

Enhancing Academic Writing ability for Higher Education Students

By

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Abstract

Becoming higher education students is quite different from Senior High School Students. Higher education students are demanded to develop their study skills such as managing own self, managing time, reading efficiency, and develop academic writing. This paper aims to discuss how to improve writing skill especially academic writing that is always faced by students in higher education. In writing academic essays there are three main activities for academic writing, first, writing foundation, second, reading and note taking and third, writing stage.

Keywords: enhancing, academic writing, higher Education students

I. Introduction

Writing is one of the language skills, besides listening, speaking, and reading skill, that should be achieved by higher students. Students in higher education should express their idea mostly by writing in form of mini paper or mini research. The ability at communication through writing essentially reproduces the information and ideas into writing. In other words, writing is an expression of language in the form of letter, symbols or words. The primary purpose of writing is written communication.

There are many genres of writing such as narrative, expository, descriptive, recount, report, spoof, hortatory, argumentative etc. In writing consist of some paragraphs. Paragraph is a group of sentences about single topic that develops in specific detail. Paragraph that higher students usually analyze is descriptive writing, narrative writing and argumentative writing.

Descriptive writing is formed by paragraphs which described the process, event, personality, person, object, place, thing or an idea. When the students want to write something they should

have a lot of information, ideas, and thought in their mind so that they will be able to express them into sentence, paragraph and essay (Dorothy and Lisa, tt).

Narrative writing relates a clear sequence of events that occurs over time. Both what happens and the order in which the events occur are communicated to the reader. Effective narration requires a writer to give a clear sequence of events (fictional or non-fictional) and to provide elaboration (<http://web.alsde.edu>).

The argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner. Argumentative essay assignments generally call for extensive research of literature or previously published material. Argumentative assignments may also require empirical research where the student collects data

through interviews, surveys, observations, or experiments. Detailed research allows the student to learn about the topic and to understand different points of view regarding the topic so that she/he may choose a position and support it with the evidence collected during research. Regardless of the amount or type of research involved, argumentative essays must establish a clear thesis and follow sound reasoning (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/05/>).

Students in higher education will often meet argumentative writing as academic writing in their academic tasks. Therefore they should know how to write academic writing. Academic writing is any writing done to fulfill a requirement of a college or university. Academic writing is also used for publications that are read by lecturers and researchers or presented at conferences. A very broad definition of

academic writing could include any writing assignment given in an academic setting (Stephen Bailey. 2003).

Academic writing should be systematic, brief and detail. In writing academic setting, one should convey his/her idea in logical manner and make it sense. Avoid long essay and exaggerated information. Propose supporting idea with example, figure and anecdote. It is done by combining words so the students in higher education should have many vocabulary to describe certain topics in detail. Besides that they must have good knowledge and ability especially about writing process and aspect of writing. To get good ability in academic writing are influenced by many factors such as; theory of writing, approach, media, interest, motivation, strategy etc.

The writer would like to discuss strategy in academic writing to solve

higher students problems. This paper will elaborate what is writing skill in academic perspective and discuss strategies to become good writer in higher education based on *Academic writing: A Handbook for International Students* book written by Stephen Bailey.

II. LITERATURE STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Ability

In Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition explained that ability is a level of skill or intelligence to perform act, physical and mental, especially for academic field and cleverness (A.S Horby, 2010:2). Although the term of ability is in common usage both in everyday talk and in scientific discussion among psychologists, educators, and other specialists, its precise definition is seldom explicated or even considered. It is a word that seems to be accepted as a sort of conceptual primitive, and in fact it is

intimately related to such commonly used word as *able* and the simple modal auxiliary *can*.

There are general ability is concerned with all sort. Special ability has to do with a defined kind of task (Jhon B. Carroll :1993:3). As used to describe an attribute of individuals, ability refers to the possible variation over individuals in the liminal level of task difficulty (or in derived measurements based on such liminal levels) at which, on any given occasion in which all condition appear favorable, individuals perform successfully on a defined class of task. Every ability is defined in term of some kind of performance or potential for performance.

