

The Art of Writing Academic English

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Outline

- 1. Writing is a Process**
- 2. The Structure of an Academic Paper**
- 3. Cohesion**
- 4. Referencing**
- 5. Academic Style**
- 6. Vocabulary**
- 7. The Most Common Errors**

I. Getting Started – challenges

What do you find most difficult about writing
in (academic) English?

I. Getting Started – writing is a process

- Writing is a great way to
- Do not look for perfection. Just write!
You might not write well every day, but you can always edit a bad page. You can't edit a blank page.
- Give yourself permission to write badly.
- All writing is rewriting. Hemingway rewrote the ending to Farewell to Arms from two to twenty drafts before releasing it. 39 times!
- To recapitulate: focus more on content and structure first and then attend to language later (but make sure you have time to edit and proofread!).
- Also! Remember to keep track of your sources and notes (Endnote, Zotero)!

2. The Structure of an Academic Paper

➤ The structure of a report:

Cover

Title page

Abstract

Preface

Table of contents

Introduction

Main text/Body sections

Discussion

Conclusion

Perspectives

References

Appendices

2. The Structure of an Academic Paper – Abstract

- Abstracts usually contain all or some of the following five moves (or communicative stages):

Move #	Typical Labels	Implied Questions
Move 1	Background/introduction/situation	What do we know about the topic? Why is the topic important?
Move 2	Present research/purpose	What is this study about?
Move 3	Methods/materials/subjects/ procedures	How was it done?
Move 4	Results/findings	What was discovered?
Move 5	Discussion/conclusion/implications/ recommendations	What do the findings mean?



2. The Structure of an Academic Paper – Abstract

➤ Example:

Gone with the wind:

visual impacts of wind turbines through housing prices

Stephen Gibbons

Present
research/purpose

Methods/materials/
procedures

This study provides quantitative evidence on the local benefits and costs of wind farm developments in England and Wales, focussing on their visual environmental impacts. In the tradition of studies in environmental, public and urban economics, housing sales prices are used to reveal local preferences for views of wind farm developments. Estimation is based on quasi-experimental research designs that compare price changes occurring in places where wind farms become visible, with price changes in appropriate comparison groups. These groups include places close to wind farms that became visible in the past, or where they will become operational in the future and places close to wind farm sites but where the turbines are hidden by the terrain. **All these comparisons suggest that wind farms reduces local house prices, and the implied visual environmental costs are substantial.**

Discussion
/conclusion

2. The Structure of an Academic Paper – Abstract

1. We demonstrate that the carbon tax imposed by the Canadian province of British Columbia caused a decline in short-run gasoline demand that is significantly greater than would be expected from an equivalent increase in the market price of gasoline. That the carbon tax is more salient, or yields a larger change in demand than equivalent market price movements, is robust to a range of specifications. As a result of the large consumer response to the tax, we calculate that during its first four years it has reduced carbon dioxide emissions from gasoline consumption by 2.4 million tonnes.

2. This paper analyzes two common features of markets in which eco-label programs certify that products are “green”: gradation – single programs offering multiple certification standards (e.g., platinum, gold, silver) – and competition – multiple programs vying to certify to their respective standards. We find that, depending on whether programs are sponsored by industry, environmental groups, or a government, they have strikingly different incentives to grade or compete. Industry sponsors are indifferent about both; environmentalist sponsors optimally grade or compete with other environmentalist sponsors only if consumer preferences for green consumption are skewed in a specific way; and government sponsors’ decisions depend on the relative importance of private vs. public benefits generated by the green market. We find also that it is no accident that green markets frequently have an environmentalist program competing with an industry one. For each of the cases examined, our analysis is consistent with casual empirical evidence.

Results/findings

Present research/purpose

Discussion
/conclusion



2. The Structure of an Academic Paper – Introduction

➤ Moves in Research Paper Introductions:

Move 1: Establishing a research territory

- a) by showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way
- b) by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area

Move 2: Establishing a niche

by indicating a gap in the previous research or by extending previous knowledge in some way

Move 3: Occupying the niche

- a) by outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research
- b) by listing research questions or hypotheses (PISF*)
- c) by announcing principal findings (PISF)
- d) by stating the value of the present research (PISF)
- e) by indicating the structure of the RP (PISF)



Renewable energy technology clearly provides potential global environmental benefits in terms of reduced CO2 emissions and slower depletion of natural energy resources. However, like most power generation and transmission infrastructure, the plant, access services and transmission equipment associated with renewable electricity generation may involve environmental costs. This is particularly so in the case of wind turbine developments, where the sites that are optimal in terms of energy efficiency are typically in rural, coastal and wilderness locations that offer many natural environmental amenities. These natural amenities include the aesthetic appeal of landscape, outdoor recreational opportunities and the existence values of wilderness habitats. The visual impacts of these 'wind farms' may be especially important because they are often on high ground with extensive visibility. Although views on their aesthetic appeal are mixed, there is evidently considerable dislike for their visual impact on the landscape. A poll of 1001 residents in Scotland in 2010 agreeing or strongly agreeing that wind farms "are, or would be, ugly and a blot on the landscape" can be noted, however, that only 51% of respondents had actually seen a wind farm in real life. In addition to these potential impacts on the landscape, wind turbines have reported health effects related to visual disturbance and noise (e.g. Bakker et al., 2012; Farbouda et al., 2012).

