MDC

SEM-I

STUDY MATERIAL

PREPARED BY: DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

MANIKCHAK COLLEGE, MALDA

Introduction and Scope:

The following discussions are prepared to provide some basic ideas about the nature of the Multidisciplinary Course on Academic Writing. Keeping in mind the need of the students of our institution, these discussions are prepared with a pragmatic approach, primarily aimed at helping the students to prepare for their end semester evaluation. Overall, this study material is intended to be a support for self-study.

Outline:

As shown in the syllabus for the course as designed by the UG BOS of University of Gourbanga, Department of English, this course has 4 units and in this discussion a separate section is devoted to each of these units. The units are as follows:

Unit-1 Understanding Conventions and Instruments

Unit-2 Understanding Academic Writing and Its Types

Unit-3 Understanding the Writing Process

Unit-4 Writing in Own Words

General Information about the Course and Its Outcome:

In response to the "Curriculum and Credit Framework For Undergraduate Programmes" from the University Grants Commission, the UG BOS of University of Gourbanga, Department of English has introduced a course on "Academic Writing" as a "Multidisciplinary Course". By "Multidisciplinary" in this context a holistic approach is signified in case of this particular course. In other words, the course will offer learners basic information about writing academically, that is, write maintaining basic decorum of the academic world. At the end of the course learners should be able to improve grammatical correctness and self-expression through writing.

In order to write correctly and clearly in English it is essential to follow a set pattern of English grammar or grammatical rules. This unit aims to familiarize the learners with a select number of these rules for the learners. As per the syllabus framed by the UG BOS of University of Gourbanga, Department of English, this unit has 8 topics. A brief outline of these topics is as follows:
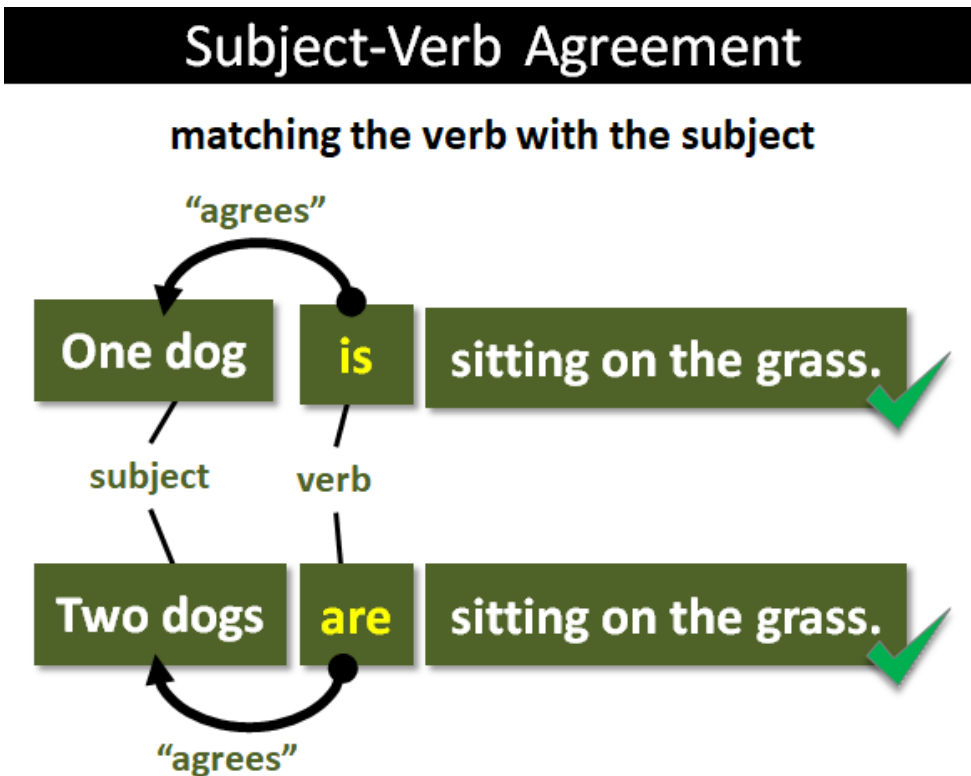
Subject-Verb Agreement

Image source: Google

As shown in the above image, it is essential for the 'subject' and 'verb' of a sentence to 'agree' that is, correspond to each other. To put very briefly, a subject is anything that does some kind of work or activity in a sentence. A subject can be a noun, pronoun or noun phrase. Usually the subject appears at the beginning of the sentence. Relatedly, the word(s) signifying some kind of action or work in a sentence is/are the verb (s) of that sentence.