There are some classification of ability. The first, cognitive ability orientates to think that is included intellectual ability, which is remember till the ability to solve a problem. The second the affective abilities orientates to feel or conscious. The characteristic of affective

is organized of value and norm. The last is psychomotor ability orientates in physical activity or muscle, so the ability for the use of the limb (Mardianto:2012:93-98).

Based on the definition from some experts above, it can be conclude that ability deals with condition of being able to doing something whether it is physically or mentally. It means the students ability is the potential or skill of the students to be able in doing something. In other hand, ability is the intelligence or the capability of someone in doing something.

Definition of Writing

There are some definitions of writing according to experts such as; writing is probably already an integral your daily routine. Consider everything you might write in one day ; messages or reminder at home, email in computer, notes in school, and ideas in journal. In the form of language skills, writing still was assumed as skill the most difficult, between speaking and reading by the

majority of the students (Joyce Armstrong Carrol et al; 2001:2).

According to Pardiyono (2006:9), writing is one of the manifestations embodiment linguistic competence that are expressed in the form of writing the use of language, besides in the form of language spoken.

Writing is usefully described as process, something which shows continuous change in time like growth in organic nature (Christina, et al;2002;24). It means through writing something can be described deeply. Writing is rigidly controlled through guided compositions where learners are given short text and asked to fill in gaps, complete sentence, transform tenses or personal pronoun and complete others exercises that focus students achieving accuracy and avoiding errors (2003;4). From it definition the writer think, when we want to write so important that we have a guide or teacher because writing is not easy and so many aspect should be known.

On the other hand, Nathan L. Mertens (2010:129) said that writing is complex and cognitively. To be successful, writers need an understanding of the components of a quality test as well as knowledge of writing strategies that can be used to shape and organize the writing process. In particular writing competence required appropriate and self regulated knowledge of strategies for planning what to write and then revising what has been written.

Writing as a process should not find the product overwhelming the process. Instead, because writing becomes something students can do, because as they internalize the process they begin to see themselves as writers, they want the product to reflect the intensity of what they know. Students who are writers care as much for the product as they do for the process. They learn about balance (Joyce Armstrong Carrol and Edward E.Wilson:1993:39-40).

From the definition above, it is concluded that writing is a way of communication to convey a message, ideas, thoughts, impression, and feeling in written form. Writing should be organized effectively and include aspects such as ideas, word choice, grammar, content and coherent.

Purpose of Writing

Purpose refers to a writer's reason for writing. It is hard to imagine anyone deciding to write something without a reason for doing it. Identifying the purposes for particular writing project will help you make important decisions about what type of paragraph to write, what information to include, and what information to leave out. Having a strong sense of purpose will also motivate you to write with clarity and power. Betty Mattix Dietsch (2006:7-8) said that for any writing that you do, you should be aware of some purposes:

- a. General Purpose. Writing has four general purpose: to inform, to persuade, to express and to entertain.
- b. Specific purpose. The specific purpose may be implied or state. Once you have identified the general purpose for your writing project, you will need to select the specific information or ideas you want to communicate your audience.

For higher students the main purpose for academic writing is to develop their thinking I specific area of study based on their major. Therefore, the writing in academic situation should towards another aspect of English for specific purposes.

The Writing Process

Writing process is considered as a dynamic system in that diverse cognitive factors are influential with special consideration give to working memory. Throughout the writing process it is necessary to translate from ideas into

words. In other words, Jeremy Harmer states that writing process is a way of looking at what people do when they compose written text. There are some steps in writing process, such as:

1. Planning: In this step, the writers have to think about three main issue. In the first place they have to consider the *purpose* of their writing since this will influence (among others things) not only the type of text they wish to produce, but also the language they use and the information they choose to include. Secondly, experienced writers think of the *audience* they are writing for, since this will influence not only the shape of the writing how it is laid out, how the paragraphs are structured, etc.), but also the choice of language whether, for example, it is formal and informal in tone. Thirdly, writers have to consider the *content structure* of the piece that is, how best to sequence the facts, ideas or arguments which they

have decided to include (Jeremy Harmer; 2004;4-12).