Move 1: Establishing research territory

England and parts of the US, has seen a rapid expansion in the number of these wind turbine developments since the mid-1990s. Although there are various local community benefits, including shared ownership schemes, community payments and the rents to land owners, in the UK, and elsewhere in Europe, wind farm developments have faced significant opposition from local residents and other stakeholders with interests in landscape preservation. This opposition suggests that the environmental costs may be important. The issue is highly controversial, given that opinion polls generally indicate majority support of around 70% for green energy, including wind farms, (e.g. results from the Eurobarometer survey in Europe). This contradiction has led to accusations of 'nimbyism' (not in my backyard-ism), on the assumption that it is the same people opposing them in principle. There is perhaps less of a contradiction when it is considered that the development of wind farms in rural locations represents a transfer from residents in these communities and users of natural amenities (in the form of loss of amenities) to the majority of the population who are urban residents (in the form of energy). Other possible explanations for the tension between public support and private opposition to wind energy developments are discussed at length in Bell et al. (2005).

Move 2: Indicating gap

This paper provides quantitative evidence on the local benefits and costs of wind farm developments in England and Wales, focussing on the effects of wind turbine visibility, and the implied cost in terms of loss of visual landscape amenities. In the tradition of 'hedonic' studies in environmental, public and urban economics, housing sales prices are used to reveal local preferences for views of wind farms. This is feasible, because wind farms in England and Wales are often close to and visible from residential areas in rural, semi-rural and even urban locations, so the context provides a large sample of housing sales that are potentially affected (at the time of writing, around 1.8% of residential postcodes are within 4 km of operational or proposed wind farm developments). The study offers a significant advance over previous studies, which have mostly been based on relatively small samples of housing transactions and cross-sectional price comparisons. Estimation in this current work is based on quasi experimental, difference-in-difference based research designs that compare price changes occurring in postcodes where wind farms become visible, with postcodes in appropriate comparison groups. These groups include: places where wind farms became visible in the past, or where they will become visible in the future and places close to where wind farms became operational but where the turbines are hidden by the terrain. The postcode fixed effects design implies that the analysis is based on repeat sales of the same, or similar housing units within postcode groups (typically 17 houses grouped together). Kuminoff et al. (2010) provide a discussion of the advantages of quasi-experimental approaches of this type in the context of hedonic methods for environmental valuation.

Move 3: Occupying the niche

The overall finding is that operational wind farm developments reduce prices in locations where the turbines are visible, relative to locations where they are not visible, and that the effects are causal. This price reduction is around 5–6% on average for housing with a visible wind farm within 2 km, falls to around 1% between 2 and 8 km, and to near zero between 8 and 14 km, which is at the limit of likely visibility. Evidence from comparisons with places close to wind farms that are not visible suggests that the price reductions are associated with turbine visibility. As might be expected, large visible wind farms have more impact on a wider area.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The next section discusses background policy issues and the existing literature on wind farm effects. The Data section outlines the data used for the analysis. The Estimation strategy section describes the empirical strategy and the Results section the results. The final section concludes.

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2. The Structure of an Academic Paper – the body

- The body of a paper/report can be structured in many different ways.
- The article "Gone with the wind" contains the following sections:

(Introduction)

Wind farm policy and the literature on their local effects

Data

Estimation strategy

Comparing the effects of new wind farms with existing and future wind farms

Comparing the effects of visible and non-visible turbines

Specifications for effects by wind farm size

Results

Descriptive figures and statistics

Baseline regression results on visibility and robustness tests

Further results on wind farm size

(Conclusions)

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2. The Structure of an Academic Paper – Discussion

- The Discussion (What does it mean?) goes beyond the results and deals with the claims made earlier. It contains all or some of the following moves:

Move 1: Background information

research purposes, theory, methodology

Move 2: Summarizing and reporting key results

Move 3: Commenting on the key results

making claims, explaining the results, comparing the new work with previous studies, offering alternative explanations