As per the existing rules of English grammar, the verb(s) of a sentence should be selected in relation to the subject(s) for correctness. For instance, the above image shows how verb is

changing from 'is' to 'are' when the subject is changing from singular to plural. Students can expect to have questions instructing them to detect errors in subject-verb usage and rectify them.

Punctuation

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Period ●	Question Mark ?	Quotation Marks " "	Exclamation Mark !
My name's Beth and I was 18 in July.	Where are you from?	"I work in Italy", said Jimmy.	Sit down!

Comma ,	Hyphen -	Apostrophe '
She is your sister, isn't she?	My eight-year-old boy loves reading.	They're going to the movies tonight.

Colon :	Parentheses ( )	Semicolon ;
You have two choices: finish the work today or lose the contract.	The two brothers (Richard and Sean) were learning how to play guitar.	My daughter is a teacher; my son is a doctor.

7ESL.COM

Image Source: Google

Interestingly, in order to start writing correctly, it is important to know where, when, why, and how to stop writing flow. In English language (as well as multiple other languages) there are a number of signs that are used to convey halts or divisions. These are bracketed as punctuations together. In the image above there are 10 (ten) important marks of punctuation and a sentence representing their respective usages. Students can expect to have questions instructing them to detect errors in punctuation usage and rectify them.

Common Abbreviations

Image Source: Google

While writing long and detailed pieces, the entire passage might appear too verbose and tedious if repeatedly used words are written in their entirety. In order to resolve this, English language uses a number of abbreviations that is shortened words signifying repeatedly used ideas and expressions in writing. In the above image students can find a brief list of these abbreviations. Students can expect to have questions instructing them to detect errors in abbreviation usage and rectify them.

Synonyms-Antonyms

It is essential to maintain neatness of language usage by ensuring that similar words are used and not the same words in repetition. This purpose is served by synonyms that is, different words with the same or similar meaning. Likewise, in case of conveying opposite meanings to various words it is necessary to use words that express the meaning succinctly. Hence there are also words that mean exactly the opposite to each other and are referred as antonyms.

LIST OF SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS

Words	Synonyms	Antonyms
Forbid	Prohibit, ban, bar	Lead, precede
Forgive	Pardon, excuse, absolve	Encourage
Former	Previous, earlier	Latter
Fraction	Part, portion, segment	Whole
Frank	Candid, straightforward, blunt	Evasive
Frenzy	Fury, rage	Serenity, calmness
Fresh	Unused, new	Old, stale
Friend	Comrade, buddy	Enemy
Frigid	Freezing, frosty	Warm, hot
Frivolous	Trivial, unimportant, silly	Important, serious
Front	Fore	Back
Full	Packed, stuffed	Empty
Furious	Angry, enraged, infuriated	Calm, placid
Future	Coming, tomorrow	past
Demolish	Destroy, wreck	Restore
Denounce	Blame, censure, indict	Commend
Dense	Thick, heavy, compressed	Sparse, empty
Depart	Leave, exit	Arrive
Deposit	Store, place	Withdraw
Desolate	Barren, forsaken	Dense, verdant
Despise	Hate, detest, loathe	Love

Image Source: Google

In the above image, a very brief list of words is provided to give an idea about the relation between words, synonyms, and antonyms. Students can access a database of synonyms-antonyms here: https://www.thesaurus.com/.

Students can expect to have questions instructing them to detect errors in synonym-antonym usage and rectify them or provide synonym or antonym for words.

Active-Passive Sentences

The nature of the subject can determine the 'voice' of a sentence. When the subject does the work described in the sentence, the sentence is referred as active voice sentence. In opposition to this pattern, when the subject of the sentence does not do anything directly, instead something is 'done' to the subject (s), the sentence is referred as passive voice sentence.