2. Prewriting: When prewriting is mandated instead of introduced as a way to plumb the writer's mind for ideas as a way to focus an idea, then any prewriting strategy becomes artificial or even detrimental to the composition process. Prewriting strategies benefit the writer because they provide a heuristic; they form the basis for inquiry that can lead the writer from the simple to complex and more sophisticated. Prewriting is so much more than sitting down with paper and writing on topic with the appropriate member of supporting detail. (Joyce Armstrong Carrol and Edward E.Wilson: 993:41). Prewriting is the next step of the writing process, in this case the point will discovering and develop an idea about the topic. Listed below are some of prewriting technique :

a.) *Free writing.* When you do not know what to write about a subject or when you are blocked in writing, free writing sometimes helps. Free writing is just sitting down and writing whatever comes into your mind about a topic. In free writing, you write on your topic for ten minutes. You don't worry about spelling or punctuating correctly, about erasing mistakes, about organizing material, or about finding exact words. You just write without stopping. If you get stuck for words, you write I'm looking for something to say or repeat words until something comes. There is no need to feel inhibited, since mistakes don't count and you don't have to hand in your paper.

Free writing will limber up your writing muscles and make you familiar with the act of writing. It's a way to break through mental blocks about writing. Since you don't have

worry about mistakes, you can focus on discovering what you want to say about subject. Your initial ideas and impressions will often become clearer after you have gotten them down on paper, and they may lead to other impressions and ideas. Through continued practice in free writing, you will develop the habit of thinking as you write. And you will learn a technique that is a helpful way to get started on almost any paper.

b). *Questioning.* Questioning means that you generate your idea and details by asking many questions as you can think of about your subject. Such questions include Why?, When?, Who?, Where?, and How?

c). *Making a list.* In making a list, also known as brainstorming, you create a list of ideas and details that relate to your subject. Pile these items up, one after another, without trying to sort out major details from minor

ones, or trying to put the details in any special order, even trying to spell words correctly. Your goal is to accumulate raw material by making up a list of everything about your subject that occurs to you.

d). Clustering. Clustering, also known as diagramming or mapping, is another strategy that can be used to generate material for a paper. This method is helpful for people who like to think in visual way. In clustering, you use lines, boxes, arrows, and circles to show relationships among the ideas and details that occur to you.

Begin by stating your subject in a few words in the center of a blank sheet of paper. Then, as ideas and details occur to you, put them in boxes or circle around the subject and draw lines to connect them to each other and to the subject. Put minor ideas or detail in smaller boxes or circle, and use connecting

lines to show how they relate as well. Keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way of clustering. It is a way to think on paper about how various ideas and details relate to one another.

e). Preparing a Scratch Outline. A scratch outline can be the single most helpful technique for writing a good paper. It often follows free writing, questioning, making a list or clustering, but it may also gradually emerge in the midst of these strategies. In fact, trying to make a scratch outline is a good way to see if you need to do more prewriting. If you can not come up with a solid outline, then you know you need to do more prewriting to clarify your main point and its several kind of support.

In scratch outline, you think carefully about the point you are making, the supporting items for the point, and the other in which you

will arrange those items. The scratch outline is a plane or blueprint to help you achieve a unified, supported and well-organized composition.

3. Drafting. Drafting occurs when you put ideas into sentence and paragraphs. Here you concentrate upon explaining and supporting your ideas fully and you also begin to connect your ideas.

When you writes a first draft, be prepared to put in additional thoughts and details that did not emerge during prewriting. And don't worry if you hit a snag. Just leave a blank space or add a comment such as " do later" and press on to finish the paper. Also don't worry yet about grammar, punctuation, or spelling. You don't want to take time correcting words or sentence that you may decide to remove later. Instead, make it your goal to state your main idea clearly and develop the content of your paper with plenty of specific details.

