Academic Writing: Product
COMP80142

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As academics...

you will inevitably

have to read and write

a lot

a lot of a lot

a lot of a lot of a lot

(too much, really)

a lot in volume and in kind
A LOT
Three Aspects of a Piece of Writing

Content: Organises Structure (Form): presents “Style”

Claims
Questions
Concepts
Data
Evidence
Definitions
Proofs

... Headings
Crossrefs
Footnotes
Tables
Lists
Signals
TOCs

... Prose style
Fonts
Formality
Word choice
Sentence
complexity
Citation forms

...
Goal of structure

• To induce a cognitive map in the reader
**Goal of style**

- To support a pleasant experience

**This**

**NOT THIS!**
(unless you’re into that)
Quick Writing Exercise

5 minutes
Describe 1 of your research interests in a sentence or two.
List the top 3 venues in your area
List a major paper in your area and a major paper you think will influence your PhD
You will be asked to share!
**Content is King**

Content **is king**

Communicating your claims (and so on) is **primary**

**Structure (Form)**

Organises

What determines the good?

**“Style”**

Presents

Poor structure or style conceals your content (perhaps from yourself!)

Good structure and style makes your content more accessible
The Good

Content

Organises

Structure (Form)

presents

“Style”

Novelty, sophistication, significance

Highly domain dependent!

See your supervisor (and colleagues) (and the literature!)

Few fully general rules!

Can vary a lot by:

- genre
- venue
- audience
- purpose (GVAP!)
Genre and Venue

• A genre is a characteristic sort of writing
  – Typically distinguished by various conventions
    • Subject matter, style, length, etc.
      – E.g., Science fiction slam poetry, haiku division
    – Scientific writing has genres! (All writing has genres!)
      • Examples?
    – Understanding your genre(s) is critical!

• Venue
  – “Where” you publish
  – Also distinguished by various conventions
    • House style, deadlines, page length, topics, genres
  – Important, but “bureaucratic”
Audience and Purpose

• Audience
  – The intended readers of your writing
    • From general public to specialists
  – Critical to the success of your writing
    • If your intended audience doesn’t get it, you failed
    • If you make them *work too hard*, it’s still a problem

• Purpose
  – **Clarify for yourself**
  – Communicate “completed” work
  – Educate
  – Raise awareness
  – Stake ground
  – Pass a class or interview
  – Secure funding
  – ...

Writing is a skill

Write every day!

No research without writing

Writing is not an afterthought
Writing is a skill

Read every day!

Read critically

Write down thoughts about content, structure, and style