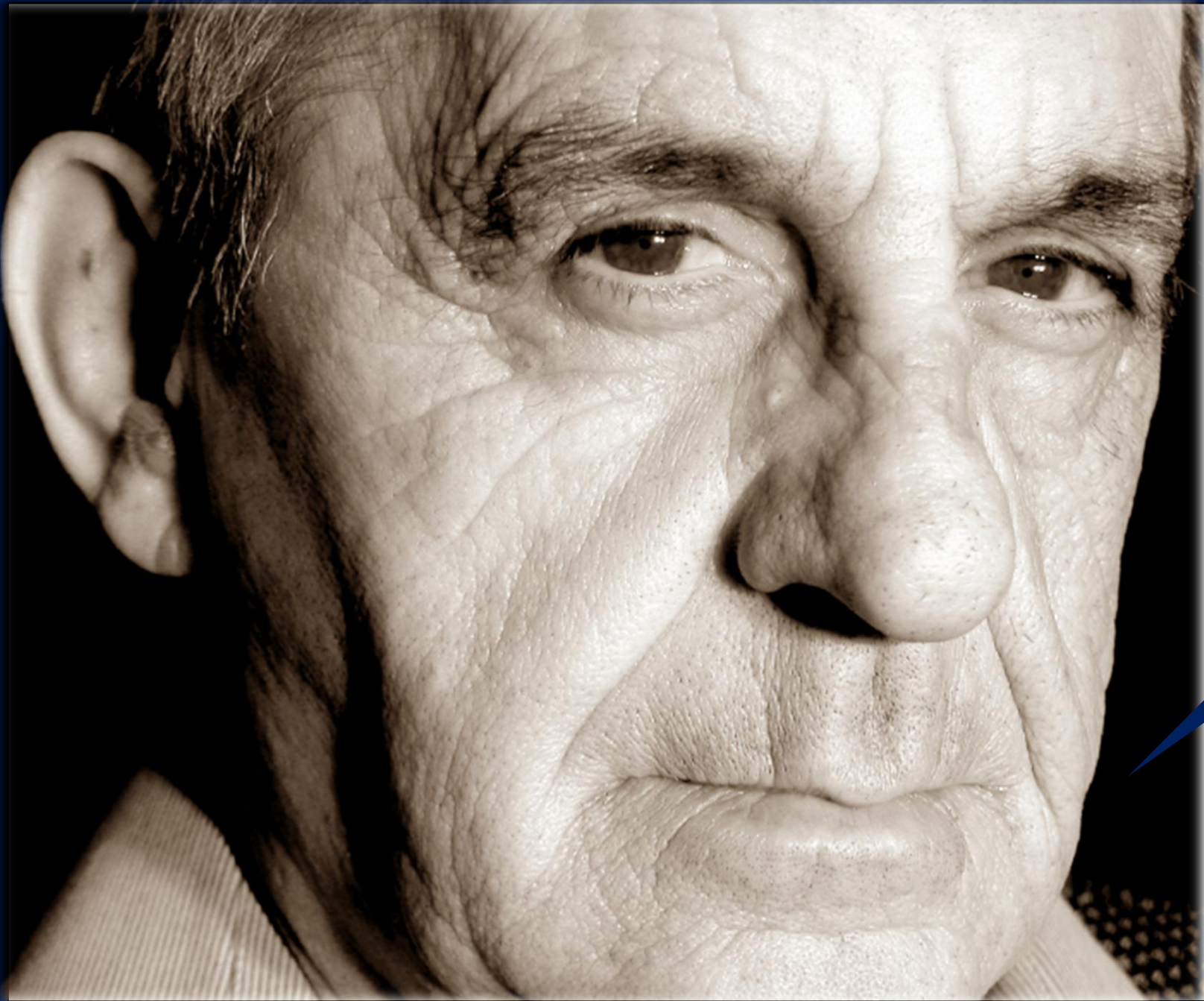
It's a good rule not to write anything you would be embarrassed to *say* to the intended audience. In tutorials at Oxford and Cambridge you have to read your writing out loud, and are embarrassed if it's stupid.



## Another useful strategy:

Imagine a hypothetical person who denies all of your premises and conclusions (he is not your friend!). Arguing with this person will enable you to defend your argument against objections.