Move 4: Stating the limitations of the study

Move 5: Making recommendations for future implementation and/or future research



Conclusions

The analysis in this paper provided estimates of the effects of wind farm visibility on housing prices in England and Wales. The fairly crowded geographical setting, with numerous wind farms developed within sight of residential property, provides a unique opportunity to examine the visual impacts of wind farms through hedonic property value methods. The analysis used a micro-aggregated postcode-by-quarter panel of housing transactions spanning 12 years, and estimated difference-in-difference effects using a quasi-experimental, postcode fixed effects methodology. Comparisons were made between house price changes occurring in postcodes where nearby wind farms become operational and visible, with the price changes occurring where nearby wind farms become operational but are hidden from view. All the results point in the same direction. Wind farms reduce house prices in postcodes where the turbines are visible, and reduce prices relative to postcodes close to wind farms where the wind farms are not visible. Averaging over wind farms of all sizes, this price reduction is around 5–6% within 2 km, falling to less than 2% between 2 and 4km, and less than 1% by 14 km which is at the limit of likely visibility. As might be expected, small wind farms have no impact beyond 4 km, whereas the largest wind farms (20+ turbines) reduce prices by 12% within 2 km, and reduce prices by small amounts right out to 14 km (by around 1.5%). There are small (~ 2%) increases in neighbouring prices where the wind farms are not visible, although these are only statistically significant in the 4–8 km band. This price uplift may indicate some local benefits from wind farms, for example due to spillovers from rents to landowners from wind farm operation, or from community grants. However, these price increases could also be explained by displacement of demand by those seeking housing in these areas towards places where the wind farms are hidden. These offsetting price effects in neighbouring places where wind farms are visible and where they are not may explain, in part, why previous studies that focus only on distance to wind farms fail to find significant effects.

These headline findings are comparable to the effects of coal power plants in the US found in Davis (2011), who finds up to 7% reduction within 2 miles (3.2 km). Of course, it takes many geographically dispersed wind farms to generate the same power as a single coal (or nuclear) plant, so the aggregate effects of wind farms and the number of households affected by their visual impact is likely to be considerably larger. The results are also in line with existing literature that suggests that other tall power infrastructure has negative impacts on prices (e.g. high voltage power lines, Sims and Dent, 2005). The point estimates are comparable to the repeat sales estimates of the effects of wind farms in Lang et al. (2014) for Rhode Island, although their estimates are not statistically significant.

The paper presents a number of robustness tests, but even so, the findings should be interpreted with some caution. The information on wind farm location and visibility is limited by lack of data on the precise location of individual turbines, so the classification of postcodes in terms of visibility is subject to measurement error. This is most likely to result in some attenuation of the estimated effects. Steps were taken to minimize this problem by eliminating postcodes where visibility is ambiguous. More importantly, there is no historical information on the timing of events leading up to wind farm operation (announcement, approval, construction etc.) so the price effects reported here relate to the average difference between the post-operation and pre-operation periods for the periods spanned by the data (a gap of just under 6 years). However, the wind farm development cycle can last a number of years, and price changes evolve fairly slowly over time in response to events. Again the most likely consequence of this is that the results underestimate the full impact between the pre- announcement and post-construction phase. It should also be noted that the estimates of turbine visibility, may pick up some effects from turbine noise —especially close to large wind farms, if terrain that hides the wind farms also attenuates the noise. However, noise levels at the distances beyond 1 km at which the visible/non-visible comparisons are made are likely to be very low.

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2. The Academic Paper – tip!

- Read and study papers in your own field to familiarise yourself with the required/expected/common structure and style – and pay attention to useful words and expressions.



3. Cohesion

- It is important that your text flows or ‘coheres’.
- One way of securing flow is by following a progression from old or given information to new information.
- Placing relevant old information in early position establishes a content connection backward and provides a forward content link that establishes the context.



3. Cohesion

- Compare the two versions of the following text. Which seems clearer? Why?
- a) Because the naming power of words was distrusted by Locke, he repeated himself often. Seventeenth-century theories of language, especially Wilkins's scheme for a universal language involving the creation of countless symbols for countless meanings, had centered on this naming power. A new era in the study of language that focused on the ambiguous relationship between sense and reference begins with Locke's distrust.
- b) Locke often repeated himself because he distrusted the naming power of words. This naming power had been central to seventeenth-century theories of language, especially Wilkins's scheme for a universal language involving the creation of countless symbols for countless meanings. Locke's distrust begins a new era in the study of language, one that focused on the ambiguous relationship between sense and reference.



3. Cohesion

➤ Apply the 'first six or seven words' test:

a) Because **the naming power of words** was distrusted by Locke, he repeated himself often. **Seventeenth-century theories of language**, especially Wilkins's scheme for a universal language involving the creation of countless symbols for countless meanings, had centered on this naming power. **A new era in the study of language** that focused on the ambiguous relationship between sense and reference begins with Locke's distrust.

Sentences begin with information a reader could not predict.

b) **Locke** often repeated himself because he distrusted the naming power of words. **This naming power** had been central to seventeenth-century theories of language, especially Wilkins's scheme for a universal language involving the creation of countless symbols for countless meanings. **Locke's distrust** begins a new era in the study of language, one that focused on the ambiguous relationship between sense and reference.

Sentences begin with familiar or repeated/old information.