4. Revising. Revising is much stage in the writing process as prewriting, outlining,

and doing the first draft. Revising means that you rewrite a paper, building upon what has already been done, in order to make it stronger. One writer has said about revision. "It's like cleaning house-getting rid of all the junk and putting things in the right order. It is not just "straightening up", instead, you must be ready to roll up your sleeves and do whatever is needed to create an effective paper. Too many students think that a first draft is the paper. They start to become writers when they realize that revising a rough draft three or four times is often at the hearth of the writing process.

Here some quick hints that can help make revision easier. First, set your first draft aside for a while. You can then come back to it wraith a fresher, more objective point of view. Second, work from typed or printed text, preferably double-spaced so you will have room to handwrite change later. You will be able to see the paper more impartially if

it is typed than if you were just looking at your own familiar handwriting. Next, read your draft aloud. Hearing how your writing sounds will help you pick up problems with meaning as well as with style. Finally, as you do all these things, write additional thoughts and changes above the lines or in the margin of your paper. Your written comments can serve as a guide when you work on the next draft (John Langan: 2006; 27).

Donald Pharr and Santi Buscemi (2005:22) said that you can make decisions about revising your writing: a. Revising for content, b. Revising for structure, and c. Revising for grammar and mechanics.

5. Editing and Proofreading. The next to-last major step in the writing process is editing and proofreading-checking a paper for mistakes in grammar, punctuations, usage, and spelling. You are ready for proofreading when you are satisfied with your choice of supporting details, the order in which

they are presented, and the way and your topic sentence are worded.

6. Publishing. Publishing is the last step of writing process. Writing should go public because publishing provides an audience. Further, publishing matters it is the writer's solo flight; it is the writer's curtain call, recital, aria; it is the writer's exhibit, premier, trophy; it is the writer winning basket, birdie, and touchdown.

Effective Activities for Academic Writing

Stephen Baily (2003:3-60) divided three main activities for academic writing: first, writing foundation, second, reading and note taking and third, writing stage. These three stage can be explained as follows.

1. Writing foundation: Most university and college students are assessed through the production of written assignments. Some of the terms used to describe different types of assignments can be confusing. In addition, students

need to be clear about the basic components of written texts. (Stephen Bailey; 2003:3)

The most common types of written work produced or used by higher students are letter, notes, report, project, essay, article or paper and thesis or dissertation. Each types of written works has specific purposes and length. Letter and note for examples, written by students usually consist of fewer than 500 words. While project, essay, paper and thesis or dissertation has different in length and consist or more than 1000 words.

Typical type of shorter texts such as essays, are normally organized: introduction – main body – and conclusion. While longer texts such as

dissertation and articles, may include depending on subject area are organized: Abstract – content – introduction – main body – case study – discussion – findings – conclusion – and references.

By identifying organization of the texts activity, higher education students are given tasks to identified the structure of the text and then discuss with partners in the class. Reasons are needed to support their idea together with the evident and example from the text. They also can be given exercises a long text in one paragraph and ask them to divide in to some paragraphs. Ask them a reason why they divide into such paragraph. This activity can be illustrated as follows:

Why are all texts divided into paragraphs? How long are paragraphs?

Read the following text, from the introduction to an essay, and divide it into a suitable number of paragraphs.

INVESTMENT

Most people want to invest for the future, to cover unexpected financial difficulties and provide them with security. Different people, however, tend to have different requirements, so that a 25-year-old just leaving university would be investing for the long term, whereas a 60-year-old who had just retired would probably invest for income.

Despite these differences, certain principles apply in most cases. The first issue to consider is risk. In general, the greater the degree of risk in investment, the higher the return. Shares, for example, which can quickly rise or fall in value, typically have a higher yield than bonds, which offer good security but only pay about 5%.

Therefore all investors must decide how much risk is appropriate in their particular situation. Diversification must also be considered in an investment strategy. Wise investors usually seek to spread their investments across a variety of geographical and business sectors. As accurate predictions of the future are almost impossible, it is best to have as many options as possible. A further consideration is investor involvement.