Alternatively, it could also enable you to adapt your stance to accommodate such critics.



Try to convince me –  
if you dare!!

A white paper airplane is shown in flight, angled upwards and to the right. The background is a dark blue gradient. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

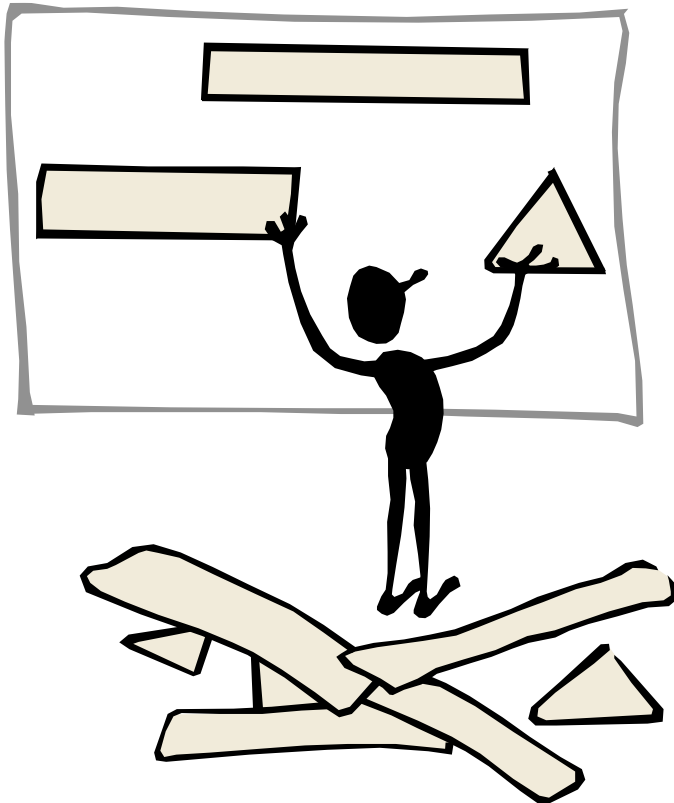
## Revision

.....is so important to the formal, academic writing process that it is fair to say that in this context, writing *is* revision.

Major revision is not inefficient.

The end product is what defines efficiency.

If it is better, then the time and energy spent on revision was efficient.



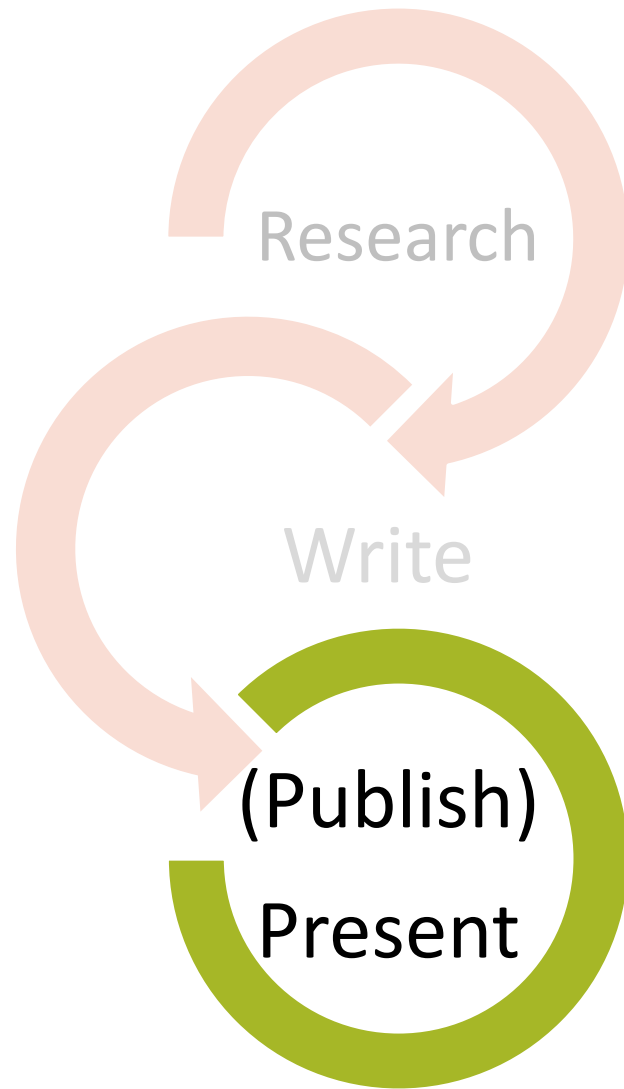




Don't love your first draft too much.

