

REPOA Writing Course Notes 2013

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(days 3-5 of the 5 day course, Wednesday through Friday, 30 January through 1 February)

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Wednesday

Editing: Yellow

It is not possible to write and edit at the same time in the way I am about to show you. You *must* write first, then edit. Now:

- People visualise when they read.
- For readers, a short scene = a paragraph
- When we read, we are creating a movie that plays in our heads.
- If we read the same text more than once, that movie will be different the second time.
- If two people read the same text, they will be creating different movies (hopefully similar in the important respects).

As a writer, you have some (only some) control over these personal movies. Use it! Think of yourself as a film editor!

- Readers *want* one main idea per paragraph.
- Readers *want* the grammatical subject of the sentence to be who/what the story is about.
- Readers *do not want* my uncle Bobby's video, and yet, when writing, the more we need to think, the more likely we are to give them just that!

So:

Write first. Get the overall structure about right – and then edit.

Divide into paragraphs – one main idea per paragraph

Well, what is the one main idea here?

(A) **Regional and urban planners in the Netherlands** have become increasingly interested in urban management. **The increasing differentiation in the demand for living environments**, which has resulted from an increased diversity of household types is putting increasing pressure on them. **There** is a need to develop public space in a way that will lead to such diversity, e.g. basing their plans for new spatial investments on the features of the newly-emerging demand. **The features of the current range of living environments** must be clearly understood. **We** will thus need to know:

What about in these?

(B) **Regional and urban planners in the Netherlands** have become increasingly interested in urban management. **They** are responding to the increasing differentiation in the demand for living environments, which has resulted from an increased diversity of household types. **Their task** is to develop public space in a way that will lead to such diversity, e.g. basing their plans for new spatial investments on the features of the newly-emerging demand, while having a clear understanding of the features of the current range of living environments. **Planners** will thus need to know:

(C) Holland's growing interest in urban management can be explained by the increasing differentiation in the demand for living environments, which has resulted from an increased diversity of household types. The government's task is to respond to these new demands; in particular, its development of public space can create conditions supporting a more diverse range of living environments. Its plans for new spatial investments should be based on a good understanding of the nature of existing living environments and the components of the new, differentiated demands; this would include questions such as:

(D) Consumers' increasing demand for differentiation in living environments in Holland has led to a growing interest in urban management. This demand has resulted from the increased diversity of household types. It has created a new task for the government: to use its ability to develop public spaces in a way that will increase the diversity of living environments. The changing and differentiated demand for living environments will need to be better understood by planners, who will need to base decisions about new spatial investment on a comparison between demand and existing living environments, by considering:

Please note that even though (A) is unreadable, it is a good draft. Nothing needed to be added to it or moved around a lot or deleted from it to make versions (B), (C) or (D). It's an unfinished text, not a bad one. (The 'finished' one, for the author, was (B), because this was what he hoped we would understand by reading (A)).

The difference between the first draft and the others is the way the reader's visualisation has been controlled. One is about planners, one about the government, and one about consumers. The first draft accidentally tried to put all three on camera at once.

We marked the 'camera' in this text while we were in class. The yellow is always the subject of the main part of the sentence. The blue is always the last image in the sentence. Every sentence has a blue, but only the ones used by the reader to make their internal movie are marked here:

Three quarters of the estimated three billion people living in developing countries lack access to adequate potable water supplies and sanitation facilities. **Those who live in cities**, where supplying water may require complex technology and expensive infrastructure, often cope with intermittent supplies. **The majority**, living in rural areas, may carry water from distant sources that may be polluted with disease-carrying organisms. **Their needs** are **addressed by rural water supply programmes**.

However, **rural water supply programmes** are difficult to implement. **They** generally fail if they rely on conventional manual pumps not designed for the level of stress and abuse routinely the case in developing countries. **They** also cannot always cope with the expense and scarcity of parts that are not made locally (because the necessary cast iron and steel are unavailable). **Rural programmes** also generally lose out to urban interests in their struggle for financial support.

