

English  
for  
academic  
study:

Sample unit

# Writing

Course Book

Anne Pallant

# Book map

Unit	Unit essay	Objectives
1 Academic achievement	Writing an essay: <i>What are the aims of academic study and how can they be achieved?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflecting on how to achieve academic success: questionnaire 1.1–1.4</li> <li>• Reflecting on issues in academic writing: questionnaire 1.5–1.8</li> <li>• Overcoming difficulties of academic writing: reflecting on issues in writing</li> <li>• Acknowledging expectations of the reader: reflecting on issues in writing</li> <li>• Reflecting on different approaches to organizing ideas: planning and introductions</li> <li>• Evaluating writing</li> </ul>
2 Early human development	Writing an essay: <i>Nature strongly influences early human development. Discuss</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzing the essay title</li> <li>• Considering how to organize ideas</li> <li>• Choosing information to support ideas</li> <li>• Practising how to write paragraph leaders</li> </ul>
3 Telemedicine	Writing an examination essay: <i>As technology continues to improve, the range of potential uses of telemedicine will increase. Telemedicine will offer more beneficial applications in preventing disease than in curing disease. Discuss.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding differences between writing course work and writing for examinations</li> <li>• Developing rapid analysis of essay questions</li> <li>• Making decisions about organizing ideas</li> <li>• Completing essays within a time limit</li> </ul>
4 Statistics without tears	Writing an essay: <i>Statistics should be interpreted with caution as they can be misleading; they can both lie and tell the truth. Discuss.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizing ideas in response to an essay title</li> <li>• Identifying useful information in a text</li> <li>• Ending paragraphs with an effective sentence</li> <li>• Writing concluding paragraphs</li> </ul>
5 Human activity and climate change	Writing an essay: <i>What role has human activity played in causing climate change?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing clear definitions</li> <li>• Supporting and developing ideas</li> </ul>
6 The global village	Writing an essay: <i>Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on the world today.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choosing patterns of organization: cause and effect</li> <li>• Incorporating information from research</li> </ul>
7 The new linguistic order	Writing an assignment: choice of three titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simulating a real essay assignment: preparation</li> <li>• Looking at other patterns of organization</li> </ul>



# Introduction

The approach used in this Writing course combines four major aspects of writing methodology based on practical classroom experience and well-founded research. They are:

- The process approach to writing
- The development of critical thinking skills
- The microskills of writing
- The importance of genre

## 1. The process approach to writing

The process approach to writing has now been used widely for a number of years on writing courses throughout the world. This approach has proved itself as an effective way of improving the academic writing skills of students studying English for academic purposes. The basic concept of this approach is that good writers go through a number of processes while composing a text before they produce their final product. The main underlying principles are:

- **Writing is a recursive process.** Effective writing results from rewriting and revising at each stage of the composing process. A good writer goes back and thinks again before continuing to write. You will be asked to:
  - brainstorm ideas, i.e., think quickly to get ideas for your essay;
  - organize your ideas into a plan;
  - write your first draft;
  - revise and edit your first draft, according to peer feedback and your own developing ideas;
  - rewrite it to produce a second draft;
  - revise and edit your second draft, according to teacher feedback and your own developing ideas;
  - rewrite it to produce a third draft.
- **It helps to share and discuss the writing process with others.** Your work improves if you talk to others about your ideas and problems. Simply by talking to another student, you can clarify aspects of your work that you are not sure about. Another person will have an objective view as your reader and will be able to make useful suggestions about your writing.

When you write, you write for an audience so you need to think about how to structure your message in order to communicate your ideas in the clearest way. It therefore helps to show your writing to others so that you can get feedback and learn how to adapt your writing to different audiences.

During your writing course, you will have the opportunity to discuss your writing at each stage of the process.

- **A good writer is critical of her/his own work.** You should read your work carefully and consider both the strengths and weaknesses of your writing.
  - a) Self-evaluation:** To help you develop your critical ability, you will be asked to consider a series of *evaluation questions*, which you will use to evaluate your own writing.
  - b) Peer evaluation:** You will also be asked to consider a series of evaluation questions which you will use to evaluate the writing of another student. You will carry out peer evaluation by reading the student's essay, offering suggestions and commenting on it in a way that is helpful and constructive, as well as receiving comments from her/him. When reading another student's essay, you will focus on the organization of the ideas and the overall argument of the text. At this stage, this is more important than the accuracy of the language, spelling and punctuation, unless errors make the essay difficult to understand.