The final draft should not represent everything you have – it should be the *best* you have!





What is different about speaking as versus writing when it comes to presenting your ideas?

Speaking is far more personal and 'risky' because people will necessarily judge your voice, appearance, and delivery in addition to your text and ideas. It's much more of a performance than writing.

Also, your listeners can't independently re-check sections of your work that they didn't understand – they need to understand everything clearly the first time, or they have to specifically ask a question.



Influences content and organization



Consider:

“Presenting is a fundamentally different form of communicating than writing. You’ve got a completed paper. People want you to present it. Cool! It is often done (badly) this way....”

Schwabish, J. 2017. Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks. P. 2 New York: Columbia University Press. See: <https://twitter.com/jschwabish>



“You start to prepare your presentation by making some slides.

You turn some text from your paper into a few bullet points.

You copy figure 1 and paste it in.

Add figure 2 and tables 1, 2, and 3.

Add a slide labeled ‘previous literature’ with your full reference list.

Make a ‘questions?’ slide at the end. Voila!”



Schwabish, J. 2017. Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks. P. 2 New York: Columbia University Press. See: <https://twitter.com/jschwabish>

It is common for presenters not to carefully consider how to strategically present their work in a convincing way.

But, your presentation may well be for high stakes.

Job market, funding and grants, building professional relationships, DPW...

Schwabish, J. 2017. Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks. P. 2 New York: Columbia University Press. See: <https://twitter.com/jschwabish>





# Your (good)presentation is not the same thing as your paper!

Resist the temptation to follow the structure of your paper, and keep in mind that your charts and tables may not translate exactly into a presentation.

## Key Concept:



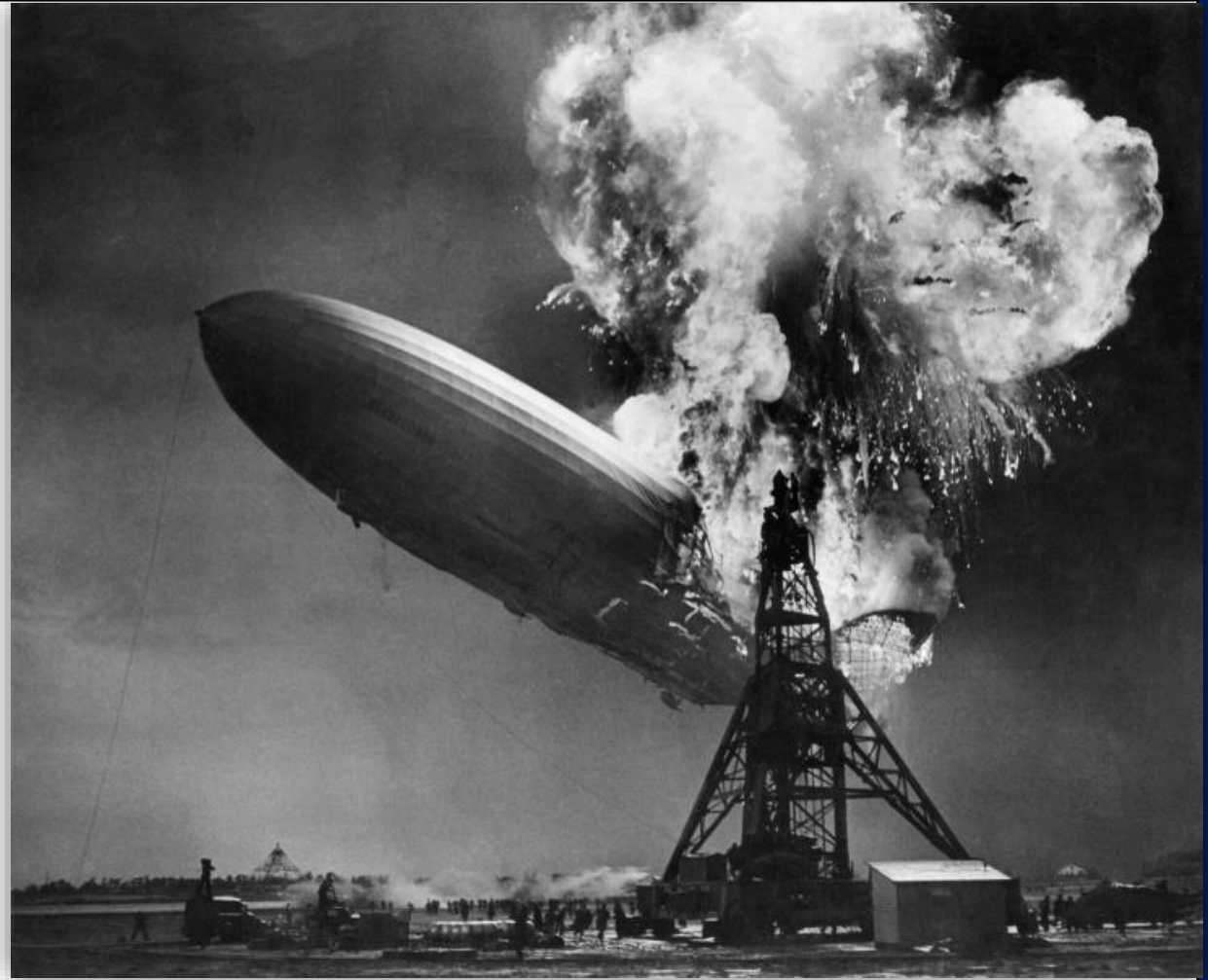
Your presentation is not your paper.