What is the yellow?

- The yellow is at the centre of the reader's visualization.
- *All* yellows are part of that visualisation.
- The yellow is the grammatical subject of the main part of the sentence.
- The yellow is always something *known at that point* to the reader.
- The yellow *cannot* be new information.

Below are many sentences that differently visualise the same event. The difference is in what is centre screen in each one (that's the grammatical subject, marked in yellow)

Jo dropped the ball quickly into the basket.

Dropping was how the ball that Jo had went into the basket.

The ball was dropped into the basket quickly by Jo.

By Jo, the ball was dropped quickly into the basket.

Quickly was how Jo dropped the ball into the basket

Into the basket was where Jo had quickly dropped the ball.

Where Jo quickly dropped the ball was into the basket.

The basket was what Jo had quickly dropped the ball into.

Dropping quickly into the basket was what the ball did, once Jo let it go.

Quickly, the dropping of the ball into the basket was done by Jo.

The yellow is often, but not always, at the beginning of the sentence.

Jack went up the hill.

Yesterday, Jack went up the hill.

After running errands in town, Jack went up the hill

Although only Jack went up the hill, both he and Jill came tumbling down.

Find the yellow: (We did this in class, and I have left group answers in.)

1. Their needs are addressed by rural water supply programmes.
2. If you think this is the issue, you are mistaken.
3. Where the flood had been, we saw the water had left a muddy mark along the wall.
4. As we saw, the flood had left a muddy mark on the wall.
5. A muddy mark on the wall was left by the flood.
6. As a steady stream of cars pass over the speed bump, its panels go up and down, turning cogs and generating between 10-36kw of electricity.
7. The largest demographic group lacking access to Department water are farmers.
8. Farmers are the largest demographic group lacking access to water.

Now, rewrite these sentences to put a version of the underlined text in the yellow position:

9. **Their crop yields** have been decreasing for several years, but **they** continue to stay on their farms.

They continue to stay on their farms, **despite decreasing crop yields**.

They continue to stay on their farms, although their crop yields have been decreasing **for several years**.

They continue to stay on their farms, but their crop yields have been **decreasing for several years**.

They have suffered decreasing crop yields for several years, **but continue to stay on their farms**.

10. **If you think this is the issue, you** are **mistaken**.

Thinking this is the issue is **a mistake**.

It is a mistake for you to think that this is **the issue**.

In thinking this is the issue, **you** are **mistaken**.

Your belief that this is the issue is **mistaken**.

Thinking this is an issue is a **mistake**.

Thinking this is an issue is **wrong**.

11. Where the flood had been, **we** saw the water had left a muddy mark along the wall.

The flood left a muddy mark **on the wall**.

The flood left a muddy mark on the wall, and **we saw it**.

A muddy mark on the wall, which we saw, was **left by the flood**.

12. As a steady stream of cars pass over the speed bump, its panels go up and down, turning cogs and generating between 10-36kw of electricity.

Between 10-36kw of electricity are generated as a steady stream of cars cause the speed bump to go up and down.

13. The largest demographic group lacking access to Department water are farmers.

Access to Department water is a particular problem for farmers, the largest demographic group.

Linking sentences together is usually done yellow to yellow, but there are two other possibilities:

Editing: a little light yellow

Light yellow is a way of thinking about anything that appears in a sentence before the yellow – it almost shares centre screen.

Sometimes (but only sometimes) the light yellow can be used to move the camera.

example:

This paper describes the initial stages of enterprise development among cooperative members in X. In it, **our analysis** is limited to those stages visible in the wider community, although where possible we include in our description parts of the process that are less visible, e.g. household-level changes.

Editing: a little blue

Blue is *always* at the end of the sentence.

Every sentence has an end, so every sentence has a blue part.

