

Academic English: Writing and Presenting

with and without the support of LLMs

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Adrian Wallwork

The lessons integrate the traditional elements of a course on writing and presenting in English with insights and strategies on the way Large Language Models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT, Writefull, Grammarly, can be used as a support, but highlighting that they also have serious deficiencies.

Large Language Models

LLMs are transforming how academic papers and presentations are written. They have some major advantages:

1. they generate texts that are 99.9% accurate from an English point of view (though not from a factual point of view); they can correct texts already in English with at least 95% accuracy
2. they can give suggestions on titles for papers, on how to interact with referees, and on some elements regarding the quality and content of the writing

However they have major drawbacks:

- when correcting and paraphrasing they may make serious undesired modifications
- they do NOT flag some of the major issues that guarantee that a paper will be published: readability, conciseness, relevance, inclusion of all the aspects that a referee expects to find (e.g. limitations of work)
- they require a lot of finetuning in the prompting process
- they generate emails that always follow the same verbose style and structure

The course will thus focus on the pros, and above all the cons, of using LLMs.

Manuscript writing skills

Focus on key areas of a paper where special human attention is required – highlighting key findings, differentiate own work from that of others, discussing limitations; short clear simple sentences and paragraphs.

Effective titles and abstracts that will attract attention and thus be read.

Readability.

Dealing with referees and editors.

Presentation skills

Design, practise and deliver a well-structured presentation that attracts and holds audience attention.

Write a script and avoid mistakes in English by using simple and short sentences.

Improve pronunciation and intonation in English.

Deal with fears and Q&A session.

DURATION

Course length: 24 hours (in presenza), 24 hours (online) - online lessons are very efficient as students can do multiple presentations at the same time in the breakout rooms.

Number of participants: max 30 per course.

FURTHER DETAILS ON THE COURSE

Pre-course homework

Slides: A week before the course begins, students must email me (adrian.wallwork@gmail.com) the first three and last two slides of a presentation (i.e. a total of 5 slides) that they have already done on another occasions.

However, the slides must be modified so that the amount of text is reduced to the minimum.

Script: Students must also send me the script for slides in English. This script should be submitted after it has been submitted to ChatGPT with the three following prompts:

1. Please correct the English for this script for each of these sides of a presentation at an international conference. The slides are the first two and the last two.
2. Please tell me how I could make my opening sentences more captivating.
3. What words or sentence could I remove to make the script more dynamic? Explain why I should remove them and what the result will be.

Course assessment

During the course all students must send me an abstract that they have written themselves but checked / modified with the aid of ChatGPT.

All students will be expected to deliver a short presentation.

Outcome of course

Students will have learned how to write short documents in virtually error-free English, how to write a paper, and how to give dynamic presentations being as specific and concise as possible.

Adrian Wallwork

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- Since 2000, Adrian Wallwork has held more than 100 courses for doctoral students and researchers at universities primarily in Italy, but also recently in China and Qatar.
- Author of textbooks for Springer Science, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, BBC, De Agostini and Vallardi. His books for Springer Science on English for science communication are used by universities around the world and have to date been translated into Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Persian/Farsi.
- In Feb 2023 he began teaching PhD students and researchers how to improve their English using Google Translate and ChatGPT - with an overall increase in accuracy from about 75% to 95%.

Publications

SPRINGER NATURE (USA & EU) (<https://www.springer.com/series/13913>).

AI-assisted Writing and Presenting in English (early 2024)

English for Writing Research Papers (2011, 2016, **2023**)

English for Research: Usage, Style, and Grammar (2012, **2023**)

English for Research: Essential English Grammar and Communication Strategies (2022)

English for Research: Writing an Academic Paper in English (2022)

English for Research: Giving an Academic Presentation in English (2022)

English for Research: "Poor English" Tips to avoid the Top 100 mistakes in Academic Communication in English (2020)

English for Presentations at International Conferences (2010, 2016)

English for Research: Grammar / Vocabulary / Writing Exercises (three volumes, 2012, early **2024**)

English for Academic Correspondence and Socializing (2011, 2016)

English for Interacting on Campus (2016)

+ Six vols in the Professional / Business English series (2014) and six in the *Easy English* series (2018).

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS - DISCUSSION BOOKS

The Book of Days (1999)

Discussions A-Z Advanced (1997)

Discussions A-Z Intermediate (1997)

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS - BUSINESS ENGLISH COURSEBOOKS

International Express – Upper Intermediate (2007) - with Keith Harding

Business Vision (2002)

Business Options (1999)

BBB WORLD ENGLISH – BBC PUBLICATIONS - WITH ANNA SOUTHERN

Science and Technology (2004); Business and Finance (2003); Culture and Society (2003); News (2002)

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