Your presentation is a separate and new work.

Schwabish, J. 2017. Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks. P. 2 New York: Columbia University Press. See: <https://twitter.com/jschwabish>



If you want your presentation  
to be a disaster...



...tell the audience they should read your paper to understand the work.

## Key Concept:

Not all of the information from your paper should (could!) be included in the presentation.



If your audience comes from a range of backgrounds, don't take for granted that they know the methods you used. They will probably appreciate a brief description.



If most of your audience consists of scientists in your field, you can skip introducing it and spend more time on the novelty of your research.

## Organizing

Presentations in English usually follow a very specific pattern

Using the expected pattern and clear signaling language helps your international audience to follow you more easily. While you may sometimes see (and use) variations of this pattern, it is a useful basis to begin your academic presentations in English.



Introduction

Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em.

Body

Tell 'em.

Conclusion

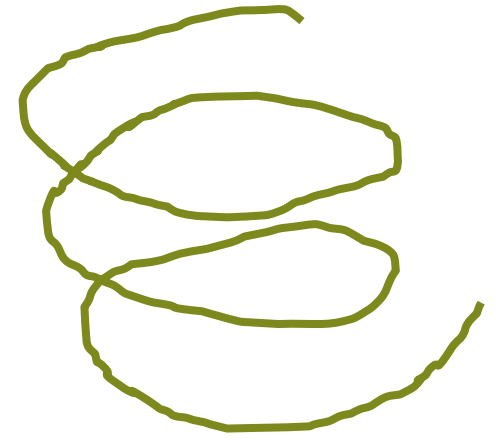
Tell 'em what you told 'em.



English: Speak very directly. Tell the listeners what you will say, say it, then tell them what you said. The responsibility for listener's understanding is mostly on the speaker!



Slavic languages: Speak on the topic, but divergence and elaboration are normal. Shared responsibility for understanding.



Asian languages: It may be considered rude and unprofessional to speak in a direct manner. Responsibility for understanding is mostly on the listener!

## Speaking effectively

Challenges can arise when presenting complex information to an international audience (from mixed language backgrounds).



Will everyone understand your accent? Your pronunciation? What if some of the listeners don't have very proficient English language skills?



Some language items should be carefully pre-planned for sure:

- In-field repeated terms (for accuracy and correct pronunciation)
- Signaling language
- Highlighting key points via repetition and restatement
- Summaries after sections
- Opening and closing

Making sure that these key elements are crystal clear goes a long way towards making your presentation comprehensible in international situations.

Have you ever noticed a presenter mispronounce an important or frequently repeated word? This can cause confusion, especially in international situations.

For example, two very commonly mispronounced words:










determ  ne

var  able



Should be: deTERmine ('min' not 'mine')  
VARiable ('var' like 'vary')

This table shows the correct stressed syllables of frequently-mispronounced words. Can you think of others you sometimes hear pronounced wrongly?