Not every blue matters to the 'camera', but once in a while one will let you move the camera.

Example:

This paper describes stages of enterprise development among cooperative members in X. **Our analysis** is limited to those stages visible in the wider community, although where possible we include in our description parts of the process that are less visible, i.e. **household-level changes**. **These changes** occur as household members shift their activity away from... etc.

There are three reasons for this. First, **the availability of cell phones** was increasing rapidly. **Second, texting and calling charges** were decreasing. Third, **the new app** allowed farmers to compare city and farmgate prices and thus to bargain more effectively.

Added because of something Tonga said in the break:

Use a spell check, but *never as the only* way to check your text!

Spellbound*

I have a spelling checquer.

It came width my pea sea.

It plane lee marks four my revue

Miss takes I cannot sea.

I've run this poem threw it,

I'm sure your please too no,

Its let or perfect in it's weigh,

My checker tolled me sew.

* Anonymous. One possible source is the *Kenmore Teachers Association Newsletter*, quoted in *New York Teacher*, 14 June 1993:8, but possibly of earlier origin.

A note re: Titles

Here is the thesis title and book title of the same study. Which is which, and why?

The IMF and the Sudan: The interplay between international and domestic factors

Public Debt and Private Wealth: Sudan and the IMF

Research proposals (page 10 of the handout)

In answering the question, discussions covered or identified these aspects:

Short term: *within 1 year? 1 year before plus one year after? During the 60 days from the start of the match?*

impact: What counts as an impact? How related/unrelated to the actual even does it need to be?

measurements: How will you know you have an impact? What are the measures? Can they be used effectively in the time frame? What would the data be? The data that is available or potentially collectable will also affect the final research question.

This final research question could cover any of the following, either a group (social or economic or environmental) or an individual change (eg infrastructure), or all three in a small geographical area (eg a community near a stadium)...

Social

cultural changes: (languages, exposing SA to other cultures ...)

impact of SA on visitors

spread of STDs

crime

the SA image internationally

tourism

immigration

Economic

income changes (including government revenue) but also individuals, private investors (both local and international).

changes in employment:

infrastructure (effect on economy)

rent increases

networking changes / business

inflation

tourism

immigration

Environmental

infrastructure (effect on the environment)

environmental degradation

pollution

tourism

Narrowing research questions

(Bob Moses and the McArthur Grant) [By the way, this is a link to a wikipedia article about Bob, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Parris_Moses. It does not mention that while he was working on that Harvard PhD, he was substitute teaching small children in the school I was directing.] First, imagine you are Bob, and someone calls you up one evening to say you have won a grant for \$250,000 that you didn't apply for and did not even know about. Suddenly, you have the money to research anything you want... you can go to the best sources, collect whatever data you wish, and you are free from the need to work at anything else in the meantime. The big question is: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW? What would your research project be? Think about this for a while, until the thrill of being rich can be set aside (that is, after you stop thinking about houses, cars, airplanes and fancy food) and you can really concentrate on what you could *do*. What would that be? Which particular curiosity do you have that could easily absorb your interest for years? Once you have that huge idea, narrow down by looking within it for a small piece of it that you can do with the resources you have or can get. If you read Bob's biography in Wikipedia, you can see that he used the money to start the Algebra Project (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algebra_Project) [he also bought a house, of course]. The Algebra Project grew from tutoring he started doing at his son's (and my daughter's) elementary school, the Martin Luther King Open School in Cambridge Massachusetts. It wasn't something he imagined out of thin air, but a way of expanding something already close to his heart.

and after doing the above exercise, consider this advice about research proposals:

- Avoid overly-broad topics.
- Be structured, and guide readers through the structure.
- Avoid repetition.
- Use your own words (and cite sources).
- Leave out irrelevant or trivial references.
- Plan to work with primary data (do not over-depend on secondary sources)

(possible proposal structure 1)

1. Working Title

2. Introduction (1.5) Why is the question important? How will answering it advance knowledge in political science/political theory? What is the broader social/political/geopolitical context that frames it? What's the puzzle you're trying to explain? (Be sure your research question(s) are clearly stated)

3. Literature review (3.5) Show that your research question is anchored in and contributes to one or more body of literature. Show you are aware of key research and summarise current knowledge. This section should also set out the general theoretical approach.

