

Chapter 5: Basic Academic Writing Skills

Test your knowledge of Chapter 5: Basic Academic Writing Skills by answering the following multiple-choice questions. You can find the answers to each question at the end of this document.

- 1 A student wishes to use an idea from the extract of an article below (in italics), in an essay whose topic is: Analyse the role of revision in producing a competent essay.

The article was published in 2005 and examines the experiences of writing for native and non-native students in the United States. Diane Becket, the author of the article, concludes with these words:

For the students in this study, the factors that most influenced their progress are the extent to which they are able to balance the conflicting demands of their lives, the motivation to thoughtfully revise their essays, and their overall attitude to the class. These factors are more important for their progress than whether or not they were born in the United States.

Which of the following paraphrases is NOT a plagiarism of the above source?
 - a Becket (2005) concludes that one of the most significant factors in student writing is the motivation to thoughtfully revise their essays.
 - b Becket (2005) concludes that one of the most significant factors in student writing is the willingness to revise carefully as this is more important for their progress than whether or not they were born in the United States.
 - c According to Becket (2005), one of the most significant factors in student writing is their motivation to thoughtfully revise anything they write.
 - d Becket (2005) concludes that one of the most significant factors in student writing is the willingness to revise carefully.
- 2 The rule for using first and second person pronouns ('I', 'we', 'you') in writing at university is:
 - a Always check whether it is acceptable to use them, as different disciplines and even different assessment styles have different rules.
 - b Always avoid first and second person pronouns.
 - c Always avoid first and second person pronouns and also phrases such as 'In this author's opinion'.
 - d Always avoid first and second person pronouns, as your writing has to be seen to be objective.
- 3 When we use quotations, we should:
 - a use inverted commas around the 'exact' words of the author.
 - b place the 'exact' words of an author in inverted commas and supply a citation with a page number.
 - c paraphrase carefully and use a citation.
 - d summarise what the author said and use a citation with page numbers.
- 4 When you paraphrase an idea you may:
 - a use synonyms for many of the words.
 - b use any of the disciplinary terminology from the original source.
 - c write a longer or shorter sentence than the original.
 - d All of the above.

- 5 You are writing an essay and want to use a quotation to show that all students meet challenges when they begin studying at university or college. Which would be the best way to use a quotation from the extract below (using the APA citation style)?

The extract below is from page 60 of an article by Diane Becket published in 2005:

Although the native and non-native speakers share the same high school background, their attitudes, which have been affected by these experiences, are different. Memories from Indian schools influence the non-native speakers' attitude to American high schools, and they feel a pressure to succeed because of the efforts of their parents to give them a better life in the United States. The native speakers feel no such pressures, but they struggle with negative memories of high school. Both groups of students are, however, working in their own ways to adjust to the demands of college life.

- a According to Becket (2005), “memories from Indian schools influence the non-native speakers' attitude to American high schools, and they feel a pressure to succeed because of the efforts of their parents to give them a better life in the United States” (p. 60).
 - b According to Becket (2005), “the native speakers feel no such pressures” (p. 60).
 - c According to Becket (2005), both native and non-native students need “to adjust to the demands of college life” (p. 60).
 - d According to Becket (2005), “although the native and non-native speakers share the same high school background, their attitudes, which have been affected by these experiences, are different” (p. 60).
- 6 Which of the following paraphrases of an idea from pages 68–69 of an article published in 2005 by Diane Becket is CORRECTLY cited (according to the APA 6th style)?
- a Both native and non-native students need help in learning writing skills (Diane Becket, 2005, pp. 68–69).
 - b According to Beckett (published in 2005, pp. 68–69) both native and non-native students need help in learning writing skills.
 - c An academic article published in 2005 claimed that both native and non-native students need help in learning writing skills.
 - d Both native and non-native students need help in learning writing skills (Becket 2005, pp. 68–69).

- 7 This is a sentence on page 180 from an article written by Karen P. Macbeth and published in 2006:

The most common view of academic culture tends to speak of it as shared "habits of mind" (e.g., Brodkey, 1987; Kennedy & Smith, 2006).

Which of the sentences below CORRECTLY cites the idea (using APA 6th style)?

- a Brodkey (as cited in Macbeth, 2006, p. 180) has claimed that academic culture is constructed of habitual patterns of thinking that are shared by those within the culture.
 - b Brodkey (1987, as cited in Macbeth, 2006, p. 180) has claimed that academic culture is constructed of habitual patterns of thinking that are shared by those within the culture.
 - c Brodkey (1987) has claimed that academic culture is constructed of habitual patterns of thinking that are shared by those within the culture (as cited in Macbeth, 2006, p. 180).
 - d Macbeth (as cited in Brodkey, 1987 and Kennedy & Smith, 2006) has claimed that academic culture is constructed of habitual patterns of thinking that are shared by those within the culture.
- 8 This is the information supplied by ProQuest for an article in a journal:

Diverse, Unforeseen, and Quaint Difficulties: The Sensible Responses of Novices Learning to Follow Instructions in Academic Writing

Macbeth, Karen P. *Research in the Teaching of English* 41.2 (Nov 2006): 180–207.

What is the title of the journal?

- a Diverse, Unforeseen, and Quaint Difficulties: The Sensible Responses of Novices Learning to Follow Instructions in Academic Writing.
 - b Research in the Teaching of English. Urbana
 - c Diverse, Unforeseen, and Quaint Difficulties
 - d Research in the Teaching of English
- 9 All reference list items include:
- a the place of publication of the source.
 - b the page numbers of the source.
 - c the full bibliographic details required for the particular type of source that is being referenced.
 - d the authors, the year, the title of the source, the place of publication and the publisher.

- 10 Below is a paragraph taken from an article published in 1999 by Lejk, Wyvill and Farrow.

There are a number of methods of getting around the problem of unequal contribution to groupwork. The most common is to use some form of peer assessment to arrive at an individual's contribution to the group effort and then use this assessment to apply a weighting to the group mark (e.g. Lejk et al., 1996). Although these methods are pragmatic and widely accepted, they do go against the ethos of team working in which the team works as a unit and is judged as a unit. In addition, there are still question marks over students' ability to objectively assess their peers in a group setting. Some methods of peer assessment appear to be more difficult for non-professional assessors than others (Schechtman, 1992) and the ability of students to assess themselves fairly in a group setting has been questioned (Falchikov, 1991). Interviews with students at the University of Sunderland also cast doubt on the ability of some students to objectively assess their peers. All in all, assessment of groupwork is problematic.

It is a well written paragraph but the topic sentence has NOT been written as the first sentence.

What topic sentence would YOU write as the first sentence of this paragraph if you wanted to maximise the impact of the argument?

- a There are a number of methods of getting around the problem of unequal contribution to groupwork.
- b Assessment of groupwork is problematic.
- c All in all, assessment of groupwork is problematic.
- d Interviews with students at the University of Sunderland also cast doubt on the ability of some students to objectively assess their peers.

Answers

- 1 D
- 2 A
- 3 B
- 4 D
- 5 C
- 6 D

- 7 A
- 8 D
- 9 C
- 10 B