								
<u>fall</u>	<u>ta</u> ble	im <u>ply</u>	<u>cre</u> ditor	<u>mar</u> ginally	sta <u>bi</u> lity	inte <u>gra</u> tion	elas <u>ti</u> city	assy <u>me</u> trically
<u>debt</u>	<u>pur</u> chase		<u>var</u> iance	<u>var</u> iable	der <u>iv</u> ative		psycho <u>log</u> ical	
<u>scarce</u>	<u>caus</u> al				en <u>do</u> genous		probab <u>ili</u> ty	
					hypo <u>the</u> sis		simult <u>ane</u> ous	
					exo <u>g</u> enous			
					homo <u>g</u> enous			

## Wording: genre considerations also apply to presentations

Are you presenting  
or teaching?

### Presenting research or research ideas

Main idea comes (very) early and the value of the work should be explicit.

The language is often a bit more hedged and formal.

“I’d like to show you...”

“Now, I’ll explain my ....”

### Teaching:

Explanations are more likely to be progressive and extended, and main ideas may come later in the talk. The language is more inclusive and more certain.

“Next, let’s look at ...”

“Now, I’m going to tell you something about...”

## **Pro Tip:** Don't be afraid of silence!!

“Silence can be articulate.

Leave a long pause right after making a key point.

Let it sink in.

If you forget where you are in the presentation, give yourself permission to take as long as you need to think of what to say next.”



Shewchuck, J. (n.d.) Giving an Academic Talk. University of California at Berkeley. Accessed on 10 January, 2016 from: <http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/~jrs/speaking.html>

## **Pro Tip:** Avoid commenting on your speaking

Never meta-comment on your speaking.

How often have you heard a speaker say, “I guess I'm running out of time; I'll just go through this quickly”? Did you hear a single word he said after that? Silently decide what to do; don't burden your audience with it.”

Shewchuck, J. (n.d.) Giving an Academic Talk. University of California at Berkeley. Accessed on 10 January, 2016 from: <http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/~jrs/speaking.html>

## Visuals: avoid the top three things audiences hate

Presenter reads from the slides.  
Slides with many long sentences.  
Text too small.





Visuals: What are we supposed to see?

Interpret and comment on the data.

Contextualize the information on your graph/table verbally.

Generally, if it's worth putting on a slide, it's worth pointing out explicitly.



# Visuals

Researchers face unique challenges in designing presentations as their content is technical and complex.

Aim to create visuals similar to LaTeX: bring the same clear, readable layout and precision to your slides.

## Visuals: Unify your presentations



Unify your visuals by using consistent fonts, sizes, and colors.

Unify your presentation by tightly connecting your vocal delivery to your visuals.

**Pro Tip:** Try not to allow the information on your slides to precede your oral delivery by much. You can avoid this with fly-ins or just by adding a slide or two where needed.

For example:

Here, while you are discussing fresh fruit, the rest of us are reading about free market economy, the US market, and how horrible this slide is!!

# Chilean Exports

- Fresh fruit leads Chile's export mix - Chile emerges as major supplier of fresh fruit to world market due to ample natural resources, consumer demand for fresh fruit during winter season in U.S. and Europe, and incentives in agricultural policies of Chilean government, encouraging trend toward diversification of exports and development of nontraditional crops - U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Economic Research Service Report
- Chile is among the developing economies taking advantage of these trends, pursuing a free market economy. This has allowed for diversification through the expansion of fruit production for export, especially to the U.S. and Western Europe. Chile has successfully diversified its agricultural sector to the extent that it is now a major fruit exporting nation. Many countries view Chile's diversification of agriculture as a model to be followed.
- Meanwhile, the U.S. remains the largest single market for Chile's fruit exports. However, increasing demand from the EC and Central and East European countries combined may eventually surpass exports to the U.S., spurring further growth in Chile's exports.
- If you've read this far, your eyes probably hurt and you've been reading this tedious long-winded text instead of listening to me. I'm insulted- can't you see I'm doing a presentation up here? Look at me! Congratulations, however, on having such good eyesight.