Your teacher will read the second draft of your essays, and will respond with comments and suggestions. Her/his feedback will focus on:

- task achievement, i.e., how well you have responded to the title of your essay;
- organization and development of ideas;
- content;
- language.

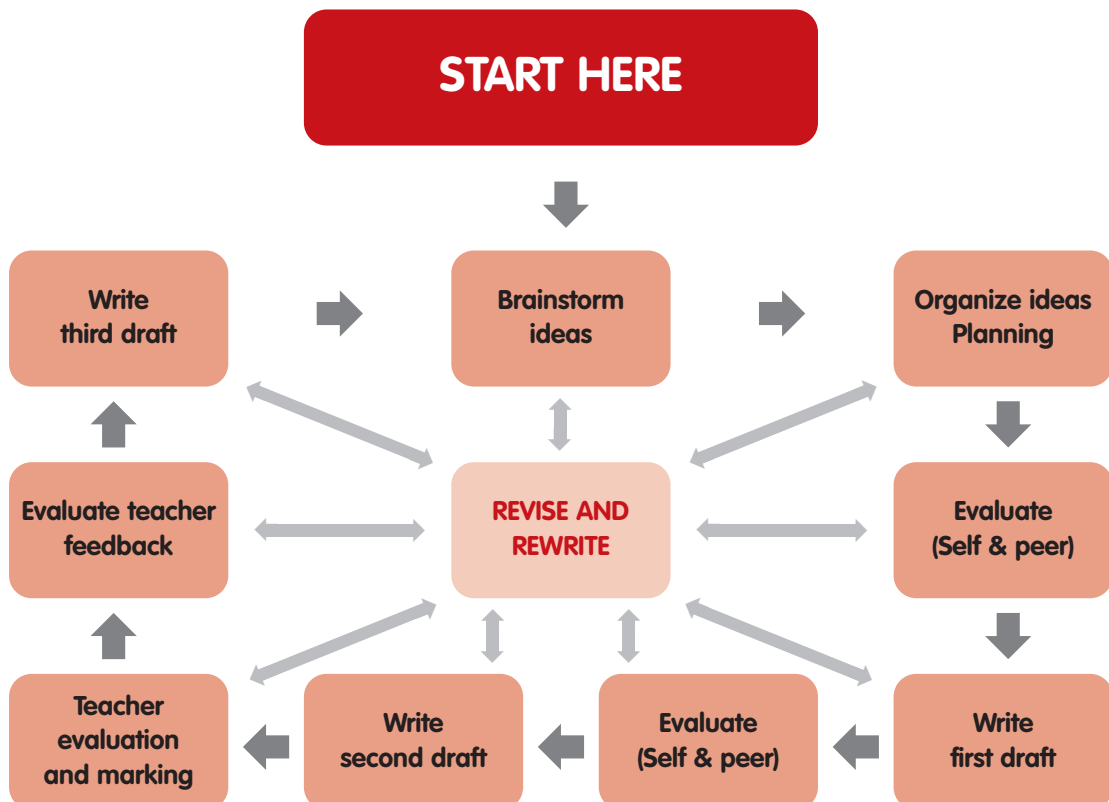
S/he will give you feedback on language problems through the use of symbols, which will indicate the type of error you have made, such as:

- Using the wrong word (*WW*)
- Using the wrong form of the word (*WF*).

Your teacher will explain this system in more detail and refer you to a key to the symbols. You will be asked to correct your language errors as well as improve other aspects of your essay; this will be your final editing work.