Some investors opt for a high degree of involvement and want to buy and sell regularly, constantly watching the markets. Others want to invest and then forget about it. Personal involvement can be time-consuming and worrying, and many prefer to leave the management of their portfolios to professional fund managers. (Stephen Bailey; 2003:16)

Avoiding Plagiarism is part of plagiarism. Plagiarism means taking the first section – foundation writing -, information or ideas from another Stephen Bailey (2003:17) said that all writer and using them in your own students have to face the issue of work, without acknowledging the

source in an accepted manner. In academic work plagiarism can be a serious offence. This idea means that everyone including higher education students should make good quotation to avoid plagiarism. Lecturer, in this case, have to inform students not to do so, and give explanation how to quote idea, or opinion in accepted manner.

2. Reading and note taking. Activities of reading and note taking are always met by higher education students. In every subjects students should read some books and make note taking of their reading. Since reading and note taking is part of higher education students life, students should have high ability in reading and note taking skill.

Activities that involve reading and note taking are: evaluating text, understanding purpose and register, selecting key points, note making, paraphrasing, summary writing, and combining sources.

Students of higher education in Indonesia at least read 20 books in a semester. It is because they take average 10 subjects in a semester. Reading books not only understand what is stated in the book but also the idea that is not stated by the authors, and it calls read beyond the line. Good readers should evaluate the text whether it is opinion or fact that proposed by the authors.

Stephen Bailey (2003:13) said that when reading a text, it is important to ask yourself questions about the value of the text. Is this text fact or opinion? If fact, is it true? If opinion, do I agree? Can this writer be trusted? These questions can be seen as a process. Having understood the title and made an outline, the next step is probably to read around the subject. Although a reading list may be given, it is still vital to be able to assess the usefulness of journal articles and books. Time spent learning these skills will

be repaid by avoiding the use of unreliable or irrelevant materials.

Understanding Purpose and Register. Having decided that a text is reliable, a student must read and understand as much as necessary for the needs of the essay. Understanding a text is not just a matter of vocabulary; the reader needs to find out the writer's intentions. Is the writer aiming to inform, persuade, describe or entertain? In addition the reader should be clear about the type of English the writer is using: how formal is the tone? The answer to these questions may affect the way a student uses the material (Stephen Bailey; 2003:17)

Activities that can be given to students in understanding Purpose and Register are giving different type of text such as persuade text, information text, descriptive text and argumentative text. Register in this case whether the text is for formal or informal language such as newspaper, academic, jargon etc.

Selecting key points. After selecting and understanding the most relevant texts, the next step is usually to make notes on the sections of the texts that relate to your topic. Almost most students forget to make a note for important point in the books that they read. said that Effective note-making is a key writing skill Stephen Bailey (2003:25), with a number of practical uses. Good note-making techniques lead to accurate essays. Although you are the only person who will read your notes, clarity and organization are important to save time and errors at the writing State.

Effective note taking include heading, subheading, under lining and listing to organize the data clearly; simplified grammar (few articles, pronouns or preposition); symbol and abbreviation, but do not abbreviate too much because it will make your note taking difficult to read. Sources should be noted in the same format as they will

appear in references. The example of note taking format can be shown as below:

Source: Geraldine Price and Pat Maier (2007), *Effective Study Skill: Unlock Your Potensial*, London: Ashford Colour Press Ltd pp.79-99

Making Note*

The ability to make notes is an essential skill which

make summary of ideas is just not suitable or related. Paraphrasing is one solution. It is best to limit paraphrasing

to short chunks of text. we need to change the words and the structure of the original but keep the meaning the same.

Paraphrasing and summarizing on the other hand is make quotation in our own words that similar meaning with the author or somebody ideas. If the ideas written in long sentences we make them short that is summarizing. We quote not only one source but also take some sources and from many expert with same ideas, in this case we may combining many sources. Illustration of paraphrasing and summarizing activities can be seen as follows:

Paraphrasing according to Stephen Bailey (2003:33) is involves re-writing a text so that the language is substantially different while the content stays the same. This activities include summarizing, means reducing the length of a text but retaining the main points.