# Visuals



Consider the notion that there is **utility in color**

Judicious use of color can clarify your data and draw attention to important points

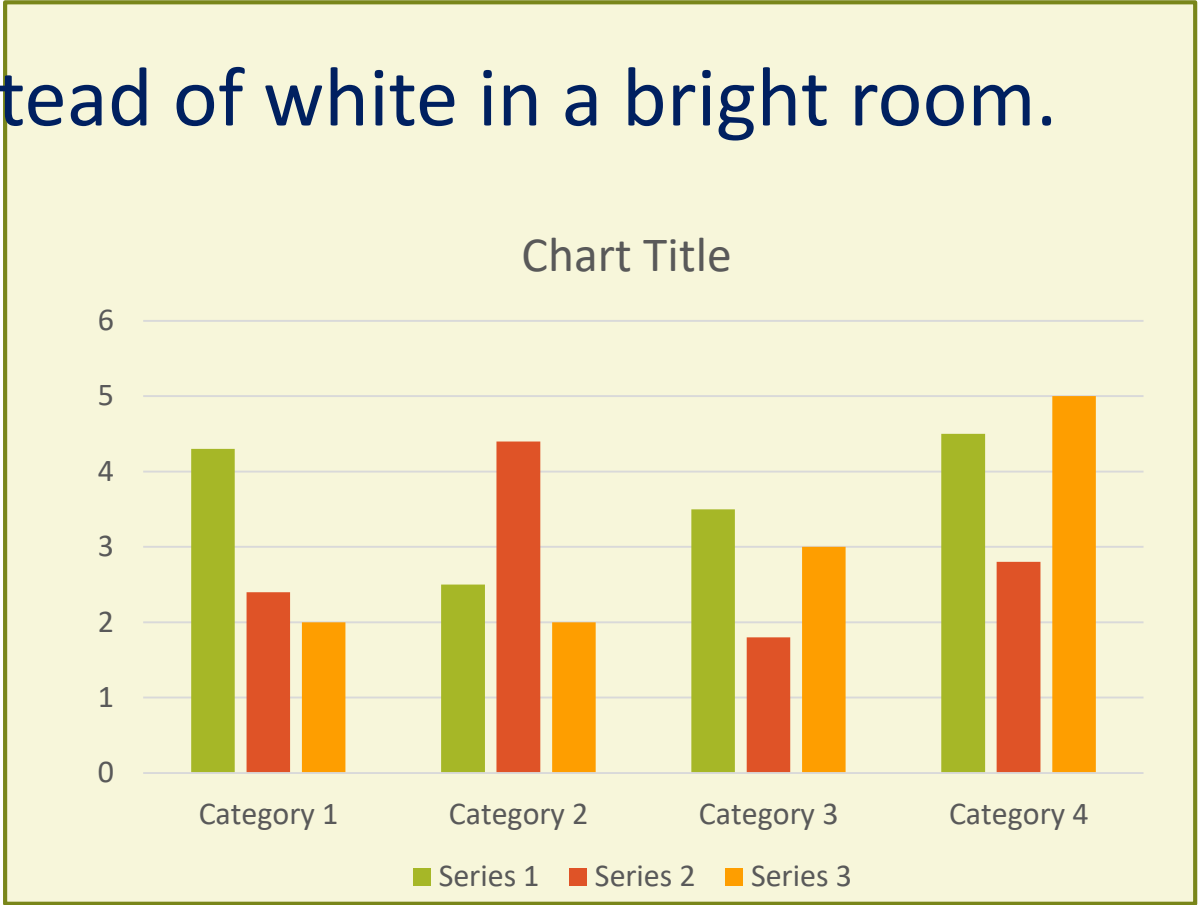