**Although some of these approaches may be unfamiliar to you, the aim is to help you acquire skills with which you will be able to produce good written English without dependence on a teacher. This is important for your future studies.**

In diagrammatic form, the process looks like this:



## 2. The development of critical thinking skills

At the advanced level necessary for your studies, academic writing should express the critical thinking and reasoning which has been used to develop the main ideas in your writing. This is a fundamental skill which is increasingly necessary for successful academic study in higher education. It could typically involve:

- assessing information in order to show how it relates to an understanding of the *truth* in a particular context;
- identifying problems;
- seeking solutions to these problems;
- evaluating the solutions;
- assessing the implications (or effect) if those solutions are applied.

Research has shown that working for a period of time on one particular topic provides a basis for developing and expressing critical thinking skills. This is one of the reasons why your writing tasks are based on specific reading texts.

Many of the tasks that you will do during the course will contribute to the development and expression of your critical thinking skills. You may discover how writing of this kind in English in higher education differs from writing in your own language.

## 3. The microskills of writing

*EAS Writing* will also deal with other important aspects of writing, such as:

- how to write an effective introduction and conclusion;
- how to communicate the main idea of a paragraph to the reader;
- how to support your main ideas with examples;
- how to express yourself in writing using more complex sentences;
- how to write accurately and fluently.

It will also help you to expand your use of language appropriate to the task.

## 4. The importance of genre

To a certain extent, *EAS Writing* will look at how different academic subjects require different styles of writing, i.e. genre. For example, an essay written in a science subject will typically be in a more concise style than one written in a social science subject. A variety of ways of organizing writing will therefore be analyzed and practised. These will include essays of:

- cause and effect;
- situation, problem, solution(s), implication(s) and evaluation;
- comparison and contrast.

The course will also increase your awareness of the type of language most appropriate to express these patterns of organization. By the end of the course, you should be able to write effectively for your individual purposes, and be able to make appropriate choices when approaching a writing task. In your writing, you should be able to show clear development of a topic through good organization and language use.

## 5. The link between reading and writing

Research has shown that an integrated approach to the teaching of writing contributes to the development of the critical thinking skills of the learner. Carson views critical thinking as:

‘the ability to transform information for their own [students’] purposes in reading and to synthesise their prior knowledge with another text in writing ... Together, reading and writing facilitate the development of critical thinking’. (Carson, EJ, & Leki (1993), *Reading in the Composition Classroom*, Heinle and Heinle: p.100.)

The implication of the research for teaching academic writing is that there should be an integrated skills approach that includes the specific development of critical thinking skills.

The structure of *EAS Writing* reflects this approach. Each unit has a writing topic that is based on the relevant reading text in the *Reading and Writing Source Book*. This follows the principle that, as a student, you read an academic text for a particular purpose. One of the main purposes of the texts will be to provide relevant information to support your ideas in the written assignments. You will need to process and critically analyze that information before incorporating it within your own argument; you will, in this way, be engaging in problem-solving activities. It is important that your writing development reflects the problem-solving you will meet in your academic study.

## 6. Timed writing

Written examinations will be a major method of formal assessment for many of you once you start your chosen degree course. To be successful in examinations, you will need to be able to write quickly and concisely when answering a question. Writing to complete an essay within a time limit will be practised on this course as an integral component. You will also develop your technique in quickly analyzing an examination question, in order to respond to the task appropriately.

## 7. Some practical points

You should type your first drafts on a word processor. This is because:

- it is easier for your classmates to read;
- it is easier to make corrections and revisions to your work;
- You will be required to submit word-processed essays in your future studies.

You should use an approved university style of layout. This might be **Times New Roman font size 12** and **one and a half spacing** for the main body of your text. However, if you have little or no experience in word processing, you should discuss with your teacher when you should begin typing your essays.

When you give your teacher the **second draft** of your essay, you will also give her/him your **plan** and your **first draft**. This will enable her/him:

- to assess the effectiveness of the process;
- to assess your response to evaluation;
- to help you further.

Similarly, when you give your teacher the **third draft** of your essay, you will also give her/him your **second draft**.



# 6

## The global village

This unit will help you:

- learn how to choose appropriate patterns of organizing the content of your essays;
- practise incorporating ideas from your reading into your writing.

### Task 1: Microskills: Organizing essays of cause and effect

One common approach to problem-solving in academic life is to examine the causes and effects of situations. When expressing these in writing, you need to use appropriate patterns of content organization, and appropriate language; this makes the link between the cause and effect clear and explicit. You will explore this approach in Unit 6.