4. Data/methodology (3) Indicate the types of data needed to answer the research question and the general methodological approach taken. Items to address include: key propositions or hypotheses; concepts; independent and dependent variable(s); indicators; whether this is a cross-section or longitudinal approach; unit of analysis; sampling; validity and reliability; etc. as relevant.

5. Proposed analyses (2)

6. Proposed timeframe for the study (1)

7. Bibliography/references

Possible structure 2: (applied research)

Topic

Background

Objective

Scope

Methodology and Approach

Facilities

Budget

Deliverables and Programme Schedule References.

Possible Structure 3:

Topic
Purposes
Background
Scope
Theoretical framework
Method
Timetable
Limitations
References

Possible Structure 4:

Topic
Overview
Introduction
The Problem
Research Plan
References

Possible Structure 5:

Topic
Introduction
Literature review
Methodology
Budget
Expected results
Bibliography / References

The one I mentioned, From *Surviving your Dissertation*, by Rudestam & Newton (this week I looked at the 2nd hand prices of this book – it is too expensive, sorry!)

Review of the literature

The classic, definitive or most influential pieces of research in this area are...

The journals that specialise in the kind of research I propose to do...

The body of literature to which I wish to add is...

The experts in my field of research are...

Statement of the problem

The intellectual problem(s) I may help to solve through this research is(are) ...

The moral, political, social or practical problem I want to address is...

Method

The method I propose to use to answer my question, prove (or disprove) my point, add detailed and substantial knowledge is...

An alternative way to do it is...

Three important research studies using the method I propose are...

The reason(s) this method is a good one for my question is(are) ...

Possible weaknesses of this method are...

The skills I would need to use this method are...

Of these skills, I still need to acquire the following ...
I propose to acquire these skills by...

Wednesday Afternoon:

Edit in your paper, using the 'yellow' concept.

Mark the things that should be yellow, then make sure they are in the right part of the sentence.
Remember:

- The yellow is at the centre of the reader's visualization.
- The yellow is the grammatical subject of the main part of the sentence.
- The yellow is always something *known at that point* to the reader.
- The yellow *cannot* be new information.
- The yellow will make most of the sentence-to-sentence connections.
- The yellow should not be a citation unless you are making a multiple-sentence comment/report *about* the citation.

Thursday

The performance of smallholder dairies has been, since the late 1980s, directly responding to economic fluctuations following the low export of coffee in the world market. This greatly affected household income...

A simple, two part review.

1. With your group, revise the paragraph entitled "rewrite" on p. 13 ("The building industry...")

Draft

The building industry uses 'turn-key' to mean responsibility for the satisfactory performance of a building in addition to its design, construction and the completion of the building. All subcontractors are supervised by the building contractor with whom turn-key responsibility lies.

possible edits from class

'Turn key' is used by the building industry to mean responsibility for the satisfactory performance of a building in addition to its design construction and completion. It assigns to the contractor the responsibility to supervise all sub-contractors.

Responsibility for the satisfactory performance of a building in addition to its design, construction and completion is termed "turn-key". Turn-key responsibility lies with building contractors, who supervise all sub contractors.

'Turn-key' is used by the building industry to mean satisfactory performance of a building, in addition to its design, construction and completion. It assigns responsibility to the building contractor to supervise all sub-contractors.

In addition to the design, construction and completion of the building, 'turn-key', in the building industry means responsibility to the satisfactory performance of a building, including supervising all sub-contractors, and lies with the building contractor.

2. There is nearly always more than one way to edit any text, and the 'right one' is always the one the author wants the reader to see.