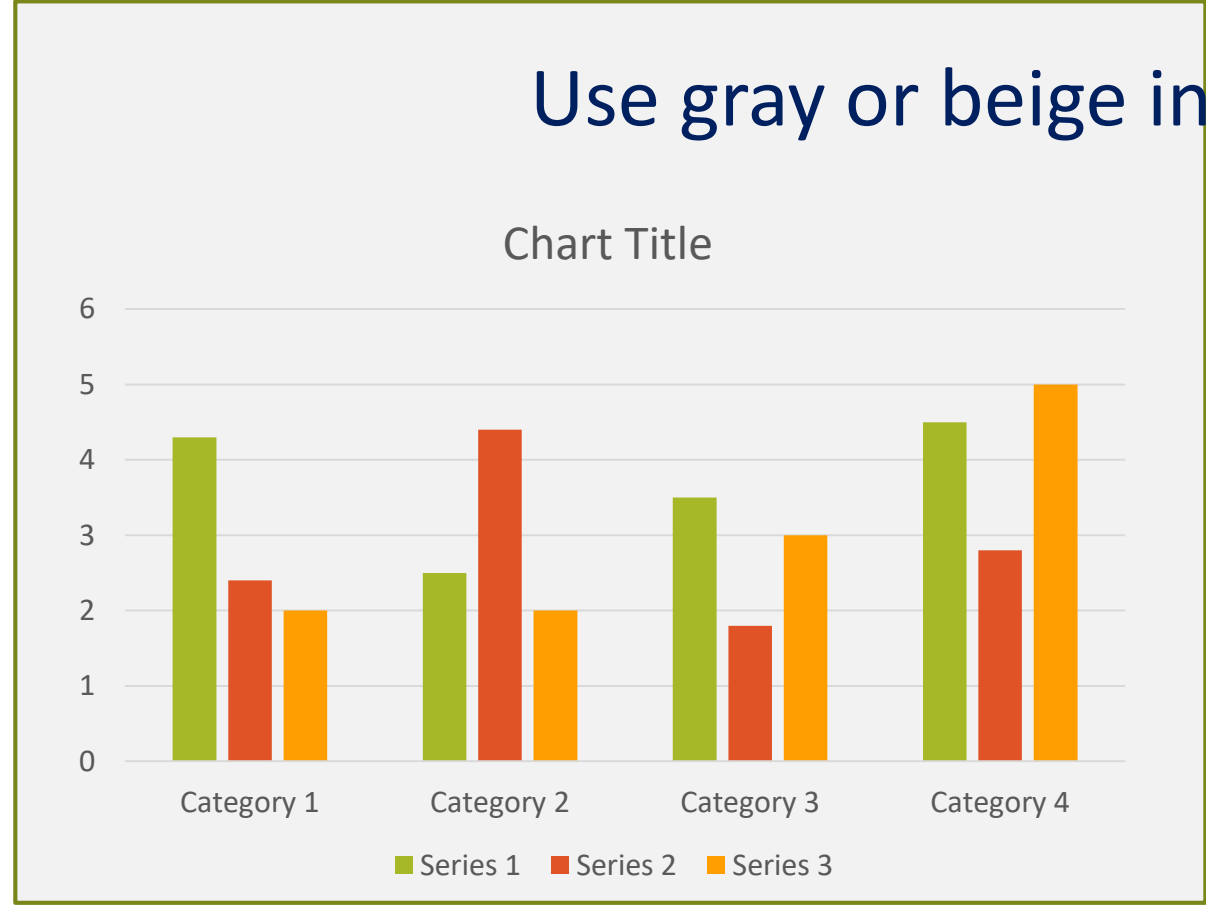
Schwabish, J. 2017. Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks. P. 2  
New York: Columbia University Press.