#### 1.1 Read the following student essay entitled: **Discuss the positive and negative effects of tourism on people and the environment.** Identify the purpose of each paragraph.

Write notes in the margin and underline key points that help you decide.

1

Since the end of World War II, the developed countries have made very significant leaps in progress. A consequence of this development for the populations of these countries has been that their standards of living have risen year after year. They have now reached a situation in which most of the people are living a healthy and comfortable life. Parallel to the rise in standards of living, many people have developed a strong desire to visit different parts of the world, resulting in a steep rise in foreign tourism. Nowadays, it is common for people to take a holiday in a foreign country rather than in their own native country. This essay will attempt to discuss the effects of tourism on people and the environment.

---

---

2

Most people tend to take a holiday at least once a year; for some people it is almost a duty. Owing to the rising standards of living, people, especially from the developed countries, do not hesitate to spend large amounts of money on the pleasure of having a break far from their permanent residence. Travel agencies and tourism companies have capitalised on this trend; they display advertisements with attractive pictures, and offer affordable prices with the aim of enticing more people to travel the world on holiday. This has caused the number of people who travel for their holidays to multiply many times over the last few decades. As holidaymakers tend to travel to tropical areas and coastal towns where they can enjoy permanent sunshine, beaches or extensive forest areas, it seems that no part of the world has been untouched by tourism.

---

---

3

The millions of holidaymakers who travel the world looking for new places have caused serious problems for the local population and for the environment of the destination countries. In fact, one result of the rising numbers of tourists visiting developing countries is that a certain proportion of the local population has developed illegal activities. For instance, the trade in ivory products has increased at the expense of elephants, especially in the Ivory Coast and Kenya. Another example is the trade in Siberian tiger furs which is threatening the species with extinction. Worse still, particularly in South Asia, the population has suffered from the rapid proliferation of prostitution, mainly due to the large number of people operating sex tourism. Thailand, where minors are occasionally sold by their parents, is a case in point.

---

---

4

Another harmful effect of tourism is the damage it causes to the environment. In fact, as a result of the large number of tourists visiting some parts of the world, environmental damage has reached serious proportions and natural resources have been degraded. An example of this is the Mediterranean Sea, which is reported to be the dirtiest sea in the world because of sewage contamination; German coasts have also been polluted by effluent from the many cruising boats; in France, where sewage is sometimes discharged directly into streams, most of those in the Pyrenees are now polluted. Above all, the dense aerial traffic created by the active movement of holidaymakers has caused an alarming rise in air pollution; this gives rise to acid rain that, in turn, contaminates soils and causes serious damage to forest areas. For example, 60% of the Alpine forests in France are reported to be experiencing serious degradation. So it would seem that mass tourism has resulted in very serious problems for both the people and the environment of the destination countries.

---

---

5

The rising intensity of the threat that mass tourism represents has prompted some governments and non-governmental organizations to act swiftly. In fact, some governments have made considerable efforts to sensitise their population to the threat that tourism represents to the environment; campaigns have been launched and money has been spent to protect the environment and to counteract the environmental damage that has already occurred. In France, for example, the government spends billions of Euros on ways to protect the national nature reserves and tidy the beaches and mountain villages from tourist-related waste. It is also engaged in creating tree plantations to replace trees destroyed by acid rain. In York, in England, many residents wear anti-tourist badges in protest against the increase in the number of tourists. Access to many monuments, such as the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy and the Parthenon in Athens, is extremely restricted. In addition, local governments in Africa, with the help of non-governmental organizations like Greenpeace, have declared war on the illegal trade in ivory and the fur from wild animals that are currently menaced with extinction. It therefore seems that significant effort has been made in different parts of the world where nature appears to be threatened.