Draft:

The headquarters of the non-profit organization, Creative Commons, is in the US. The range of creative works available for others to build upon legally and to share is expanded by Creative Commons. The public can use, at no cost, any of the several copyright-licenses Creative Commons has released and copyright holders use. These licenses define which rights are reserved and which rights are waived for the benefit of recipients or other creators. Creative Commons was invented to create a more flexible copyright model, replacing "all rights reserved" with "some rights reserved."

Edit1:

Creative Commons, a non-profit organization headquartered in the US, expands the range of creative works available for others to build upon legally and to share. It has released several copyright-licenses known as Creative Commons licenses for free to the public; these licenses allow creators to communicate which rights they reserve and which rights they waive for the benefit of recipients or other creators. It was invented to create a more flexible copyright model, replacing "all rights reserved" with "some rights reserved."

Edit2:

Creative Commons, a non-profit organization headquartered in the US, has redefined 'copyright' by creating new types of copyright licenses. These new licenses are free to use, and allow creators to communicate which rights they reserve and which rights they waive for the benefit of recipients or other creators. This expands the range of creative works available for others to build upon legally and to share. The several different Creative Commons licenses have created a more flexible copyright model, replacing "all rights reserved" with "some rights reserved."

Edit3:

Creative Commons, based in the US, invented a more flexible copyright model, replacing "all rights reserved" with "some rights reserved." Rights, grouped into several Creative Commons licenses, are either reserved or waived. This allows others to see easily when it is legal to share someone's original work, or to build upon it. It has created a more flexible copyright model, replacing "all rights reserved" with "some rights reserved."

This is surely a possible edit 4, which again depends on what the author wanted us to notice!

Editing: Blue

Every sentence has a blue part. It is

- always the end.
- varies in length.
- always new (summaries excepted).
- the most important information in the sentence.

If there is nothing new, delete the whole sentence.

Use the reader's love of paragraph patterns (they love patterns, even if they don't know this)

RESPECTIVELY:

Don't overload peoples' conscious processing ability.

a , c and b are t, u and d, respectively

is harder to understand than:

a is related to t, c to u, and b to d.

or even

a, c and b are related, respectively, to t, u and d/

About the yellow pattern:

Anything pattern you can use in a documentary,
you can do in a **paragraph in a text:**

- **steady shot**
- **general-to-particular**
- **cause(s)-effect(s)**
- **here comes a list (in parallel)**
- **through time**
- **through space**
- etc.*

Other reading tendencies:

Light before heavy

Unless the long phrase **MUST** be on camera, prefer light before heavy (that is, short before long).

revise:

The trade effect of the EU's new, harmonized aflatoxin standard on food exports from Africa is quantified in this paper. This effect... (or) This paper...

This paper quantifies the trade effect of the EU's new, harmonized aflatoxin standard on food exports from Africa.

This paper quantifies the trade effect on African food exports of the EU's new, harmonized aflatoxin standard.

Lists use parallel grammar

not parallel

- The building is 20m long, has a width of 10m and is one storey in height.

parallel

- The building is 20m long, 10m wide and one storey high.
- The building is 20m in length, 10m in width and one storey in height.

- The building has a length of 20m, a width of 10m and a height of one storey.

revise to be parallel

On farms where the probability of spreading of this disease to other cows is low, the average net profit of a three-day treatment with antibiotics and an antibiotic treatment lasting eight days was €4.00 and €−28.88 respectively.

On farms where the probability of spreading of this disease to other cows is low, the average net profit of a three-day treatment with antibiotics was £4.00 and the average net loss for an eight day treatment was £28.88.

[Please note: almost everyone missed the minus sign in their revision, if they tried to keep it!]

What happens when something that is not a list is shown with parallel grammar? We see a list.

False parallel: I see a lounge chair and a beer bottle and sailboats gliding along the bay. (the beer bottle and chair out out floating with the sailboats!)