3. Cohesion

(AB)(BC)(CD)

is easier to understand than

(ABZYZ)(MNOP)(BJKLC)



3. Cohesion

- Cohesion can be achieved by repeating words or using synonyms and pronouns.
- *This/these* (+ a noun) can be used to establish a good old-to-new flow of information:

However, like most power generation and transmission infrastructure, the plant, access services and transmission equipment associated with renewable electricity generation may involve environmental costs. **This** is particularly so in the case of wind turbine developments, where the sites...

Although these wind farms can offer various local community benefits, including shared ownership schemes, community payments and the rents to land owners, in the UK, and elsewhere in Europe, wind farm developments have faced significant opposition from local residents and other stakeholders with interests in environmental preservation. **This opposition** suggests that the environmental costs may be important.



3. Cohesion

- BUT! Make sure **this** and other pronouns (**it, they, that, these, those, which**) have a clear *reference* and *agree* in number or gender with what they are pointing to. Examples:
 - a) Some **lawyers** claim that it is better to rely on traditional **sources** of the law. Indeed, since **they** (**Who? What?**) are known and usually used by the **courts**, it is likely that the **arguments** based on those **sources** will be acknowledged by the **courts**. Furthermore, it is easier for **them**. (**Who? What?**)

- And some amusing examples:
 - a) Guilt, vengeance, and bitterness can be emotionally destructive to you and your children. You must get rid of **them**. (**Who? What?**)
 - b) The driver had a narrow escape as a broken board penetrated his cabin and just missed his head. **This** (**What?**) had to be removed before he could be released.



3. Cohesion

- Another way of ensuring flow is by inserting connective words and phrases:
 - **Comparison:** in comparison, in contrast, similarly...
 - **Time:** at first, next, later, in the end, eventually...
 - **Contrast:** but, still, however, yet, nevertheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, in spite of this...
 - **Addition:** what is more, moreover, furthermore, in addition, also...
 - **Reason:** for this reason, owing to this, therefore...
 - **Result:** as a result, consequently, so, therefore, thus, accordingly...
 - **Order:** first, second, in the first place, firstly, to begin with, secondly, lastly, finally
 - **Example:** for example, for instance, such as...
 - **Explanation:** in other words, that is to say...
 - **Attitude:** naturally, of course, certainly, strangely enough, oddly enough, luckily, (un)fortunately, admittedly, undoubtedly...
 - **Summary:** finally, in conclusion, in short, to sum up...



➤ How is coherence achieved in the Introduction we have already looked at:

Renewable energy technology clearly provides potential global environmental benefits in terms of reduced CO₂ emissions and slower depletion of natural energy resources. However, like most power generation and transmission infrastructure, the plant, access services and transmission equipment associated with renewable electricity generation may involve environmental costs. This is particularly so in the case of wind turbine developments, where the sites that are optimal in terms of energy efficiency are typically in rural, coastal and wilderness locations that offer many natural environmental amenities. These natural amenities include the aesthetic appeal of landscape, outdoor recreational opportunities and the existence values of wilderness habitats. The visual impacts of these 'wind farms' may be especially important because they are often on high ground with extensive visibility. Although views on their aesthetic appeal are mixed, there is evidently considerable dislike for their visual impact on the landscape, with 23% of respondents in a poll of 1001 residents in Scotland in 2010 agreeing or strongly agreeing that wind farms "are, or would be, ugly and a blot on the landscape" (You Gov, 2010). It should be noted, however, that only 51% of respondents had actually seen a wind farm in real life. In addition to these potential impacts on landscape, residents local to operational wind turbines have reported health effects related to visual disturbance and noise (e.g. Bakker et al., 2012; Farbouda et al., 2013).

The UK, like other areas in Europe and parts of the US, has seen a rapid expansion in the number of these wind turbine developments since the mid-1990s. Although these wind farms can offer various local community benefits, including shared ownership schemes, community payments and the rents to land owners, in the UK, and elsewhere in Europe, wind farm developments have faced significant opposition from local residents and other stakeholders with interests in environmental preservation. This opposition suggests that the environmental costs may be important. The issue is highly controversial, given that opinion polls and other surveys generally indicate majority support of around 70% for green energy, including wind farms, (e.g. results from the Eurobarometer survey in European Commission, 2006). This contradiction has led to accusations of 'nimbyism' (not in my backyard-ism), on the assumption that it is the same people opposing wind farm developments in practice as supporting them in principle. There is perhaps less of a contradiction when it is considered that the development of wind farms in rural locations potentially represents a transfer from residents in these communities and users of natural amenities (in the form of loss of amenities) to the majority of the population who are urban residents (in the form of energy). Other possible explanations for the tension between public support and private opposition to wind energy developments are discussed at length in Bell et al. (2005).