---

---



6

The solutions that have been adopted by governments have not shown much effectiveness or efficiency, however. Although governments have made serious efforts to deal with the problems, sometimes by enacting strict new laws, mass tourism is still causing many problems, and the intensity of degradation that has been registered in the environment has not declined. Also, the traffic in ivory and rare animal furs has considerably increased, and gangs are becoming more organized because of the potential profits that can be obtained from this traffic. The strict laws do not seem to dissuade the gangs from carrying out these illegal and destructive activities. In addition, in spite of the huge efforts made by the international courts and the organizations for the protection and promotion of children's rights, there are still hundreds of thousands of tourists who are reported to practise sex tourism and to abuse poverty. In addition, there is a marked deterioration in the behaviour of young people associated with tourism, such as alcohol-related problems and violence, which governments have been unable to prevent despite their efforts to do so.

---

---

7

This essay has provided an illustration of the problems generated by mass tourism nowadays, outlined the laws and initiatives adopted by governments and international non-governmental organizations to abolish these problems, and evaluated the solutions. At present, a variety of wild animals and flora is seriously threatened with extinction, the deterioration of sea water has already caused the extinction of some sea species, and the world is losing a forest the size of Britain every year. If nothing is done in the next few years, the worst possible outcome is to be expected, and more destruction is likely to occur to nature and humanity. The underlying causes of these problems require more serious attention, and greater consideration should be paid to the initiatives introduced to solve the problems.

---

---

Edited extracts from authentic student material

1.2

**Look back at the title in Ex 1.1 and decide whether the writer has addressed all the parts of the question. For example:**

- Are all the paragraphs necessary?
- Are all the relevant points appropriately developed?

**What other questions can you ask to evaluate the success of this essay?**

**1.3** There are a number of different ways of developing an essay involving an explanation and analysis of the causes and effects of a situation. Study the two simplest models set out below. Then think about them in relation to the essay you have just read.

- Which of the two models is most similar to the essay?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each pattern?

1	Paragraph 1	Introduction (which introduces the situation to the reader)
	Paragraph 2	Causes
	Paragraph 3	Causes
	Paragraph 4	Causes
	Paragraph 5	Transition paragraph
	Paragraph 6	Effects
	Paragraph 7	Effects
	Paragraph 8	Effects
	Paragraph 9	Evaluation
	Paragraph 10	Conclusion

2	Paragraph 1	Introduction
	Paragraph 2	Cause/Effect
	Paragraph 3	Cause/Effect
	Paragraph 4	Cause/Effect
	Paragraph 5	Evaluation
	Paragraph 6	Conclusion

**1.4** Discuss your answers with another student.

**1.5** Look at the underlined words in Ex 1.1. What purpose do these expressions have within or between the sentences?

- Find similar expressions with the same function in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5.
- Note down more such expressions.
- Compare your answers with your partner.

**1.6** Write ten sentences to connect the following ideas using some of the expressions discussed in Ex 1.5.

**Examples:** **air travel – airports.** *Since there is such a demand for air travel, the government is building more airports.*

**Infected mosquitos – malaria.** *Due to the rising number of infected mosquitoes, malaria has become an even worse threat to health than in the 1990s.*

**Study tip**

Using clear and accurate expressions of cause and effect where appropriate will help you achieve your purpose for writing.

- a) rain – floods \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) globalization – cultural convergence \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) fear – adrenalin \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d) inflation – unemployment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e) arid climate – irrigate fields \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- f) absenteeism – low productivity \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- g) lack of plants – soil erosion \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- h) satellites – mobile phones \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- i) high birth rate – overcrowding \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Language to express cause and effect

Here are some useful expressions commonly used when expressing cause and effect:

### A Using **cause** as a noun

The	direct	cause of death was a serious bacterial infection.
	likely	
	major	
	main	

The cause of the damage was not known.

Structure: **The** + (adjective) + **cause** + **of** + noun + verb **to be** + noun clause

### B Using **reason** as a noun

The	main	reason for choosing a university is its academic reputation.
	first/second/third	

One | key | reason for entering higher education is to improve employment prospects.

Structure: **The** + (adjective) + **reason** + **for** + \_\_\_\_\_ **ing** + noun + verb **to be** + noun phrase/verb phrase

Many young couples are not able to buy their own house.  
The reason for this situation is the rising price of housing.

