Writing in another language can seem tricky at first, but you can learn to write well if you:

1. Read to write
2. Think to write
3. Write and rewrite

1 Read to write

To write well in English, read something in English every day. This will help you expand your language and your ideas.

And remember, for academic writing, there’s no ‘one size fits all’. Each discipline views the world and expresses ideas differently. Read widely in your field of study so you can see how others express ideas in your discipline.

2 Think to write

Good writing depends on good ideas and a clear message, so take time to let your ideas form. To help you think clearly, don’t aim to be perfect right away.

Instead generate lots of ideas and try different ways of telling your story. This will help you think more clearly about what’s most important: your key message.

To loosen up your thoughts, try the techniques over the page: free writing, mind mapping, dictating ideas and keeping a writing journal.

3 Write and rewrite

Good writing has a clear, logical structure. In most disciplines in English-speaking universities, this generally means that you:

- say what you’re going to say (introduction),
- say it (body), and
- say what you said (conclusion).

Write the body part first, selecting your key points and putting them in order. Then discuss points one by one. Explain them, evaluate them, and provide examples and evidence as appropriate.

Next, write your introduction, stating your structure and argument, then your conclusion, summarising key points and their real-world significance. Keep each brief (no more than 10% of your word length).

Finally, proofread your writing for:

Commonly misspelled words—Check you have correctly spelt words that sound the same but can be spelt differently, e.g. there, they’re, their.

Problems with sentence boundaries—Make sure each sentence has at least one main clause with: a subject (this tells us ‘who’ or ‘what’ the sentence is about) and a verb (a ‘doing’ or ‘being’ word that indicates past, present or future time). Add an object (a ‘who’ or ‘what’ after the verb) if needed.

Grammar demons—Get to know your typical mistakes. STUDY Smarter can help you learn how to fix them. Check our website for details.
Try these on your own

**Free writing**
1. Pick a topic to write on and write whatever comes into your head.
2. Aim to keep writing without stopping for at least 15 minutes.
3. Don’t worry about the structure of what you write or stop to revise or edit content; simply keep writing.
4. Repeat regularly to increase the speed and fluency of your writing.

**Dictation**
1. Instead of writing your thoughts on a topic, say them out loud.
2. Use an electronic device to record your ideas as you’re talking.
3. Aim to speak for at least 15 minutes.
4. Listen to what you said and take notes of the ideas you like best.
5. Do this often to overcome writers’ block.

**Mind maps**
1. Write down a key topic word or question in the middle of a large sheet of paper, or use mind mapping software.
2. In a circle around this, write related ideas, connecting them to one another with lines and arrows to show links.
3. Use this technique to increase creative thinking and identify ideas for writing.

**Writing journal**
1. Record your thoughts daily in a notebook or diary, or use an electronic text document, facebook or a blog.
2. Aim to write at least 250 words a day.
3. Write on any topic you wish: a consistent theme or different themes, a story, your life, your thoughts, your ideas.
4. Use this to try out new expressions and help you to think more in English.

Try this with a friend
Write short essays regularly. Swap and give each other feedback.

**English Language Corner**
Check out the English Language Corner on the STUDY Smarter website for information about events, programs and resources to improve your English fast!

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