This paper provides quantitative evidence on the local benefits and costs of wind farm developments in England and Wales, focussing on the effects of wind turbine visibility, and the implied cost in terms of loss of visual landscape amenities. In the tradition of 'hedonic' studies in environmental, public and urban economics, housing sales prices are used to reveal local preferences for views of wind farms. This is feasible, because wind farms in England and Wales are often close to and visible from residential areas in rural, semi-rural and even urban locations, so the context provides a large sample of housing sales that are potentially affected (at the time of writing, around 1.8% of residential postcodes are within 4 km of operational or proposed wind farm developments). The study offers a significant advance over previous studies, which have mostly been based on relatively small samples of housing transactions and cross-sectional price comparisons. Estimation in this current work is based on quasi experimental, difference-in-difference based research designs that compare price changes occurring in postcodes where wind farms become visible, with postcodes in appropriate comparison groups. These groups include: places where wind farms became visible in the past, or where they will become visible in the future and places close to where wind farms became operational but where the turbines are hidden by the terrain. The postcode fixed effects design implies that the analysis is based on repeat sales of the same, or similar housing units within postcode groups (typically 17 houses grouped together). Kuminoff et al. (2010) provide a discussion of the advantages of quasi-experimental approaches of this type in the context of hedonic methods for environmental valuation.

The overall finding is that operational wind farm developments reduce prices in locations where the turbines are visible, relative to where they are not visible, and that the effects are causal. This price reduction is around 5–6% on average for housing with a visible wind farm within 2 km, falling to under 2% between 2 and 4 km, and to near zero between 8 and 14 km, which is at the limit of likely visibility. Evidence from comparisons with places close to wind farms, but where wind farms are less visible suggests that the price reductions are associated with turbine visibility. As might be expected, large visible wind farms have much bigger impacts that extend over a wider area.

4. Referencing

- Remember to always cite your sources!
- Citations are used to recognise and acknowledge the intellectual property rights of authors.
- But they are also tools of persuasion and can be used to give statements greater authority (= academic weight).
- And do not forget that citations function as reading guides, pointing the reader to the relevant works.



4. Referencing

➤ 3 ways to insert outside information into your own writing:

1. Quote it (rare in scientific writing).
2. Summarize it.
3. Paraphrase it.

Avoid plagiarism!

4. Referencing – when paraphrasing or summarising

- Integral citations (focus on author) are grammatically part of a sentence:

Hoен et al. (2011) apply cross-sectional hedonic analysis, based on 24 wind farms across US states.

Kuminoff et al. (2010) provide a discussion of the advantages of quasi-experimental approaches of this type in the context of hedonic methods...

- Non-integral citations (focus on research) have no grammatical function, appearing instead either in parentheses at the end of a sentence or as a number representation:

In addition to these potential impacts on landscape, residents local to operational wind turbines have reported health effects related to visual disturbance and noise (e.g. **Bakker et al.**, 2012; **Farbouda et al.**, 2013).



4. Referencing – positioning

- It is essential for academic writers to control their claims carefully and **position** themselves appropriately in relation to other research and scholars.
- They do this by means of **hedging** and **boosting**.
- **Hedges** display uncertainty, deference, modesty, or respect for colleagues' views. They make statements less dogmatic.
- **Boosters**, on the other hand, show confidence in the author's claims and results.
- There are many grammatical resources that allow writers to hedge, boost, and generally evaluate ideas, such as **verb tenses**, **modal verbs**, **adverbs**, and **conditionals**.



4. Referencing – hedging

➤ Examples of hedging from the literature:

- This opposition **suggests** that the environmental costs **may** be important.
- Media reports **suggest** that this rent **could** amount to as much as related to...
- One concern **might** be that topographic features that obscure a wind farm...
- In part, the coefficient on non-visible wind farms... **may** be picking up on...
- ..., where turbines are not visible, but noise **may** be an issue.
- One concern **could** be that the price effects by distance and visibility status...
- The price uplift **may** indicate some local benefits from wind farms.
- There **may** be benefits to home owners within the 8 km radius.
- All this evidence **suggests** that the estimated price reductions in postcodes...
- The visual impacts of these ‘wind farms’ **may** be especially important because they are **often** on high ground with extensive visibility.



4. Referencing – boosting

➤ Examples of boosting from the literature:

- Renewable energy **clearly provides** potential environmental benefits...
- The study offers a **significant** advance over previous studies...
- For the US, Kahn (2013) argues that wind farm counties **generate** benefits for their communities.
- This direct link between local taxation and school resources **is** more important in the US than in the UK, where...
- This approach **provides a powerful** test of the robustness of the main findings...
- Looking across Table 4, it **is evident** that there **are no** statistically significant changes in the composition...
- **All** the results **point** in the same direction. Wind farms reduce house prices in postcodes where the turbines are visible, and...
- **More importantly**, there **is no** historical information on the timing of events leading up to wind farm operation...



5. Academic Style

- Writing styles vary considerably across the different academic disciplines, but the academic writing guides agree on the following points:
 - 1) **formal**: a preference for a more formal alternative when choosing a verb or a noun.
 - 2) strive to produce sentences that are **clear, coherent** and **concise** (= the "three **Cs**");
 - 3) **precision**: avoid vagueness and imprecision;
 - 4) **short or mixed-length sentences**: keep sentences short and simple (max. 29 words!);
 - 5) **active verbs**: avoid passive verb constructions or use them sparingly.