Andy Gillett at. al (2009: 190) said that sometimes when we are writing to

Example

Original

The mere physical proximity of one person to another is a potent facilitator of attraction (Martin et al., 2007: 757).

Paraphrase

Attraction between two people is greatly influenced by their physical closeness (Martin et al., 2007).

Original	Paraphrase
Physical proximity	Physical closeness
Of one person to another	Between two people
X is a potent facilitator of Y	Y is greatly influenced by X
'Physical proximity' is the subject of the sentence	'Attraction' is the subject of the sentence

From the activities above, we can see how to quote original source become paraphrase and summarizing with the same idea without changing the meaning from original one. This activities is to avoid plagiarism in our academic writing.

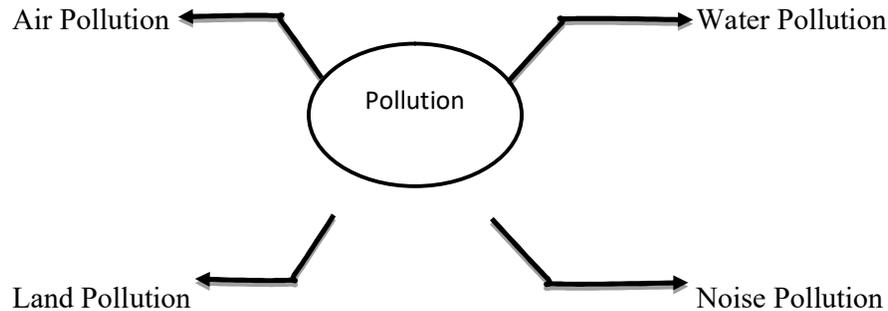
3. The last activities in academic writing is writing stage. These activities consist of Planning Essays, Organizing Paragraphs, Organizing the Main Body, Introductions, Conclusions and Rewriting and Proof-reading.

Stephen Bailey (2003:39) said that planning provide essays a coherent structure and, most importantly, helps to ensure that they answer the question set. Although all essays need planning, they are written in two different situations: as coursework, and in exams. Clearly, under the time pressure of an exam, planning is more hurried, but can also be more critical.

Planning an essay is very important part of the activities in academic writing. Without good planning the writing that is produced by students can be judged not good.

Think about the title first and then come up to the idea that comes in our head and then write down the relevant

ideas. This process is called brain storming or webbing. Illustration can be seen as follows:



The picture above shows the simple brain storming to make planning essay about pollution. First identify the title and expand with idea about pollution that happened in our environment. Second, the writers can build and expand according to the topic that have been grouped. This planning make the writers easy to explain and develop in logical writing.

Organizing Paragraphs.

Stephen Bailey (2003:43) said that paragraphs are the basic building blocks of texts. Well-organized paragraphs not only help readers

understand the argument, they also help writers to structure their ideas effectively.

One of the primary means of achieving coherence in essays is logical ordering or sequencing of the main points and details of each paragraph in the body of the paper. Once the divisions and details are logically ordered, transition words and devices to signal that order become more natural and obvious to use. (<http://www.tcc.edu.htm>).

There are two main steps to the organization process. Both steps should be done during the outlining

or planning of your paper after you have decided on the main idea of the paper. The first step involves ordering the paragraph topics. You must impose some logical sequence for the paragraphs and have a reason for one paragraph coming first, another next, and so on through the end of your essay. The second step involves ordering the particular sentences as details within each

individual paragraph. You must enforce a logical order for the various sentences and have a reason for writing one sentence first, another next, and so on through the end of the paragraph. There are many ways to order information. In some cases, your main point will indicate an obvious order to use. Some of the ways you may consider are outlined as follows (<http://www.tcc.edu.htm>):

Ordering by Time (Chronological Order): Chronological order is usually used in narration and process analysis, but can be used in other cases as well. first in time last in time season season morning night early late.