Passive & Active Voice

Tense	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Present Simple	She **delivers** the letters.	The letters **are delivered**.
Past Simple	She **delivered** the letters.	The letters **were delivered**.
Future Simple	She **will deliver** the letters.	The letters **will be delivered**.
Present Continuous	She **is delivering** the letters.	The letters **are being delivered**.
Past Continuous	She **was delivering** the letters.	The letters **were being delivered**.
Going to	She **is going to deliver** the letters.	The letters **are going to be delivered**.
Present Perfect	She **has delivered** the letters.	The letters **have been delivered**.
Past Perfect	She **had delivered** the letters.	The letters **had been delivered**.
Infinitive	She **has to deliver** the letters.	The letters **have to be delivered**.
Modals	She **must deliver** the letters.	The letters **must be delivered**.

www.englishgrammarhere.com

Image souce: Google

In the above image, essential changes between two different voices are highlighted. Students can expect to have questions instructing them to change voices.

Narration

Most of what we write consists of sentences that describe or narrate something. This narrating can be done in two ways, namely the direct, that is, when speaking is done directly, on the other hand, if speaking is done without directness, it becomes indirect speech.

1st person indicates the subject   2nd person indicates the object

Subject + said + to + object, + "1st / 2nd + verb + object

Subject + told + object + that + _subject_ + verb + object

Direct – He said to me, "I am a student."

Indirect – He told me that he was a student.

Direct – He said to me, "You are a good boy."
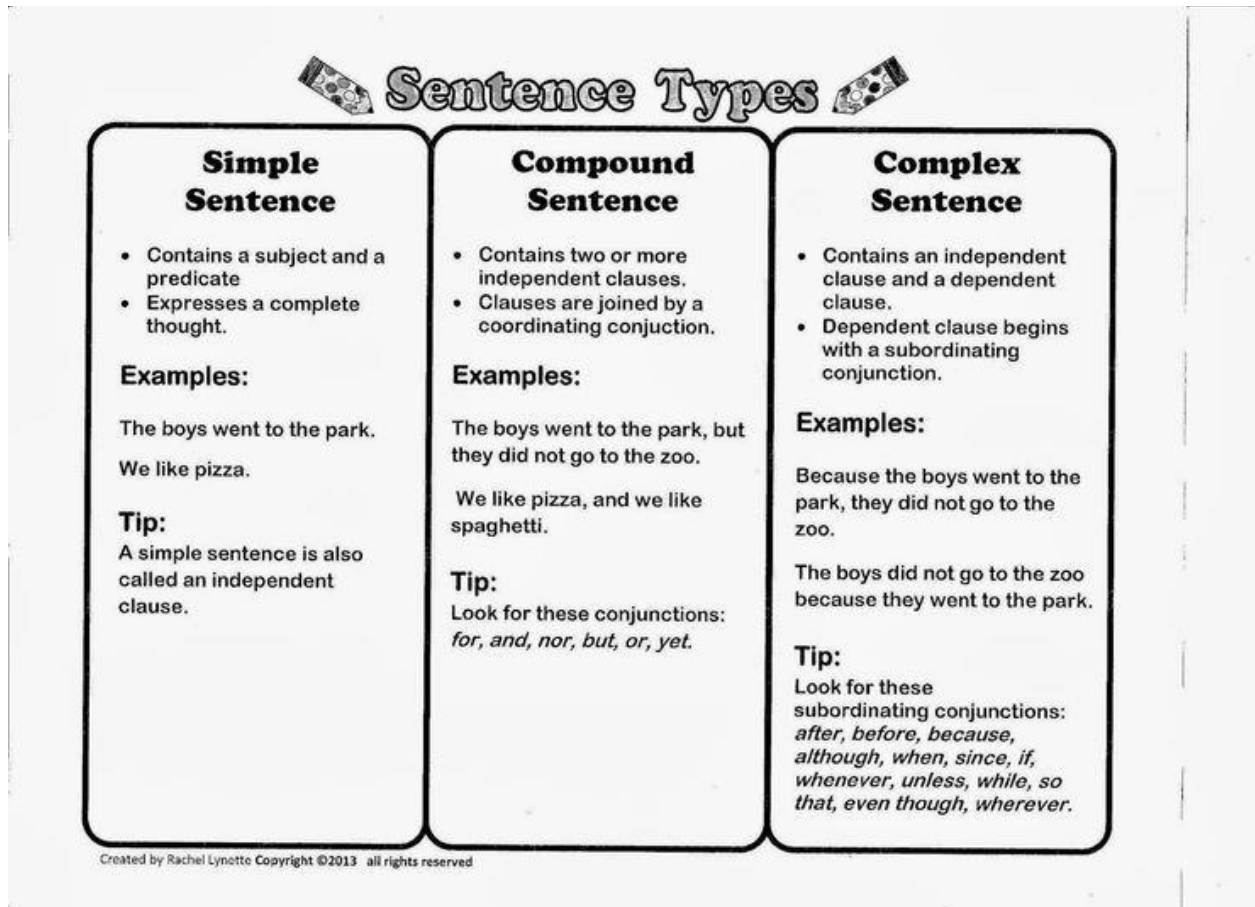
Indirect – He told me that I was a good boy.