5. Academic Style – clear language

- Keep sentences short and simple and avoid redundancy (omit needless words):

performed a measurement → measured

carried out the analysis → analysed

make a review on → review

made the quota price increase → increased

make an appearance with → appear with

is capable of being → can be

the tendency among researchers to focus on → researchers tend to

has the intention of becoming → intends to

brought about the organisation of → organised

owing to the fact that → because

for the purpose of → to

in view of the fact that → since



5. Academic Style – clear language

- Keep sentences short and simple and avoid redundancy:

The human immune system is responsible not only for the identification of foreign molecules but also for actions leading to their immobilisation, neutralisation, and destruction. (25 words)



The human immune system not only identifies foreign molecules but also immobilises, neutralises, and destroys them. (16 words, crisper, more direct)

Participants read assertions whose veracity was either affirmed or denied by the subsequent presentation of an assessment word. (18 words)



We presented participants with a sentence, followed by the word TRUE or FALSE. (13 words)

5. Academic Style – clear language

- There is something else going on in these sentences:

The human immune system is responsible not only for the **identification** of foreign molecules but also for their **immobilisation**, **neutralisation** and **destruction**.

Minimise abstractions.
Express actions as verbs!

The human immune system not only **identifies** foreign molecules but also **immobilises**, **neutralises**, and **destroys** them.

Participants read **assertions** whose **veracity** was either affirmed or denied by the subsequent **presentation** of a **fourth** word.

Verbs are more dynamic
and clearly express *who* is
doing *what*.

We **presented** participants with **assertions** followed by the word TRUE or FALSE.



5. Academic Style – clear language

- Keep your subjects short:

The stripping of rain forests in the service of short-term economic interests could result in damage to the earth's biosphere. (12 words)



If rain forests are stripped to serve short-term economic interests, the earth's biosphere may be damaged. (2 words)

The reason for Locke's frequent repetition lies in his distrust of the accuracy of the naming power of words. (6 words)



Locke frequently repeated himself because he did not trust the power of words to name things accurately. (1 word)

5. Academic Style – clear language

- Keep subject and verb fairly close together:

A vast amount of research on different techniques using fly ash generated from municipal solid waste incineration (MSWI) as the source of extraction and the benefits and potentials of using these techniques have already been conducted.



A vast amount of research has examined different techniques...

- And avoid unnecessarily long modifier phrases (highlighted in red):

Because most existing studies have examined only a single stage of the supply chain, for example, productivity at the farm, or efficiency of agricultural markets, in isolation from the rest of the supply chain, policymakers have been unable to assess how problems identified at a single stage of the supply chain compare and interact with problems in the rest of the supply chain.

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5. Academic Style – clear language

- Nominalisations (making something into a noun) cause another problem: preposition stacking!

The **stripping** of rain forests **in** the **service** of short-term economic interests could result **in damage** to the earth's biosphere. (5 prepositions)



If rain forests are **stripped** to **serve** short-term economic interests, the earth's biosphere may be **damaged**. (0)

The reason **for** Locke's frequent **repetition** lies **in** his **distrust** of the accuracy of the **naming** power of words. (5 prepositions)



Locke frequently **repeated** himself because he did not **trust** the power of words to **name** things accurately. (1)

5. Academic Style – precision

- Avoid vague words and expressions:

big (problem)	→	significant, serious, acute, global, growing, fundamental, pressing, urgent, insurmountable...
bad (situation)	→	difficult, unstable, problematic, dangerous, hazardous, tense, perilous, critical...
get	→	receive, obtain, achieve, contract, arrive, persuade, understand...
put	→	insert, install, invest, place, deposit, embed, situate...

5. Academic Style – contractions

- Contractions may be acceptable in some fields, but in most they are not, so try to avoid them:

don't	→	do not
can't	→	cannot
won't	→	will not
there's	→	there is
it's (vs its!)	→	it is

5. Academic Style

- Writing styles vary considerably across the different academic disciplines, but the academic writing guides agree on the following points:
 - 1) **formal**: a preference for a more formal alternative when choosing a verb or a noun.
 - 2) strive to produce sentences that are **clear, coherent** and **concise** (= the "three Cs");
 - 3) **precision**: avoid vagueness and imprecision;
 - 4) **short or mixed-length sentences**: keep sentences short and simple (max. 29 words!);
 - 5) **active verbs**: avoid passive verb constructions or use them sparingly.