Structure: **The** + (adjective) + **reason** + **for** + noun + verb **to be** + noun phrase/verb phrase

### C Using **cause** as a verb

Student loans	may	cause financial problems for some categories of graduates.
	can	
	will	

Falls in the Asian stock market may cause significant damage to markets in the United States and Europe.

Structure: noun + (modal auxiliary verb) + **cause** + noun phrase

**D** Using **result** as a verb

The rise in house prices may/can/will result in fewer young people buying their first home.

Structure: Noun phrase + (modal) **result** + **in** + noun phrase

**E** Using **effect** (noun) pattern 1

The effect of loan sales is an immediate improvement in the public finances.

The effect of greenhouse gases is to warm the atmosphere.

Structure: **The** + (adjective) + **effect of** noun + verb **to be** + noun phrase/verb phrase

**F** Using **effect** (noun) pattern 2

Violence on television can have a(n)	substantial	effect on the behaviour of children.
	adverse	
	strong	

Loans may have a disincentive effect on the willingness of individuals from low socio-economic groups to participate in higher education.

Structure: noun + (modal auxiliary verb) + **have** + **a/an** + (adjective) + **effect** + **on** + noun phrase

**G** Using **affect** (verb)

The increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere significantly affects some of the continental scale patterns of climate change.

Adverse weather conditions can affect the psychological state of human beings.

Structure: noun +	adverb	+ <b>affect(s)</b> + noun phrase
	modal auxiliary	

**H** Using the first conditional

When there is a dense accumulation of pollutants in the air, people often become ill.

When a reduction in the research funds available occurs, there is a decrease in the number of medical research projects.

Structure: **When** + cause + effect

**Text 6****The global village** (Source Book pp. 42–55)

The text deals with the effects of globalization on the world we live in and contains information relevant to your essay.

**Task 2: Writing your essay**

**2.1** You are going to write an essay on the following topic:

*Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on the world today.*

Quickly decide with another student what the question is asking you to do.

**2.2** Read Text 6 entitled **The global village**. Then brainstorm ideas in order to develop further ideas for your essay, considering the information you read in the text.

**2.3** Decide which pattern of organization is most appropriate for your essay. Organize your ideas in a plan.

**2.4** Exchange plans with another student and evaluate each other's plans.

**2.5** Write your first draft.

**2.6** When you have finished your first draft, find another student who has finished and exchange drafts.

a) Read your partner's draft carefully.

b) Respond to the questions on the Peer Evaluation Sheet for Unit 6 on page 73.

**2.7** Write your second draft.



## Unit Summary

In this unit you have looked at different ways of organizing the contents of an essay. You have also worked on incorporating ideas from your reading into your essay.

### 1 Think about and/or discuss your answers to the following questions.

- a) I have trouble knowing when to start a new paragraph when I write essays. Will it help if I use the same basic paragraph organization for all my essays?
- b) My essay is supposed to be on the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in developing countries, but I can't think of many disadvantages. How important is it to look at negative effects as well as positive ones?
- c) How flexible should the plan for my essay be? For example, do I have to have three paragraphs on the advantages of a situation, and three paragraphs on the disadvantages?
- d) Why is it important to use particular language patterns in different types of essays? For example, in a cause and effect essay, do I need to use the language expressions on pages 58–60? Should I vary the expressions I use – I get confused about the different grammar patterns.

### 2 Choose the best option to complete the sentences below.

- a) The decision on how to organize your essay should depend on *the topic of the essay / your tutor's preference*.
- b) You need to plan your paragraphs and edit them after you have written your first draft so that each paragraph has a clear *ending / function*.
- c) It is important to answer the essay question fully and give a balanced answer. For example, if you are asked to discuss advantages and disadvantages, *you should try to / don't need to* give equal attention to both sides of the argument.
- d) You can use different patterns to organize your essays. As you become more skilled and confident you can *be more flexible / write longer paragraphs*.
- e) If you are aware of and able to use common essay-writing expressions, it will make the ideas in your essay *less exciting and original / clearer and easier to follow*.

For web resources relevant to this unit, see:

[www.englishforacademicstudy.com/student/writing/links](http://www.englishforacademicstudy.com/student/writing/links)

On these websites you can find helpful phrases and expressions used in academic writing, as well as help in structuring your arguments.