

Academic English: Writing and Presenting with and without the support of LLMs

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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, Claude, Gemini and Copilot can be used as a support, but highlighting that they also have 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
3. they can help with practically every aspect of academic life - not just studying for also

socializing The key is in learning how to prompt and to judge the bot's output using critical thinking skills. However LLMs have major drawbacks:

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

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

Drafting a skeleton presentation co-created with ChatGPT.

Designing, practising and delivering well-structured presentation that attracts and holds audience attention. Drafting a script using simple and short sentences.

Choosing appropriate and inclusive images - highlighting importance of diversity.

Learning from TED and 3MTs.

Improving pronunciation and intonation in English.