Renewable energy technology clearly provides potential global environmental benefits in terms of reduced CO₂ emissions and slower depletion of natural energy resources. However, like most power generation and transmission infrastructure, the plant, access services and transmission equipment associated with renewable electricity generation may involve environmental costs. This is particularly so in the case of wind turbine developments, where the sites that are optimal in terms of energy efficiency are typically in rural, coastal and wilderness locations that offer many natural environmental amenities. These natural amenities include the aesthetic appeal of landscape, outdoor recreational opportunities and the existence values of wilderness habitats. The visual impacts of these ‘wind farms’ may be especially important because they are often on high ground with extensive visibility. Although views on their aesthetic appeal are mixed, there is evidently considerable dislike for their visual impact on the landscape, with 23% of respondents in a poll of 1001 residents in Scotland in 2010 agreeing or strongly agreeing that wind farms “are, or would be, ugly and a blot on the landscape” (You Gov, 2010). It should be noted, however, that only 51% of respondents had actually seen a wind farm in real life. In addition to these potential impacts on landscape, residents local to operational wind turbines have reported health effects related to visual disturbance and noise (e.g. Bakker et al., 2012; Farbouda et al., 2013).

The UK, like other areas in Europe and parts of the US has seen a rapid expansion in the number of these wind turbine developments since the mid-1990s. Although these wind farms can offer various local community benefits, including shared ownership schemes, community payments and the rents to land owners, in the UK, and elsewhere in Europe, wind farm developments have faced significant opposition from local residents and other stakeholders with interests in environmental preservation. This opposition suggests that the environmental costs may be important. The issue is highly controversial, given that opinion polls and other surveys generally indicate majority support of around 70% for green energy, including wind farms, (e.g. results from the Eurobarometer survey in European Commission, 2006). This contradiction has led to accusations of ‘nimbyism’ (not in my backyard-ism), on the assumption that it is the same people opposing wind farm developments in practice as supporting them in principle. There is perhaps less of a contradiction when it is considered that the development of wind farms in rural locations potentially represents a transfer from residents in these communities and users of natural amenities (in the form of loss of amenities) to the majority of the population who are urban residents (in the form of energy). Other possible explanations for the tension between public support and private opposition to wind energy developments are discussed at length in Bell et al. (2005).

This paper provides quantitative evidence on the local benefits and costs of wind farm developments in England and Wales, focussing on the effects of wind turbine visibility, and the implied cost in terms of loss of visual landscape amenities. In the tradition of ‘hedonic’ studies in environmental, public and urban economics, housing sales prices are used to reveal local preferences for views of wind farms. This is feasible, because wind farms in England and Wales are often close to and visible from residential areas in rural, semi-rural and even urban locations, so the context provides a large sample of housing sales that are potentially affected (at the time of writing, around 1.8% of residential postcodes are within 4 km of operational or proposed wind farm developments). The study offers a significant advance over previous studies, which have mostly been based on relatively small samples of housing transactions and cross-sectional price comparisons. Estimation in this current work is based on quasi experimental, difference-in-difference based research designs that compare price changes occurring in postcodes where wind farms become visible, with postcodes in appropriate comparison groups. These groups include: places where wind farms became visible in the past, or where they will become visible in the future and places close to where wind farms became operational but where the turbines are hidden by the terrain. The postcode fixed effects design implies that the analysis is based on repeat sales of the same, or similar housing units within postcode groups (typically 17 houses grouped together). Kuminoff et al. (2010) provide a discussion of the advantages of quasi-experimental approaches of this type in the context of hedonic methods for environmental valuation.

The overall finding is that operational wind farm developments reduce prices in locations where the turbines are visible, relative to where they are not visible, and that the effects are causal. This price reduction is around 5–6% on average for housing with a visible wind farm within 2 km, falling to under 2% between 2 and 4 km, and to near zero between 8 and 14 km, which is at the limit of likely visibility. Evidence from comparisons with places close to wind farms, but where wind farms are less visible suggests that the price reductions are associated with turbine visibility. As might be expected, large visible wind farms have much bigger impacts that extend over a wider area.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The next section discusses background policy issues and the existing literature on wind farm effects. The Data section outlines the data used for the analysis. The Estimation strategy section describes the empirical strategy and the Results section the results. The final section concludes.

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6. Vocabulary

- Words, words, words! Which ones should you choose?
- Remember: academic style is **formal**.
- English heavily influenced by French and Latin:

cordial reception	vs	hearty welcome
investigate	vs	look into
require	vs	need
respond	vs	answer

- Words of French and Latin origin are considered more formal, more 'educated' and also more precise.