Ordering by Space (Spatial Order): Ordering from one place to another is usually effective in physical description but can be used in other cases as well. left right top bottom inside outside here there far near.

Ordering by Groups or Types (Classification and Comparison): This method involves two steps. The first step is labeling the groups or types by answering the question "What is this paragraph about?" or "What kinds of things are these details about?" The second step arranges the types in Chronological, Spatial, or Emphatic Order. first type second type third type first similarity second similarity third similarity first difference second difference third difference problem first possible solution second possible solution.

Effective writing uses mixtures of structures as suitable for communicating information and ideas most logically. Be sure to consider both the internal organization of your

paragraphs and the external organization among the various paragraphs. In addition, use transitions and other coherence strategies to enhance the logic.

<http://www.tcc.edu.htm>

Students may check their paragraph by using following points:

IMPROVING MY WRITING BY ORGANISING PARAGRAPHS

I have checked/corrected this piece of work to prove that I can:

- Organize my main ideas into sections appropriate to the type of text*
- Use paragraphs to organize my writing in a logical way*
- Link paragraphs clearly, using connectives*

My English teacher agrees/disagrees that I have succeeded in improving my writing by meeting the above

target(s): _____ *(signature)*

Any further comment:

Organizing the Main Body. In the case of longer assignments it is often better to write the main body before the introduction (Stephen Bailey: 2003:48). The first paragraph of the body should cover the strongest argument, most significant example, cleverest illustration, or an

obvious beginning point. The first sentence of this paragraph should include the "reverse hook" which ties in with the transitional hook at the end of the introductory paragraph. The topic for this paragraph should be in the first or second sentence. This topic had better relate to the

thesis statement in the introductory paragraph. The last sentence in this paragraph should include a transitional sentence to tie into the second paragraph of the body (http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/five_par.htm).

Introductions. An introduction is crucial, not just for what it says about the topic, but for what it tells the reader about the writer's style and approach. Unless you can introduce the subject clearly the reader may not wish to continue. The purpose of introduction are: a) to define some of the terms in the title; b) to give your opinion of the subject; c) to show that the subject is worth writing about; d) to explain which areas of the subject you will deal with; e) to get the reader's attention with a provocative idea; f) to show how you intend to organize your essay (Stephen Bailey: 2003:52)

Conclusions and Rewriting. Conclusion and rewriting is essential part of the essay, Stephen Bailey (2003:56), said that there is usually a link between the starting point, i.e. the title, and the conclusion. If the title is asking a question the answer should be contained in the conclusion. The reader may look at the conclusion first to get a summary of the main arguments or points.

However, not every academic essay has a conclusion. In some cases it may be linked to the discussion section, or it may be called 'concluding remarks', or 'summary'. However, in most cases it is helpful for the reader to have a section which (quite briefly) looks back at what has been said and makes some comments about the main part.

The last part of writing stage is rewriting and proof-reading. Stephen Bailey (2003:60) said that when we have finished the conclusion it may be

tempting to hand in our work immediately. However, it is almost certain that it can be improved by being revised. With longer assignments, it may be worth asking a classmate to read your work and make criticisms. Proof-reading is a vital final step, which can prevent confusion or misunderstanding due to simple errors. Computer programs that check spelling will not detect other common types of mistakes.

Rewriting and proof reading is the most part activities before students hand in their works to the lecturer. This activity allow students make correction of their works or essays. If it is possible ask other students to write the essays and ask them suggestions or criticize the essays. The questions may ask in this activity are: How well does this answer the question in the title? Have I forgotten any points which would strengthen the

development?; and Is it clearly structured and well linked together?

III. CLOSING

Writing essays and mini papers can be a major concern for higher education students. All courses contain a large degree of written assessment and it is essential to ensure that writing skills meet the necessary standard. Academic Writing is a new kind of writing course for all higher education students who have to write exams or coursework either in Bahasa or in English. By reading and practicing Stephen Bailey book - *Academic writing: A Handbook for International Students* - will improve students skill or ability in academic writing. This practical book thoroughly explains the writing process and covers all the key writing skills.

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