



STUDYING SUCCESSFULLY

How do you write an academic text? Part II

Advanced skills

With most studies at the UvA, you will learn in the first year how you must write an academic text and the requirements such a text must fulfil. The rules can differ per study or specialisation. It is essential that you are aware of this. The rules are mostly listed on Blackboard. Below you will find what is expected from your writing skills point by point if you received an education in academic writing and where you can find more extensive advice and information about the aspects named.

- *Taaltip (Language tip) 1590 'Ordenen van informatie* (Ordering information) for more extensive information about various ordering principals
- *Taaltip 1308 'Het tekstschema* (The text outline) for more information about combining the research question with the text outline
- *Taaltip 2954 'Uitwerken argumentatiestructuur* (Elaborating on argumentation structure) for more information about structuring an argument

Formulating a clear research question

Considering critical questions is important for the progress of each academic discipline. Good research begins with a good question. Before you start a thesis, essay or report, you must first have formulated a clear research question or problem. For this, you must be able to restrict your subject and make it concrete.

TIP Look on www.taalwinkel.nl at Language tip (*Taaltip*) 1111 *Formuleren van de centrale vraag* (Formulating a central question) for more explanation about coming up with this.

Coming up with a suitable structure

In order to be able to answer the research question step for step, you need to come up with a good structure. For this, you will need knowledge of various types of ordering principals and text outlines for various types of texts. It is especially important that you have insight into writing texts in which you substantiate your viewpoint with proper argumentation. You need to carefully consider the structure prior to writing.

TIP Look on www.taalwinkel.nl at the following language

Including the correct components

Longer texts such as theses and research reports consist mostly of numerous fixed components such as: the cover page, summary, table of contents, introduction, conclusion, literature list and notes. It is also the case in this instance that you must apply the conventions of your own field of study. Is the summary, for example, before or actually after the text?

Ensuring proper coherence

TIP At www.taalwinkel.nl you will find under Language tip 1860 *Tekstonderdelen* (Text components) more general information about the various components of longer texts. You should also look at the text of fellow students who achieve good results for these components. Or look at examples or rules for your own study on Blackboard or in the course catalogue.

On <http://humoz.hum.uva.nl/> you will find a lot of information and advice about writing academic

In a good academic text, it must be clear to the reader how sentences, paragraphs, but also larger sections of text, are connected. As a writer, you must clarify those connections by using linking words (thus, but, although etc.) and reference words (this, that, of which etc.) and to familiarise the reader with your text through directions such as: This first chapter will explain how..., these aspects are handled point by point etc. You also need to clearly present your viewpoint and the supporting arguments to the readers.

TIP Read Language Tip 2165 on www.taalwinkel.nl for an example of how you ensure adequate coherence in your text.

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STUDYING SUCCESSFULLY

self-discipline persistence context

remembering INDEPENDENCE CRITICAL THINKING

flexible thinking EFFECTIVENESS

learning styles repetitions

making connections exams

Incorporating sources

You must be able to put the information that you have collected through literature research and empirical research into your own words and incorporate them into a well-written story. In order to do this, you must be able to paraphrase well, that is to say: put texts of other people into your own words. Moreover, it must be clear to the reader which information comes from your and which information comes from other people. You make that clear by referring properly to the sources. You need to present data that you collected during your research in well-organised manner via diagrams, tables and graphs.

TIP Read Language Tip 82 *Literatuur verwerken* (Processing literature) on www.taalwinkel.nl for more information about paraphrasing and citing literature.

Properly substantiated and correct argumentation

Proper argumentation is essential for a prospective academic. You want to be able to convince others with your insight. Your argumentation must be properly substantiated and the hidden argumentation must also be correct. Furthermore, you must ensure that no sophisms occur in your argumentation because these undermine the strength of your argumentation.

TIP Read the Language tips 808, 812, 3341 and 3344 on www.taalwinkel.nl about formulation of an argument or read *Schrijven van betogen* (Writing arguments) by W. Koetsenruijter.

Using an academic writing style

You will develop an academic writing style in the course of your study. This will in part occur because you increasingly adopt the standard formulations and specialise terminology, but also because you can word ideas better through writing and reading a lot. An academic writing style is characterised by clean, neutral use of language. Short and medium sentences are interspersed and the sentence structure is correct and you possess a large vocabulary, as a result of which you can express yourself in a nuanced way.

TIP On www.taalwinkel.nl, you will find extensive information about an academic writing style under Language tip 3008. For advice about a good writing style, you should also read Language tip 3827 *Stijltips* (Style tips). To gain an impression of your own style, you can also do the *Stijltoets* (Style test)

Perfect language and text preparation

Finally, you are expected to submit a text that is faultless in terms of language. You should correctly apply the grammatical and spelling rules of the Dutch language and not make any mistakes when using punctuation marks. The technical preparation of the text must also occur in accordance with rules of the study programme: cover page, titles, margins, type of font and font size and spacing must be correct.

TIP If you are not good at reading and writing in a critical way, ask someone to take a critical look at your text before handing it in. Furthermore, you can visit www.taalwinkel.nl for:

- *Taaltip 824 Grammaticale kwesties* (Grammatical questions)
- The grammar test under the option *Taalhulp* (Language help)
- The tests on difficult spelling questions 1 and 2 under the option *Taalhulp* (Language help) in order to see how good your spelling is
- *Taaltip 4160 Overzicht leestekens* (Punctuation marks overview)
- The punctuation mark test under the option *Taalhulp* (Language help)
- *Taaltip 2718 Technische verzorging* (Technical presentation)
- *Taaltip 2027 De lay-out van alinea's* (The layout of paragraphs)

Problems?

Have you established after reading this text that one or more aspects of your writing skills are insufficient, then please contact the Institute for Dutch Language Education (INTT) of the UvA for advice or to do the course *Beter Schrijven* (Better Writing) via email intt@uva.nl. The INTT is located in the PC Hooftgebouw on the fourth floor, room 4.06.

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