

Expectations of English-Speaking Readers

Writing well in another language requires more than knowing just that language's grammar or lexicon. English-speaking readers expect certain writing practices or *rhetorical strategies* to be used in an academic paper. Below are various rhetorical strategies to use and avoid when writing for English-speaking readers.

	Strategy	Example	Reason
Do	Begin with a fact and expand it or introduce a problem	All organisms depend on metabolic processes to sustain life , but not all metabolic processes function equally. By studying the metabolism of organisms like yeast, researchers may be able to understand how different processes could be used to develop cells that can survive in more than one environment.	A supporting fact provides a foundation for your argument and draws in your reader by starting with information that is more familiar before moving into information that is new or less familiar
Don't	Over use metaphor or analogy	Just as earthquakes reveal the strength of a building's foundations, so do political scandals reveal the strength of a nation's government.	Metaphor and analogy can be used, but should not replace evidence. Note: you may have to explain a metaphor if your reader is unfamiliar with it.
Do	Use dates or data in order to give context for your argument	In her 2009 study, Smith reveals that 30% of Country X's population lives below the poverty line. Since 2008, global poverty rates have increased due to the loss of industry; however, increased poverty rates in Country X were accompanied by an increase in industry, contradicting global patterns and suggesting that other factors are influencing Country X's poverty rates.	Relevant information, like <i>when</i> or <i>how much</i> , can help orient your reader by providing context for your topic. Note: use only if this information is necessary to your argument as unnecessary information can distract your reader.
Don't	Over use personal experience	As a child, I obeyed my parents because they had my best interests in mind. Shakespeare's Hamlet also obeys his parents because he trusts that they have his best interests in mind, but he learns later that this trust is unfounded.	Some assignments will ask for personal experience, but readers generally prefer objective evidence over personal experience.
Do	Develop ideas from simple to complex	Yeast cells undergo both aerobic and anaerobic respiration, which ensures their survival in different environments. This ability indicates that supporting different metabolic processes is within the genetic capability of certain cells. Researchers should explore which genetic factors allow for these processes and how they can be used in the production of biofuel.	Western logic often follows a pattern of "if this, then this." Following this logical pattern provides your argument with a foundation that is difficult to dispute. Note: make sure your logic is accurate and does not include any fallacies.
Don't	Rely on facts alone	Aerobic exercise is good for the heart. Strength training is important for maintaining muscle mass and improving bone density. All	Readers expect to hear what a writer has to say about facts, not just facts alone.

		kinds of exercise have been shown to relieve depression, anxiety, and stress.	
Do	Combine facts with analysis	Exercise can be beneficial for both physical and mental health. Aerobic exercise is good for the heart, which is necessary for overall health. Strength training is important for maintaining muscle mass and improving bone density as both decrease as we age. All kinds of exercise have been shown to relieve depression, anxiety, and stress.	Western education generally values analysis of facts more than the facts alone. If you do not connect your facts or indicate how a fact supports your argument, readers assume that you are unaware of these connections.
Don't	Assume your reader will draw conclusions from declarative statements	The quality of a product is not enough to ensure a loyal consumer base. Consumers expect to have a positive experience when purchasing. Consumer demand has shifted from product to purchasing experience. Service sector businesses fulfill an important socio-economic need.	Declarative sentences are written to inform rather than persuade. Using declaratives is okay, but using too many causes your reader to lose track of your purpose in giving the information.
Do	Draw conclusions by connecting effects to causes	The quality of a product is not enough to ensure a loyal consumer base as consumers expect to have a positive experience when purchasing. The shift in consumer demand from product to purchasing experience suggests that service sector businesses fulfill an important socio-economic need.	Readers relate well to information when it is laid out in a pattern of "cause and effect" because they see the effect (your argument) being directly supported by the cause (your evidence).
Don't	Reiterate or re-word content without adding new insight	Strategic management is necessary in order to align a business's goals with its outcomes. Managers want to make sure that their business's goals become a reality. When a business's reality does not reflect their goals, it is time to introduce strategic management.	Reiterating or re-wording the same idea is unnecessary and does not strengthen the value of the original idea or demonstrate analytical thinking.
Do	Confront opposing arguments	Smith believes that interfering in another country's welfare results in dependency over a long-term basis. However, allowing current socio-economic conditions to continue in Country X may result in a vicious cycle that eliminates the possibility of a healthy future.	Responding to a counter-argument is considered a sign of strong scholarly ability in Western education and demonstrates that the writer has considered other views.
Don't	Quote without engaging the material	Plato believes that political rulers should adopt philosophical roles so that "political power and philosophy entirely coincide" ¹ so that power belongs to "those who love the sight of truth." ²	Quotes provide evidence, not analysis. Readers expect you to tell them how a quote relates to your argument.
Do	Engage quoted material by either opposing or agreeing	Plato believes that power should belong to "those who love the sight of truth," ¹ but this argument assumes that truth is singular rather than pluralistic. <i>Or...</i> Plato believes that power should belong to "those who love the sight of truth," ¹ supporting the argument that rule by a <i>reasonable</i> few is more valuable than rule by many, i.e. democracy.	Engaging quotes results in a dynamic argument that demonstrates the writer's willingness to be part of scholarly debate rather than to simply provide information from other scholars.