Parallel only the chair and beer: I see a lounge chair and a beer bottle on the shore, and also sailboats gliding along the bay.

parallel: This study describes the effects of three treatments: a three-day treatment, an eight-day treatment, and no treatment

parallel: This study describes the effects of three treatments: a treatment lasting three days, one lasting eight days, and no treatment

The problem with 'respectively' is that it almost always adds a memory burden!

cf p15 in handout

Friday

The two papers (explain why)

Quotations and citations

The difference between Krall (2012:32) and Krall (2012): the thing cited is found on page 32 in the first one, and throughout Krall in the second one. Direct quotations need page numbers.

citation part of the sentence

As Krall (2012) shows...

As Krall (2012:32) points out...

citation not part of the sentence:

Imports fell 20% in 2005 (Krall 2012:32)

Shipping suffered heavily from 2008 onwards (Krall 2012)

adding page numbers

(2012:32) This is found on page 32.

(2012) This is a theme

adding a, b etc.

Smyth 2011a first source mentioned in the paper

Smyth 2011b second source (same author, same author order, same year)

Smyth and Lu 2010

Lu and Smyth 2010 (names change order, so no a/b)

Citation or quotation exercise:

Use the paper you like most, or the one from the journal you'd most like to publish in, or (if neither of these applies) the shortest. Count the number of direct quotations and the number of citations, in each section of the paper.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS

Intro	background	Findings	discussion	conclusion
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	1	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	2	6	8	0
1	0	0	0	3
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0

CITATIONS

intro	background	findings	discussion	conclusion
1	10		0	0
9	0	0	n/a	0
0	11	0	0	0
34		6 (5 are from background)		0
2	9		4	0
7	0	0	20	0
16	9	0	10	0
4	9	27	19	0
5	9		57	3

7	22		23	0
13	0		12	0
19	3	0	23	0
5	2	0	0	1
41 ()	0	14	0

Stating things in your own words.

1. Find, in your own work, a quotation you would like to rephrase.
2. Copy it together with the paragraphs before and after into a new document. With your group, look at each person's quotation in turn.
3. Instead of simply substituting one word for another, interview the writer – find out (from speaking, not reading aloud) what he or she wants to say (you might need to take notes).
4. Then (this is completely experimental, and locating problems is part of my task right now – so tell me what works for you and what does not!)
 - Many people give the direct quote and then explain it, and if this is true, just add a citation to the explanation in the draft and delete the direct quotation.
 - Colour the font (red, maybe) and use the yellow and blue to integrate the quotation into the flow, deleting as much as possible without losing the reason the original quotation was needed. (This will change the structure to one that fits your draft)
 - If a key concept label you need originated recently from the author of the quotation, put quotation marks around it and leave it in, with the citation.
 - Look at what is left and restate *that* in your own words. If you can't find the formal words, use the less formal. This is a draft, after all. (This will change the wording.)

Exercise: Helping people see the message in graphics

Challenger exercise:
figures aid decisions, so make the decision visible!

Submission-to-acceptance and beyond

Do not give up. If a journal asks for revisions, do them and resubmit. If a journal rejects the paper, see if you can find ways to improve it (if there are any you can see) and submit to another journal. Don't waste your work! Talk to me.

Open Access and Copyright

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Closing thoughts

- Never try to 'get it right the first time'.
- Write 15 minutes a day
- Use writing to think
- Writing and reading are mentally different processes
- Writing well requires revision.
- The newer or more complex your points, the more readers need a familiar handhold.
- Structural knowledge can guide your reading
- Finish the paper/proposal and submit it!
- Tell me what happens, no matter what!
- Plan on being asked to revise at *least* once.
- Knowledge expands: perfect now but in two years: flaws
- Plan enough time for revision.
- Yellow: familiar, subject of main clause
- Blue: new, important, end of sentence
- PRACTISE !