

# CLEAR WRITING AND EDITING

Want good marks at UWA? Make sure that your writing is *C.L.E.A.R.*

*C.L.E.A.R.* as an acronym to help you remember the important features of academic writing.

*C.L.E.A.R.* stands for '**C**lear' and for:

- C Cohesive**
- L Logical**
- E Expressed well**
- A Analytical**
- R Relevant**

Let's take each of these features in turn.

**Clear** - Clear writing is writing where the core messages are easy to find. The easiest place to find core messages is at the beginning of things, so use a topic-development structure for everything you write! This works for:

- Essays
- Assignments
- Reports
- Theses
- Thesis chapters
- Sections of papers
- Paragraphs

Summary statements also help. So include summaries at the end of sections and in your conclusion. That way your core message can't be missed!

## Cohesive

Cohesive writing is predictable and easy to follow. Make your writing predictable by ensuring that your thesis statement, topic sentences and summary statement all share a single theme.

- State what you're going to say
- Say it
- Repeat what you said

Cohesive writing also makes good use of connectors, repetition and reference words. Using these appropriately makes your writing easy to follow.

## Logical

Logical writing uses the powerful tools of logic, reasoning and evidence to develop and support ideas. State your ideas and support them with:

- Explanations
- Examples
- Evidence

**Tip:** When you are using evidence from other sources, check that you've got your quotes, summaries, paraphrases, citations and references right!

## Expressed well

Writing that is expressed well is expressive *and* technically correct.

Expressive writing includes a purpose statement and a '*so what*' factor in both the introduction and the conclusion. Your purpose statement is what you intend to do, prove, etc. The '*so what*' factor is:

- Why the reader should care about what you've written
- What makes your message, topic or approach important, significant, interesting, special or new.

Correct writing contains appropriate grammar, punctuation, word choice and spelling.

## Analytical

In analytical writing, you explore the relationships between ideas. You:

- Synthesise ideas – select and combine ideas in new ways
- Compare ideas – state similarities and differences
- Discuss ideas – look at ideas from different perspectives and debate their value
- Critically evaluate ideas – make your own reasoned judgement about these ideas

Writing that is analytical also uses descriptive, analytical, evaluative and speculative language.

## Relevant

In writing that is relevant, all of the material you include is central to the topic or question under discussion. Make sure your thesis statement, topic sentences and summary statements all:

- Address the topic
- Help answer the question you are writing about.

If they don't, be ruthless! Get rid of them. Don't forget to also check that all of the sentences within each paragraph are related to the topic sentence of that paragraph. Same problem? Same treatment!

**Tip:** Some people say that in life it's the little things that count. But in writing, it's the big things that count most!

Remember to always check the *macro features* of your writing first: Check your introduction, conclusion and topic sentences for structure, consistency, relevance, clarity of purpose and the 'so what' factor. Make the changes necessary to achieve logical, evidence-based, critical texts.

When you're satisfied at that level, examine the *micro features* of your text. Revise your summary statements if required. Chop out or change any irrelevant supporting sentences. Do a final check to ensure appropriate grammar, word choice, punctuation, spelling and referencing.

## CLEAR Writing Checklist—Use this to help you revise your work

CRITERIA	EXPECTATIONS	MACRO FEATURES		MICRO FEATURES	
CLEAR	Core messages are easy to find	The overall structural pattern of the whole text, each section & each paragraph is topic-development		Summary statements are used appropriately at the end of sections & the end of the text.	
COHESIVE	The writing is easy to follow & assists the reader to predict what is coming next	The thesis statement, topic sentences & summary statement are thematically related & allow the reader to predict what is coming next		Connectors, repetition & reference words are used appropriately.	
LOGICAL	The writing employs logic, reasoning & evidence	The writer explains, gives examples & provides evidence to support ideas		Quotes, summaries, paraphrases, citations & references are appropriate.	
EXPRESSED WELL	The writing is expressive & technically correct	The writer's purpose & the significance or 'so what' factor are clear in the introduction & conclusion		Grammar, punctuation, word choice & spelling are appropriate. Non-discriminatory language is used.	
ANALYTICAL	Relationships between ideas are explored	Ideas are synthesised, discussed, compared & critically evaluated		Descriptive, analytical, evaluative & speculative language is used appropriately.	
RELEVANT	All of the material pertains to the topic or question	Thesis statement, topic sentences & summary statements address the topic & answer the question		Sentences within paragraphs are all related to the topic sentence.	

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