Some research indicates that white type on a dark background helps readers to focus on complex content better.

Schwabish, J. 2017. Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks. P. 2  
New York: Columbia University Press.

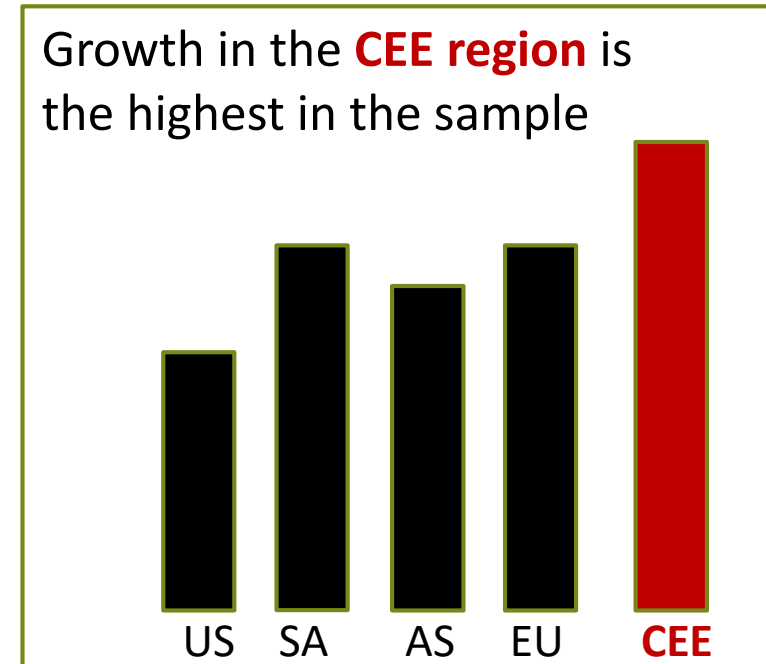
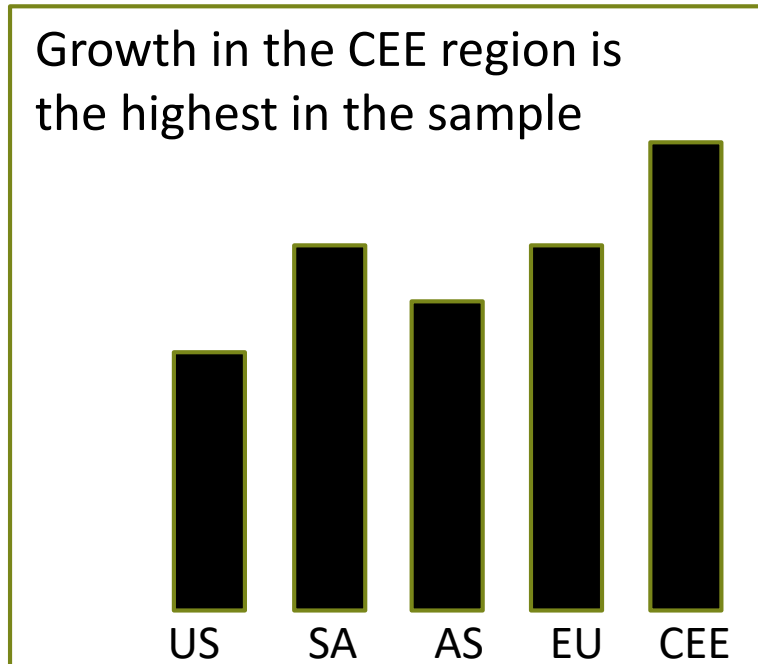
Good background colors also depend on the size of the room and the intensity of light there.

Use gray or beige instead of white in a bright room.





Consider how careful use of color can highlight your important points.



## Visuals

variable of interest



$$y_t = x_t^{LR} + 0.5x_t^{SR} + e_t$$

“For slides with formulae, one of my favorite tricks is to add arrows and labels pointing to the variables in a formula, reminding the audience what each one means.

Few people will remember nomenclature that you defined on a previous slide. “

# Body Language

Eye contact  
+  
Posture  
=  
Attitude

(note that this is the same person!)



**Pro tip:** Keep in mind that if you are wearing a shirt with words on it, everyone is going to read it! Neutral clothing that makes you feel both comfortable and professional is ideal.

## Final Presentations Tip: Consider the academic or professional community

You will want your presentation to generally fit into the local expectations.

It's a good idea to ask your professors for any guidelines they have for presentations.



When presenting at conferences,  
you may have more freedom😊



The End



We hope you've enjoyed this tutorial and that you have found a few useful and interesting items in it!

We wish you every success with your writing and presentations, and we will be happy to hear from you with any questions or comments.

Deborah Nováková and the Academic Skills Center

ASCorganizer@cerge-ei.cz

Some especially useful resources for MA and PhD Economics writers and speakers:

Chaubey, V. (2018, p. 20) The Little Book of Research Writing. Amazon Distribution. [www.econscribe.org](http://www.econscribe.org).

Cochrane, J. (2005) Writing Tips for PhD Students. University of Chicago.

Available at: [http://faculty.chicagobooth.edu/john.cochrane/teaching/papers/phd\\_paper\\_writing.pdf](http://faculty.chicagobooth.edu/john.cochrane/teaching/papers/phd_paper_writing.pdf)

Englander, K. (2013). Writing and Publishing Science Research Papers in English. A Global Perspective. Springer

Schwabish, J. (2017). Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks. New York: Columbia University Press.

Thomson, W. (2011) A Guide for the Young Economist. MIT Press