Image Source: Google

In the image above, a brief idea about the way sentences are transformed when changing them from direct speech to indirect and vice versa, is provided. Students can expect to have questions instructing them to change narration of the sentences.

Sentence Types

Simple Sentence

- Contains a subject and a predicate
- Expresses a complete thought.

Examples:

The boys went to the park.

We like pizza.

Tip:
A simple sentence is also called an independent clause.

Compound Sentence

- Contains two or more independent clauses.
- Clauses are joined by a coordinating conjunction.

Examples:

The boys went to the park, but they did not go to the zoo.

We like pizza, and we like spaghetti.

Tip:
Look for these conjunctions: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet.*

Complex Sentence

- Contains an independent clause and a dependent clause.
- Dependent clause begins with a subordinating conjunction.

Examples:

Because the boys went to the park, they did not go to the zoo.

The boys did not go to the zoo because they went to the park.

Tip:
Look for these subordinating conjunctions: *after, before, because, although, when, since, if, whenever, unless, while, so that, even though, wherever.*

Image Source: Google

As per the number/nature of clauses or a grammatical unit consisting one subject and one predicate, sentences are classified into three types, namely Simple, Compound, and Complex. Students can expect to have questions instructing them to change sentences from simple to complex, etc.

Unit-2

Academic Writing and Types

To put simply, writing for academic/educational purposes can be bracketed as 'academic writing'. As per the nature of academic writing, four major types can be found. These are as follows:

Type of Writing	Descriptive	Analytical	Persuasive	Critical
Purpose	Introduce facts and information to the reader.	Analyze a topic to understand it better from different perspectives.	Convince reader to adopt a perspective.	Exhibit the writer's thorough and solid understanding of the topic.
Nature of writing	Descriptive, Detailing, Reporting, Informative.	Comparative, Investigative, Survey	Convincing, Argumentative, Logical, Compelling.	Critical, Opinionated
Examples	Description of people, places, reports, etc	Most academic writing in general is analytical in nature.	Academic essays.	Research Thesis, Literature Review, etc.

Image Source: Google

These four types of academic writings chiefly differ on the basis of their respective purposes. Descriptive writing serves as introductory discussions, that is, writing that familiarizes readers to concepts, ideas, etc. Analytical writing scrutinizes topics or offers in-depth interpretation of topics or ideas. Persuasive writing differs from the previous two for its emphasis on eliciting a particular kind of response from the readers. Through offering logics the writers of Persuasive writings convince the readers to subscribe to the writers' point of view. Lastly, the Critical writings represent detailed and holistic understanding of a subject and focuses on bringing out the writer's own critical thoughts.

Students can expect to write short-notes on these topics.

Unit-3

Understanding the Writing Process

Image Source: Google

To develop a simplistic formula for charting the writing process is nearly impossible. Yet, in order to make students realize the essential steps of writing this unit encourages students to perceive writing process through a number of interconnected steps. In these steps 'brainstorming' or thinking in depth about the writing topic, 'drafting' or developing a rough outline of the writing, and 'prrofing' or error correction of the written piece are emphasized.

Students can expect to write essay questions asking for analysis or outline of these processes of writing.

Unit 4

Summary or Paraphrase

Summary writing is technically re-writing an existing piece of writing in own words with the aim of shortening the given writing significantly (preferably half of the given passage).

On the other hand, paraphrase involves expanding a given passage (mostly verse or complex writing in prose) in lucid and simple words.

Students can expect two passages instructing them to summarize and paraphrase.

Students should read the given passages carefully and write in their own words as much as possible.

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