6. Vocabulary – weak vs strong verbs

- Avoid using weak (Germanic) multi-word verbs if there is a stronger and more precise one-word (French/Latin) synonym:

build up	→	accumulate
blow up	→	explode/detonate/enlarge
get better/worse	→	improve/deteriorate
do away with	→	abolish/eliminate/obviate
put out	→	extinguish
put up with	→	tolerate
put off	→	deter/postpone/procrastinate
put together	→	assemble/compose/synthesise
go up	→	increase/rise/augment
go down	→	decrease/decline/diminish

6. Vocabulary – weak vs strong verbs: exercise

Exercise! Replace the informal multi-word verbs with more formal equivalents:

1. The aggregate of outstanding balances **went up and down** quite violently.
The aggregate of outstanding balances fluctuated quite violently.
2. Researchers have **come up with** a number of models to describe the effect of certain cola drinks on dental enamel erosion.
Researchers have created/developed/devised/proposed a number of models...
3. Problems with the new data management software **showed up** soon after it was launched.
Problems with the new data management software appeared/emerged/materialised/surfaced soon after it was launched.
4. AIDS researchers have **run into** a variety of unexpected problems in their efforts to develop an effective medicine.
AIDS researchers have encountered/faced a variety of unexpected problems in their efforts

6. Vocabulary – weak vs strong verbs: exercise

5. They had **given up** all hope that she was alive.
They had abandoned all hope that she was alive.

6. Rice and aquatic products **make up** a major part of the diet of the people in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam.
Rice and aquatic products constitute a major part of the diet of the people in...

7. This was before he had read the guidelines on how to **carry out** the research.
This was before he had read the guidelines on how to conduct the research.

8. Raising taxes has been shown to reduce revenue to the government and **make** the job situation **worse**.
Raising taxes has been shown to reduce revenue to the government and exacerbate the job situation.

9. Researchers **put** this trend **down to** globalisation, privatisation, accountability, and demographic changes in the graduate student population.
Researchers attribute this trend to globalisation, privatisation, accountability, and....

6. Vocabulary – collocations

➤ **Collocations** are pairs or groups of words that are often used together and sound natural to native speakers:

*~~Give~~ important questions vs. ✓ **Raise** important questions

*~~Raise~~ a debate vs. ✓ **Ignite/generate/trigger/provoke/fuel** a debate

*~~Make~~ research vs. ✓ **Do** research

*~~Warm~~ debate vs. ✓ **Heated** debate

*~~Deeply~~ disagree vs. ✓ **Strongly** disagree

*~~Recur~~ to another strategy vs. ✓ **Adopt/resort to/employ/choose/use** another strategy

*~~Keep to~~ requirements vs. ✓ **Meet** requirements

6. Vocabulary – collocations

➤ More examples:

a) Adjective+noun:

heated debate, preliminary results, groundbreaking research, significant contribution, powerful argument, supporting evidence, tentative explanation...

b) Verb+noun:

play a central role, gather evidence, conduct an experiment, raise questions, draw a conclusion/an analogy, assess the significance of, touch on issues, lend support to...

6. Vocabulary – collocations

- **Be aware** of collocations when you are reading/listening to English

- **Check** collocations in dictionaries / collocations dictionaries e.g.
 - *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* (CD-ROM)
 - *Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English* (CD-ROM)
 - *Macmillan Collocations Dictionary* (book only)

- **Collocations link** <http://www.just-the-word.com/>

6. Vocabulary – fixed expressions

➤ Fixed expressions:

on the whole, with respect to, in the case of, in terms of, for the most part, with the exception of, to some extent, with regard to, a great deal of, a wide range of, as a rule, from the point of view of...

➤ Examples of some of the phraseological ‘nuts and bolts’ of academic writing:

The Academic Phrasebank: <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>



7. The Most Common Errors – punctuation

- Correct punctuation is important!



7. The Most Common Errors – punctuation

- Avoid **run-on sentences** and **comma splices**:

Run-on:

Beginning in the 1800s, women organised, petitioned, and picketed to win the right to vote it took decades for them to accomplish their purpose.

Comma splice:

Beginning in the 1800s, women organised, petitioned, and picketed to win the right to vote, it took decades for them to accomplish their purpose.

Different solutions:

a) Beginning in the 1800s, women organised, petitioned, and picketed to win the right to vote; it took decades for them to accomplish their purpose.

b) Beginning in the 1800s, women organised, petitioned, and picketed to win the right to vote, **but** it took decades for them to accomplish their purpose.

c) Beginning in the 1800s, women organised, petitioned, and picketed to win the right to vote; **however**, it took decades for them to accomplish their purpose.

7. The Most Common Errors – subject-verb agreement

➤ Subjects and verbs must agree in number:

1. The purpose of the monorails **have** changed from one of carrying food to one of carrying people to work in crowded urban areas.

have → has

2. The shortage of available infants and the availability of children with special needs **has** changed the focus of adoption for many parents.

has → have

3. Recent discoveries about the weather **reveals** that several cycles are involved.

reveals → reveal

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Tools and Links (self-study)

Academic Writing in English: <http://sana.aalto.fi/awe/index.html>

The Academic Phrasebank: <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>

Free dictionary: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

Online dictionary: <http://www.dictionary.com>

Using English for Academic Purposes: <http://www.uefap.com/>

Collocations: <http://www.just-the-word.com/>

Guidelines for writing a scientific paper: <http://physics.illinois.edu/people/Celia/SciWrite.pdf>



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